

Review of ITB 17000656- Motivational Interviewing in a Correctional Setting

Overview

For the Motivational Interviewing ITB published by the Idaho Division of Purchasing for the Idaho Dept. Of Correction, 2 bidders were reviewed, The Institute for Individual and Organizational Change (IFIOC) of Spokane, WA and the Center for Strength-Based Strategies (CSBS) of Denver, CO. In the ITB Section 5, 12 mandatory items were defined for the bidders for which they were to meet or exceed the specification. Those items are listed below in the following table. If the Bidder met the specification, a passing score is indicated with the initials “JP”. A red JP indicates it appears that they would pass; however, more clarification would be needed to confirm. A blank box indicates that the Bidder failed to meet the specification.

In the case of ITB 17000656, the low bidder, IFIOC, failed to meet the specification in Section 5.7 for Web-based courses and requires clarification on the Bid Table for three other items regarding Unit Price/Session. In the end, the low bidder did not meet all of the mandatory specifications set by IDOC and is therefore deemed non-responsive to the bid. The other bidder, CSBS, did meet all specifications defined in the ITB and should therefore be deemed the lowest responsive bidder.

Section	CSBS	IFIOC	Comments/Concerns/Clarification
5.1 MINT certified	JP	JP	
5.2 Correction Experience (>1yr)	JP	JP	
5.3 Curriculum for Trainings	JP	JP	Further detail needed on training topics and objectives.
5.3.1 End User Training	JP	JP	Clarification needed on Bid Schedule.
5.3.2 In Person Trainer Development	JP	JP	
5.3.3 In Person T4T	JP	JP	Clarification needed on Bid Schedule.
5.3.4 In Person Mgr and Supervisor Training	JP	JP	
5.4 Web Consultation	JP	JP	
5.5 In-Person Consultation	JP	JP	
5.6 Tape Coding Services	JP	JP	
5.7 Web-based Courses	JP		No courses are detailed by IFIOC, didn't meet the specification.
5.8 Correctional-setting Specific	JP	JP	

Table 1 Review of Section 5 Specifications

Reasoning

IDOC has several areas of concern with IFIOC's proposal. Of the concerns, one item is deemed non-responsive because the bidder changes the specification. Other areas identified would require further clarification by the bidder had they been deemed responsive. Those items are detailed below.

IFIOC proposes the use of an alternate form of web-based training to use pods for collaborative learning that has no defined topics or objectives. Whereas the process is discussed, there are no proposed courses or description for training as required in the bid. Section 5.7 states, "**Bidder must provide detail on web-based training they will offer for end-user ongoing education. This detail shall include a list of web-based courses with a brief description of each course.**" Within their response, IFIOC states, "*Instead of online courses, IFIOC has developed learning collaboratives where the focus is on application of knowledge versus static gathering of knowledge.*" This is not what IDOC is seeking and is deemed a changing of the specification by the Bidder. Furthermore, by changing the specification away from the course-based system, it caused a dramatic variation in the bids on that one item in the Bid Schedule. In the end, accepting this change would not be fair to the responsive bidder who adhered to the specifications.

The lack of detail persists throughout the bid proposed by IFIOC that would at a minimum beg for more information and clarity before IDOC would feel comfortable in accepting the bid. Section 5.3 broadly states, "Bidder must provide details for each in-person training curriculum." IDOC needs to see a Bidder's proposed courses and their objectives in order to feel comfortable contracting for a three year period.

Finally, within the Bid Schedule, IFIOC did not tabulate their Bid as called out in the Bid Schedule. In subsections 5.3.1 and 5.3.3, the Bidder did not correctly fill out their Bid Price Column. For example, Section 5.3.1 as referenced in Bid Schedule by IFIOC is proposed as follows:

1-End User Training Session x \$3,150/session = \$12,600.00

The math just doesn't work. From the text of the IFIOC proposal, they propose a 4 day session, which mathematically adds up to a \$3,150 daily rate, but that's not what the bid schedule asked for. For consistency with all bids, the bidders Bid Price should match the cost for a session. The same error in calculation occurs again in subsection 5.3.3.

Conclusion

IDOC recommends that IFIOC is found non-responsive and award the Bid to the lowest responsive bidder, CSBS.

When comparing only the estimated annual cost of both bidders, CSBS was higher than IFIOC; however, IFIOC created a cost advantage by changing the specification in Section 5.7 to not provide module-based training as detailed in the specification. The difference in the cost of providing the course-based training modules was by far the largest variance between to the two bids. In all, the difference of the one item was \$22,500.00, in excess of 25% of the entire bid. The difference was too great to go unnoticed and upon review of our Subject Matter Expert, this was too great a leap for IDOC.