

New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH)
Request for Proposal
Project Willow Animal Assisted Support – Employee Wellness Program
CDC OT21-2103 Health Disparities Grant

1.0 INFORMATION FOR BIDDERS

Proposals Due: Friday, March 3, 2023, by 4 PM EST

Question & Answer Period: Tuesday, January 24, 2023, by 4 PM EST

All Bidders must submit Quotes to centralprocurement@doh.nj.gov

Initiative Term: TBD – Approximately six (6) months to commence upon approval from Using Agency Contract Manager (SCM) or designee. This timeline may be subject to change.

If you are not interested in bidding, please send an email indicating that you will not bid.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) seeks to award up to 4 canine support vendors to manage an Animal Support initiative. This initiative is an employee wellness program dedicated to fostering a positive, supportive, and comfortable work environment for current employees through the implementation of certified therapy dog visits at 12 designated NJDOH sites (North, Central, and South regions).

New Jersey’s residents have experienced unprecedented levels of stress, anxiety, and exhaustion throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically in the public health workforce. This initiative seeks to address the needs of the New Jersey Department of Health workforce with the known and ever-growing benefits of animal-assisted support.

Therapy dog intervention has been shown to improve psychological, physical, and emotional well-being while increasing employee productivity, engagement, and passion, (Wilkin, 2016). Studies have also found that the presence of an active therapy dog program improves employee-supervisor and coworker relationships and increases employee retention (Habri, 2022). With this evidence in mind, we propose that such a program be instated at the New Jersey Department of Health with goals as outlined below.

The goal of this initiative is to accomplish the following:

1. Foster a positive workplace environment by providing a safe and comforting space.
2. Promote productivity and engagement by decreasing stress.
3. Increase morale and motivation.
4. Improve employee performance, job satisfaction and retention.
5. Promote awareness of existing employee assistance services by providing resources during therapy dog visits (to be provided by PMO for employee distribution during engagements).

3.0 SCOPE OF WORK

The Potential vendor {contractor} plan for completing the following tasks and responsibilities outlined below from the contract award sign date through the project end date. The proposal must describe Vendor's organizational capacity to achieve the project objectives.

3.1 Vendor Responsibilities

The vendor {contractor} must deploy certified and insured handlers and therapy dogs to designated NJDOH sites. The following activities are required:

1. Provide group pet support sessions for NJDOH staff.
2. Develop and share the organization's visiting guidelines and plan for NJDOH review prior to the start of site visits.
3. Develop program materials (educational/promotional) for distribution to staff prior to the beginning of site visits.
 - a. This may include the differences between Therapy Dog vs. Service Dog (ADA) vs. Emotional Support Dog (AACA).
4. Provide documentation for all staff/volunteers/pets to ensure all involved have required training and certifications including any wellness records.
5. Coordinate efforts and create and manage site schedules within the designated service area. Ensure the organization's Project Manager or similar supervisory staff is in place to manage field teams and assignments.
6. Identify roles and responsibilities of the applicant's team such as the leadership of the project; monitoring of the project's ongoing progress; preparation of reports; program evaluation; and communication with partners and NJDOH.
7. Maintain regular communication with NJDOH PMO after signing of the contract to communicate site schedules and updates.
8. Visit facilities prior to the start of visits to ensure adequate space, identify needs, and ensure a safe space for the canines.
9. Distribute a satisfaction survey for employees to complete following visits with the Support Pets. Share survey results with NJDOH PMO.

3.2 Establish Consistent Site Visits: provide group pet support sessions at DOH sites determined by Program Lead and the NJDOH PMO.

3.3 New Jersey Regions: Organizational reach ideally separated by regional proximity (Northern, Central and Southern parts of the state). Due to heavy concentration of NJDOH sites in the central region, more than one organization may service that region, based upon organizational capacity.

3.4 Training

The vendor {contractor} must ensure all pets/staff/volunteers complete required training as designated by the governing licensing body on best practices.

