HESAA 2023 Temporary Employment Services RFPs

Potential Vendor's Questions & HESAA's Answers

March 07, 2023

Below are the responses to questions received which were relevant to the present procurement:

1. What is your annual anticipated spend by category or working headcount by category (to include Finance and Admin/Office/Clerical)?
   The fiscal year 2023 projected budget for all three Temporary Employment Services contract is $2.7 million. The fiscal year 2024 projected budget will be determined at HESAA's July 2023 Board meeting.

2. When was the existing contract started, and what is the annual monetary spent value of the current contract since inception?
   The existing contract commenced July 6, 2020.

   HESAA spent the approximate amounts shown below for each of the Temporary Employee Services Categories. Fiscal years run from July 1 through June 30. ($ in thousands)

	Fiscal Year2021	*Fiscal Year 2022*	*Fiscal Year 2023 As of February 28*
Administrative, Office & Clerical	*$105*	*$181*	*$18*
Finance	*$609*	*$544*	*$197*
Information Technology	*$$2,672*	*$2,311*	*$937*

3. Could you please share a copy of the purchase orders issued to all vendors?
   HESAA issues purchase orders through the State's procurement system, NJSTART. Purchase orders which will be issued to the selected contractors.

4. Will you accept redlines to the contract?
   Pursuant to Section 1 of Attachment 1, Higher Education Student Assistance Authority Standard Terms and Conditions, "In the event that the bidder/offeror would like to present terms and conditions that are in conflict with either these terms and conditions or those set forth in the RFP, the bidder/offeror must present those conflicts during the Question and Answer period for HESAA to consider." HESAA has reviewed all submitted terms and will negotiate such terms with the prospective bidders if they are selected for the program.

5. How many vendors do you intend to select for the program? Is this a multiple award contract?
   Pursuant to Section 1.0 of each RFP, HESAA anticipates making three awards for each RFP, a primary, secondary and tertiary contract for each RFP. Additionally, pursuant to section 5.3 of each RFP, HESAA shall award the pass-through rate contract to one of the three vendors awarded each of the contracts.

6. What percentage (headcount) of the business will be remote (work from home)?
   Pursuant to Section 3.0 of each of the RFPs, "It is anticipated that temporary staff will report onsite to HESAA's three buildings located at 1, 2, and 4 Quakerbridge Plaza, Mercerville, New Jersey 08619. There may be some circumstances, at HESAA's discretion, in which remote work is acceptable."

7. What positions would require fingerprinting?
   HESAA does not currently require fingerprinting prior to placement.

8. What is included in the pre-employment background requirement?
   The background check should include information in the following categories: past employment history; education - degree, accreditations and certifications; criminal records; and references – reputation and character.

9. What positions require security clearance?
   HESAA does not offer positions that require security clearance.

10. Is there a requirement for pre-employment drug screening, and if so, what is included?
    HESAA does not currently require pre-employment drug screening.

11. Under what circumstances would HESAA undertake a criminal background check on temporary staff? (Section 4.3 Security Clearances)
    At this time there are no circumstances under which HESAA anticipates exercising its discretion to undertake a criminal history record background check for assigned personnel at its own cost.

12. Is this a new initiative? If not, please provide the names of the current vendor(s) providing the services and length of their contract. Could you please share the Bid Tabulation and Bid Scoring Sheet?
    The vendors selected for the current contracts, along with the rates that they submitted, and the bid scoring sheets can be found on HESAA's website at:
    https://www.hesaa.org/BoardMeetingMinutes/04.22.20HESAABoardMeetingMinutes.pdf
    Pages 30 – 85.

13. When is the anticipated award date?
    It is anticipated that the HESAA Board will approve selected vendors at their April 26, 2022 meeting.

14. Can we do only email submission for this RFP?
    Pursuant to Section 6.1 of each of the RFPs "One original and 4 copies of the proposal must be marked "Employment Services…" and be delivered no later than 4:00 pm on March 27, 2023", This is in addition to an emailed submission.

15. Are there any pain points or issues with the current vendor(s)?
    The issues with any contract for provision of temporary employees is ensuring that there are qualified candidates for a needed position.

