QUESTION & ANSWERS SUMMARY

RFP# COG-2117 for Cybersecurity Products & Services

Question 1

1) How can we accept the changes on the Section 2 Word Doc? Right now, all the changes we make are being tracked to the right of the document. We would like to submit a PDF response, and all of the tracking notes would be included

2) Following a master agreement being established, what is the sells process with an equalis member? Do they contact you? Do they contact us? Do we work directly with them?

3) How many members do you have in Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana?

4) How will your sales and marketing support us working with your members? Webinars? Joint marketing efforts? Solution Campaigns?

5) Did this RFP come out of multiple members looking to invest in Cybersecurity solutions? If so, will they likely take next steps following this RFP being awarded to a supplier.

6) If we use Resellers, can they work alongside us following our master agreement being established?

7) Our pricing is based on FTE's at a giving organization. Depending on the size of the organization, our pricing is adjusted. How should we provide that pricing in the cost proposal?

Answer 1

Answer to Q1: We uploaded a new Section 2 Word Doc with the "Track Changes" featured turned off.

Answer to Q2: The Master Agreement can help facilitate the sale of products and services outside a formal procurement process like an RFP or Bid. The Master Agreement is not meant to change the sales process for a winning supplier. The winning supplier and Equalis Group member will work together. Equalis Group provides sales and compliance support, if required.

Answer to Q3: Membership is counted at the agency or school district level and not the department or school level. Ohio = 959, Michigan = 51, Indiana = 15.

Answer to Q4: The roles and responsibilities of Equalis Group in supporting or marketing the Master Agreement can be found in Section 1, Part A, Subsection 3 - Role of Equalis Group and in Appendix B of Attachment A - Sample Administration Agreement.

Answer to Q5: Equalis Group seeks to create a Cybersecurity Products & Services as a benefit to all current and future members. This is an indefinite quantity, indefinite demand contract with no committed business opportunities.

Answer to Q6: Please reference Section 2.1 - Personnel & Equipment in Section 3 - General Terms and Conditions of the Master Agreement.

Answer to Q7: It is the responsibilities of each Bidder to determine the best way to communicate their pricing methodology while taking into consideration the information provided in Section 1, Part C, Subsection 5 - Cost Proposal & Pricing.

Question 2

1.   What is the average amount of daily or monthly data? 2.   Is there currently an incumbent company or previous incumbent, who completed similar contract performing these services? If so - are they eligible to bid on this project and can you please provide incumbent contract number, dollar value and period of performance? 3.   Specify the VLAN details how many is included in the Scope?   4. Approximately how many computer endpoints do you have (desktop PCs, laptops, servers)?   5.   Can you tell the total number of endpoints you want protected?   6.   What's your headcount of users (employees + contractors+interns)? What number/percentage of your workforce resides within organizational facilities? What number/percentage works remotely? 7.   How much (%) of the infrastructure is in cloud? 8. What is the size of the IT environment? 9.   How many physical locations? 10.   What is the aggregate Internet Capacity per location (<300mbps, <1gbps, <4gbps, up to 10gbps)? 11.   Do you manage your own data Center, or do you utilize any 3rd-party/colocation facilities? 12.   What security tools are already in place? I.E., firewalls, endpoint protection, vulnerability management, email, identity access management, networking (routers, switches, access points), user behavior analytics, network threat analytics, security orchestration automation, response (SOAR), etc.   13.   How is the network architected? I.E. How many sites will be in scope, all coming back or decentralized (stand-alone sites, mesh network, hub and spoke, SD WAN)? 14.   What percentage of your servers are virtual versus physical? 15.   How many Internet connections exist, and what is the speed of each connection? (This is to help us understand the monitoring of all incoming and outgoing Internet activity. For example, an organization may have 2 main offices, each office connecting with 1Gbps links.) 16.   Physical network information. 17.   Please identify each physical location with direct ingress or egress to the internet: 18.   Are any of these locations tunneling data through another data center? If so, please list. 19. For each location, please provide sustained and peak traffic rates (i.e. 500 Mbps). This can often be obtained through a firewall or edge switch. 20.   Do your switches support port mirroring (SPAN)? 21.   Switch manufacturer and model: 22.   Switch utilization (will it drop packets?): 23.   Current and projected number of users: 24.   How many network users (at a workstation most of the day)? 25.   How many users are not on the network most of the day, but authenticate with a domain controller (such as remote workers, maintenance staff, etc)? 26.   Do you have any outward facing web applications for which authentication monitoring is in scope? If so, how many users? 27.   Do you have Office 365? 28.   How many assets and endpoints for the project? 29.   Does the daily recap have to be live interactions with the proposed vendor each day? Or can this be issued reports on activity? 30.   What are the federal, state, and local specific regulations that need to be adhered to? 31.Is it a mandatory requirement to have all three types of notifications for notifications? 32.   What does you use for cloud DNS currently? 33.   Is there a Remote Monitoring and Management (RMM) application used now and if so which one is it? 34.   Is there an Endpoint Detect & Response (EDR) application used now and if so which one is it? 35.   Do you have threat analysts, threat hunters that will need access to the SIEM or do you want this as an added service from the SOC? 36.   Do you have IOT and IIOT networked devices that need to be monitored? If so how many and what type in general? 37.   Have you segregated your network with authorizations, permissions and use that is administered and monitored within a Zero Trust Architecture and if so which tools do you use to manage this? If you do not have this is this desired to be an option as part of the services