16. How many resources are currently engaged in the current contract? Please share titles and count. What is the total number of resources who are currently working on this project? Please let us know their position name and hourly rate?
Currently engaged resources are as follows:

Position	Current Hourly Rate
Administrative, Office & Clerical	
Administrative Assistant	$19.60
Special Projects	$71.50
Finance	
Collector – Evening	$24.95
Collector – Day	$23.80
Junior Accountant	$26.25
Tax Verifier	$29.40
Information Technology	
Database Admin 3	$95.71
Database Admin 3	$95.90
Product Specialist 1	$100.00
Product Specialist 3	$95.14
Programmer 2	$79.00
Programmer 2	$81.00
Programmer 2	$81.00
Programmer 3	$88.00
Programmer 3	$88.00
Programmer 3	$88.00
Programmer 3	$86.75

17. What is the tentative start date of this engagement?
Pursuant to Section 7.1 of the RFP, the agreements entered as a result of this RFP will commence with new temporary employees hired on or after June 1, 2023.

18. If there is an incumbent for this contract, is the incumbent eligible to submit the proposal again?
The current incumbents for this contract are eligible to submit a proposal.

19. Is there any mandatory subcontracting requirement for this contract? If yes, is there any specific goal for the subcontracting?
There are no mandatory subcontracting requirements for this contract. However, pursuant to section 5.8 of Attachment 1, the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority Standard Terms and Conditions, all subcontractors must be identified in the proposal.

20. If the proposed candidates are not available at the time of award, will the agency allow us to provide replacement personnel with similar or more skill sets?
Pursuant to Section 4.1 B. and C., the contractor shall furnish personnel on a timely basis, as agreed upon by both parties. In the event delivery of qualified resumes for available requested

personnel is not made within three business days, HESAA will obtain said personnel from any available source including but not limited to the secondary and tertiary contractor.

21. Are hourly rate ranges acceptable?
    Bidders should submit their price proposals using the price sheet provided as Attachment 3 to the RFP. The price sheet provides for a range of rates.

22. Are resumes required at the time of proposal submission? If yes, do we need to submit the actual resumes for proposed candidates or can we submit the sample resumes?
    Resumes for proposed candidates are not required at the time of the proposal submission.

23. Could you please provide the list of holidays? Are there any mandated Paid Time Off, Vacation, etc.?
    HESAA's offices are closed for the following State holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Election Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

    Contractors are required to follow New Jersey's Earned Sick Leave law, N.J.S.A. 34:11D-1 et seq.

24. How many incumbent employees are currently working?
    Currently there 17 temporary employees working at HESAA.

25. If an incumbent vendor is not awarded, will there be transitioning of current employees to the new vendors?
    Pursuant to section 7.1 of the RFP HESAA reserves the right to retain temporary employees assigned to the Authority prior to June 1, 2020 in their current positions through the contractors for which they are employed, regardless of whether the contractor is awarded a new contract through this RFP.

26. How many positions are required under this contract?
    The need for positions will vary through the term of the contract depending on HESAA's needs.

27. How many positions are currently open?
    All temporary positions are currently filled.

28. What is the average length of assignment?
    The average length of assignment varies from a few months to longer term assignments.

29. How many placements on average transition to HESAA's payroll each year?
    In general zero to one person transitions to HESAA's payroll each year. In 2022 HESAA hired more permanent employees than usual therefore an unprecedented eleven placements transitioned.

30. Do any positions require travel?
    The positions do not require travel.

31. Can you explain what portal-to-portal expenses are? Does HESAA have any portal-to-portal expenses?

Portal-to-portal expenses are the costs to commute to and from HESAA's place of business. HESAA does not pay separate portal-to-portal expenses.

32. Can you please share the number of positions served in previous years under this contract?
Below are the number of positions that were filled under each contract over the last three years:

	2021	*2022*	*2023*
Administrative, Office & Clerical	*19*	*9*	*2*
Finance	*3*	*15*	*4*
Information Technology	*22*	*19*	*11*

33. Out of the mentioned staffing positions, which are the most filled positions? Please share.
In general the positions HESAA fills the most often under each contract are:
Administrative Office & Clerical – Customer Service Representative
Finance – Collectors
Information Technology – Programmers Customer service

34. What would be the shift timings for the given positions?
Most positions work first shift with a start time between 8:30 am and 9:00 am and an end time between 4:30 pm and 5:00 pm. Second shift hours are 12:30 pm and 8:30 pm. Evening shift hours are approximately 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm.

35. What would be the estimated hours for given positions?
Most positions work 35-40 hours per week. Evening shift positions work 12-16 per week.

36. Please confirm minimum guaranteed hours per week for these positions.
There are no minimum guaranteed hours per week.

37. What is weekend and holiday shift work rate policy of County such as 1.5-time standard hourly rate? Please confirm.
Weekend, holiday, and overtime work is rare and must be pre-approved. If a temporary worker is approved to work for more than 40 hours a week HESAA pays 1.5 times the standard hourly rate.

38. What is the anticipated volume (number of workers and/or spend) of pass-through opportunities for this program? (Section 5.3 Fees)
HESAA anticipates 1-2 pass-through opportunities through these contracts.

39. How many of each position does HESAA anticipate needing per year?
HESAA anticipates engaging no more than 5 temporary workers per year.

40. How will job requests be shared among multiple awarded vendors? Will all job requests be shared among all awarded vendors simultaneously? Is there any ranking system for sharing job requests among awarded vendors such as primary bidder, secondary bidder, and then other awarded bidders?
Section 4.1 of the RFP describes how the job requests will be allocated to the primary, secondary, and tertiary contractors selected as a result of this RFP.

41. Can you share details from where we can get old RFP details?
The 2020 Employment Services RFPs can be found on HESAA's website at: https://www.hesaa.org/Pages/Procurements.aspx

42. Can you please tell us where we can see the records for the old contract? Can you please share the email id/details where we can raise the public record request for old RFP?
HESAA's Open Public Request form, with details on how to submit the form, can be found on HESAA's website at: opra_request_form.pdf (hesaa.org)

43. Would you be accepting references from large commercial entities?
Section 5.1 B. of the RFP requires bidders to submit three references of companies for which the bidder provides temporary employees.

44. What is average response time to provide resume of qualified resources?
Section 5.2B. of the RFP requests that bidders submit their turnaround time between the HESAA request for employees and the company's provision of employees.

45. Do we have to provide Sample Insurance Certificate with the proposal response? Please confirm.
Pursuant to Section 4.2 of Attachment 1 to the RFP, the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority Standard Terms and Conditions, prior to providing any services to HESAA the contractor must submit certificates of insurance.

46. Will you award this contract to the lowest responsive bidders? Please confirm.
The evaluations criteria for selecting contractors is listed in Section 8.2 of the RFP.

47. Will the agency be giving any preference to local vendors? Please confirm.
The evaluation committees consider the location of the vendors when evaluating the ability of the bidder to provide needed personnel and the ability of the bidder to provide appropriate personnel in a timely manner.

48. In order to be responsive, is it mandatory to have physical office in the State of New Jersey?
While it is not mandatory to have physical offices in New Jersey, contractors must submit a current, valid Business Registration Certificate.

49. In order to be responsive, is it mandatory to provide Business Registration Certificate (BRC) with the proposal response? Can we provide BRC certificate after the award?
As stated in section 5.4 A. of the RFP, "To facilitate proposal evaluation and contract award process, the bidder shall submit the Business Registration form with the proposal. If not already registered with the New Jersey Division of Revenue, registration can be completed online at the Division of Revenue website: https://nj.gov/treasury/revenue/gettingregistered.shtml." If a vendor is in the process of obtaining their license, they can submit proof that they submitted their registration.

50. Regarding the following requirement: "The contractor must be registered with the State of New Jersey, Division of Consumer Affairs, Regulated Business Section, Employment

and Personal Services, on or before the bid opening date for this RFP as a private employment agency or a temporary help service firm." Would a proof of submitting the application or the photocopy of the fees paid for this license work? If not, then is there any other alternative to qualify for this requirement?
Pursuant to Section 4.2 of the RFP, the contractor must be licensed on or before the bid opening date of this RFP, which is March 27, 2023. HESAA is not waiving this requirement.

51. We are a Virginia-based MBE firm certified by NMSDC, are we qualified to bid as an MBE?
Pursuant to section 5.1 D. of the RFP, consideration will be given to minority-owned and women-owned companies, and to companies owned by disabled veterans. Bidders are requested to provide any information relevant to these considerations.