offered?   38.   Do you have threat intelligence feeds from any ISAC, FBI, DHS, CISA or others? If yes how are these responded to and acted upon? If not do you want access to th

Answer 2

We cannot answer any of these questions as they are all very specific to the needs and requirements of the purchasing member. Please review Section One, Part A of the RFP documents to better understand the intent and purpose of this RFP.

Question 3

Section 2: 1.3.6 Certifications and Licenses. What certifications and licenses are you looking for? ISO or something else?

Answer 3

As stated in Section 2: 1.3.6 Certifications and Licenses, we are asking Bidder provide licenses and certification that are required to be held by your organization to provide the types of products and services in your proposal to public agencies. It is the responsibility of each Bidder to determine who best to respond to the questions in Proposal Form 1: Technical Proposal.

Question 4

Section 2: 3.3.2 Customer Set Up. Is this process similar to NASPO's participating Addendum? if not, can you explain?

Answer 4

We cannot comment on NASPO's process. As disclosed in Section 1, Part A, Subsection 1 - Overview: Under applicable state statutes, public sector entities nationwide that join Equalis Group can purchase products and services through the resulting Master Agreement without having to conduct their own formal procurement process, thereby saving both themselves and the awarded suppliers (a "Winning Supplier" or "Supplier Partner") significant time and money.

Question 5

Section 2: 3.3.5 Payment. The question is about payment terms. Can you elaborate if there is a payment term you are expecting?

Answer 5

It is the responsibility of each Bidder to determine who best to respond to the questions in Proposal Form 1: Technical Proposal.

Question 6

Section 5: 5.1.1 Key Contacts. Will LinkedIn profiles likes work in lieu of full resumes?
Answer 6
It is the responsibility of each Bidder to determine who best to respond to the questions in Proposal Form 1: Technical Proposal.

Question 7
Section 2: Proposal Form 14: Federal Funds Certification Forms #11: Profit as a Separate Element of Price. Can you confirm we must accept orders where this applies?
Answer 7
CCOG has no authority over the awarded suppliers to require they accept the terms and conditions of purchase from any public agency. If a Bidder fails to complete any item within Proposal form 14, CCOG will consider the respondent's response to be that they are unable or unwilling to comply. A negative response to any of the items may, if applicable, impact the ability of a participating agency to purchase from the Supplier Partner using federal funds.

Question 8
Section 2: Proposal Form 14: Federal Funds Certification Forms #13: Domestic preferences for procurements. What are you look at for proof? Will a statement suffice?
Answer 8
We are not requesting proof. As communicated in the opening two paragraphs of Proposal Form 14, we are asking if a Bidder would comply with the applicable contract terms should a participating agency use federal funds to purchase products or services from the Bidder should they successfully receive a contract award from CCOG through this RFP process.

Question 9
Section 2: Proposal Form 19: C.271 Political Contribution Disclosure Form. Who needs to complete this? Contractor, reseller, public agency?
Answer 9
This is a document that may be requested to be completed by a Winning Supplier in the event that Winning Supplier is working with a public agency in New Jersey. It is the NJ public agency's responsibility to request the information.

Question 10

Q1.) Managed Cybersecurity Pricing Models are often an aggregated bundled solution; "commoditizing" the security technology tools, awareness training and policy consultation is typically resisted as a Defense in Depth approach is dictated by all the leading cybersecurity frameworks (namely the CIS and NIST) from which our solution was developed. That said, line item commoditization can be made available to CCOG members. Is there any general guidance Equalis/CCOG can provide as to both approaches?

Q2.) Can you provide a brief demographic overview of the CCOG membership of 4,000? Eg Number of municipalities, libraries, higher-ed and K-12? State specific presence of membership?