52. Will bidder be responsible for providing qualified staff and managing payroll of professionals?
The temporary employees placed at HESAA by the selected contractors will remain employees of the selected contractors. The contractors will manage payroll for their employees.

53. Would NJ HESAA consider incremental discounts and/or rebates based upon the total spend or number of resources placed by a vendor?
HESAA will not consider incremental discount or rebates based upon the total spend or number of resources placed by a vendor.

54. What type of training should the personnel already have? Would this be related to their previous work history, or is the selected vendor(s) required to provide certain training(s) before starting an assignment with HESAA? (Section 4.4 Personnel)
The selected vendors should ensure that personnel has the training required to perform the general job duties listed in the job descriptions, whether it be through previous work history or training by the contractor.

55. For new hires, would HESAA provide training on specific requirements for the role they were hired for? (Section 4.4 Personnel)
While the selected vendors should ensure that personnel has the training required to perform the general job duties listed in the job descriptions, HESAA will provide training on the job duties that are specific to HESAA's operations.

56. What is the timeframe that a temporary worker must complete before a conversion to HESAA at no fee can occur? (Section 5.3 Fees, the paragraph references that HESAA shall be permitted to hire an employee directly without paying a fee to the contractor)
If bidders have a minimum timeframe that a temporary worker must complete before a conversion to HESAA at no fee can occur the bidder should include that timeframe in its proposal.

57. Considering the 3-year contract term, with 2 1-year extension options, can a year over year cost increase be built in to cover rising costs? (Section 5.3 Fees)
If bidders propose a year over year cost increase they should submit a separate Price Sheet for each year.

58. Is there a certain percentage of spend required to come from M/WBE or SDVOB firms?
There is not a specific percentage of spend required to come for M/WBE or SDVOB firms.

59. What types of records may be requested to transfer to a successor contractor as directed by the Authority? (Record Retention)
HESAA does not anticipate directing contractors to transfer any records to a successor contractor.

60. Can HESAA confirm which of the requested positions found in "Job Descriptions" require prevailing wage rates?
While the positions listed in the Job Descriptions do not fall under the prevailing wage rate definitions in N.J.S.A. 34:11-56.26, all positions must be paid the minimum wage levels pursuant to N.J.S.A. 34:11-56a et seq.

61. What degrees or certifications would be required of any of the in-scope positions, if any?
If a degree or certification is required for any of the specific positions then that requirement is included in the job description attached to the RFP.

62. The contract allows for pass through/payroll employees, should we be stating our proposed mark-up for this service in our response?
Yes, bidders should state their proposed mark-up for pass through/payroll employees in their proposals.

63. Is there a minimum number of resumes required for each role?
No, HESAA does not have a set minimum number of resumes required for each role.

64. What is the resume and interview process?
Contractors send resumes to HESAA's Human Resources (HR) team, HR sends to the hiring manager who determines the disposition of the resume. If the hiring manager determines a resume meets their needs, then HR schedules an in-person interview.

65. If the State has a request for the contractor to fill a title outside of the titles listed in the job descriptions list, and price sheet, how is that new rate confirmed?
If HESAA requests that the contractor fill a title outside of the titles listed in the job descriptions, the new rate will be confirmed in writing signed by HESAA and the contractor.

66. Will the primary contractor have the ability to automatically replace, or will all contractors be allowed to make an attempt to submit a replacement?
Pursuant to the Section 4.1 D. of the RFP if the personnel supplied by the primary contractor cannot perform the services required, HESAA may request a replacement. HESAA will follow the same process for a replacement as for an initial placement.

67. If a title change is made, will the corresponding pay rate change be automatically processed?
If HESAA transfers a temporary employee to another title pursuant to Section 4.1G. of the RFP, then the corresponding pay rate change will be automatically processed.

68. Three days for positions in low supply of that are difficult to find may be problematic at times. Would HESAA consider 3 days as a target but allow for additional time should it be required of select positions?
HESAA will accept resumes after three days, but reserves the right to also request resumes from the secondary and/or tertiary contractor after three days.

69. What is the timeframe for HESAA to provide feedback on submitted candidates?
The timeframe for HESAA to provide feedback on submitted candidates varies. If a bidder requires a specific timeframe for feedback that should be included in their proposal.