Answer 10

Answer to Q1: It is the responsibility of each Bidder to determine the best approach to provide pricing while taking into consideration the information provided in the RFP documents and specifically in Section 1, Part C, Subsection 5 - Cost Proposal & Pricing.

Answer to Q2: See the attached file which will provides a breakdown of membership count by membership type. The data in the attached file presents membership at the agency level (i,e, there is one membership for an entire school district rather than for each individual school). The top 5 states for membership in order of magnitude are Ohio, Texas, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and California.

Question 11

We are a VAR/reseller, so we can and have the capability to resell any and all security tools. For products that we resell. Do you want a list of ALL products that we are able to resell? (e.g. Office 365, Qualys, Thycotic, etc…)

Answer 11

It is the responsibility of each Bidder to determine how best to communicate and price the full scope of the products and services included in their proposal.

Question 12

We have strategic partnerships that provide us preferential pricing that can not be publicly disclosed. To that end, how would one like us to share list pricing?

Answer 12

It is the responsibility of each Bidder to determine how best to provide pricing while taking into consideration the information outlined in Section 1, Part 3, Subsection 5 - Cost Proposal & Pricing. The pricing submitted should accurately reflect the pricing offered to our Members which should not require any Bidder to disclose nonpublic pricing between a Bidder and one of their Vendors.

Question 13

As part of the our partnerships, we are able to offer implementation services, however, the services are contingent on solutions and the scale of the implementation. To that end, how would one like us to factor in the costs and benchmark the costs based on no set common organizational sized parameters?

Answer 13

It is the responsibility of each Bidder to determine how best to provide pricing while taking into consideration the information outlined in Section 1, Part 3, Subsection 5 - Cost Proposal & Pricing. The pricing submitted should accurately reflect the pricing offered to our Members which should not require any Bidder to disclose nonpublic pricing between a Bidder and one of their Vendors.

Question 14

We offer a number of professional services, however, we do not see any place to list professional services.   Where does one want us to list our hourly rate? How does one want us to scope professional services given that professional services are customized and tailored to each organization uniquely and is very hard if not nearly impossible to commoditized?

Answer 14

A Bidder is permitted to edit excel template provided in Attachment B - Cost Proposal so that it accurately reflects and accommodates how their products and services are priced.   It is the responsibility of each Bidder to determine how best to provide pricing while taking into consideration the information outlined in Section 1, Part 3, Subsection 5 - Cost Proposal & Pricing.

Question 15

How many public sector organizations are part of the cooperative outside of the three public entities you listed?

Answer 15

Equalis Group has 4,000 members across all 50 states. Membership is counted at the agency or school district level and not the department or school level.

Question 16

Is the "Admin Fee" 2% of gross or net, please?

Answer 16

Winning Supplier shall remit to Equalis an administrative fee payment (the "Administrative Fee") of written number percent (number%) of the total Winning Supplier revenue (the "Equalis Group Spend" or "Spend") invoiced to Program Participants during the prior calendar month. "Spend" shall mean the cumulative purchases of Products & Services by Program Participants under the Master Agreement net of taxes, shipping costs, returns, and credits.

Question 17
How many suppliers are you willing to award to comprehensively cover compliance to the NIST Framework?
Answer 17
There is no predetermined number of contracts committed to be awarded through this RFP process. It is the sole discretion of CCOG to determine number of contract awards issued as a result of this RFP process.

Question 18
A lot of the forms in Section 2 seem New Jersey specific. Do these only apply if we are performing work for a New Jersey public entity?
Answer 18
Yes.

Question 19
Are we subject to Federal Acquisition Rules? Or DFARS?
Answer 19
Public agencies using federal funds to purchasing products and services from the Winning Supplier are subject to the Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, commonly called "Uniform Guidance".

Question 20
If we have an innovative product we won't have 5 client references. Is it still OK to respond despite that?
Answer 20
It is the responsibility of each bidder to determine how best to answer the questions in Section 2: Proposal Submittal Documents.

Question 21
Can video demos be submitted?
Answer 21
Yes.

Question 22
Confirm PDF files are acceptable for ALL except Cost.
Answer 22
Confirmed.

Question 23
We have had issues with member organizations not being aware of cooperative contracts or be willing to use them. Can you provide examples of success stories addressing this issue?
Answer 23
It is common for public agencies to not be aware of a cooperative contract or that they are already a member of a cooperative and have access to their portfolio of contracts. The Equalis Group Member Engagement team will gladly educate any current or prospective members on the subject of cooperative purchasing benefits, confirm their membership status, and answer any questions they may have about Equalis Group and cooperative purchasing.