3.5 Supplies, Equipment, and Staff

The vendor {contractor} must supply all necessary supplies, equipment, staff, volunteers, and therapy dogs deemed essential for this program.

3.6 Performance Management and Reporting

The vendor {contractor} must provide NJDOH key performance indicators to enable monitoring of progress. Required metrics include:

- Number of NJDOH sites visited within region and dates of each visit
- Average engagement time at each visit
- Number of individuals reached during engagements
- Number of dogs and staff present and working at each visit

Vendor {contractor} must participate in regular stand-up calls to review metrics and share insights on overall program performance.

Vendor {contractor} must report issues as they arise with NJDOH PMO to ensure rapid resolution and to avoid a disruption or delay in services.

3.7 Proposed Structure

Staff Type	Number of Organization's Members
Project Manager	1
Fiscal Lead	1 (may be same as Project Manager)
Handlers	1-5
Total	+/- 7

Proof of Eligibility

NJ Charities Registration- If your organization is registered with the NJ Charities Registration then a “Letter of Compliance” from the Division of Consumer Affairs must be obtained. All registered charities must renew their registration yearly. For more information contact and forms can be found at

www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/charity/charfrm.htm.

4.0 Experience:

Vendor {Contractor} shall provide relevant experience on projects of similar size and scope successfully completed as evidence of vendor {contractor} ability to complete work similar to those required by this RFP. Vendor {Contractor} shall submit the resumes and licenses of staff that will participate in the Animal Support Initiative.

5.0 Pricing:

Vendor {Contractor} shall submit all-inclusive pricing to provide the requested deliverables.

Pricing shall be firm fixed pricing. Firm Fixed Price means a price that is all-inclusive of direct cost and indirect costs, including, but not limited to, direct labor costs, overhead, fee or profit, clerical support, equipment, materials, supplies, managerial (administrative) support, all documents, reports, forms, travel, reproduction, and any other costs.

The Vendor {Contractor} must demonstrate how it proposes to utilize the funds (proposed amount) as it carries out each objective; including a timeline of funding used based on the submitted work plan. **The proposed amount must align with the Statement of Work and include in the proposal.**

6.0 Technical Proposal Requirements:

Vendor {Contractor} shall submit a Technical Proposal, which describes its approach and plans for accomplishing the work outlined in the Scope of Work section, Deliverables, Experience, and Pricing, i.e., Sections 1 - 3. The Vendor {Contractor} must set forth its understanding of the requirements of this RFP and its approach to successfully complete the contract. The Bidder should include the level of detail it determines necessary to assist the evaluation committee in its review of the Bidder's Proposal. **All required forms must be completed and returned as part of the required proposal.**

7.0 Evaluation:

Personnel: The qualifications and experience of the vendor's (contractor's) management, fiscal lead, project manager, and handlers that will be assigned to the contract, including the candidates recommended for each of the positions/roles required.

Experience of firm: The Contractor {Vendor} must provide documentation of current projects/ successfully completing contracts of a similar size and scope in relation to the work required by this RFP.

Ability of firm to complete the Scope of Work based on its Technical Proposal: The overall ability of the bidder to undertake and successfully complete the technical requirements of the contract in a timely manner.

The intent of this RFP is to award a contract to that responsible Bidder whose Proposal, conforming to this RFP is most advantageous to the State, price and other factors considered. The evaluation criteria categories may be used to develop more detailed evaluation criteria to be used in the evaluation process.

8.0 Required forms:

8.1 FORMS, REGISTRATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS REQUIRED WITH PROPOSAL

All required forms are found at the following link:
<https://www.state.nj.us/treasury/purchase/forms.shtml>

All bid submissions must include completed mandatory compliance forms, which include:

- Ownership Disclosure
- Disclosure of Investigations and Other Actions Involving Contractor
- Disclosure of Investment Activities in Iran
- Chapter 51 Compliance, where applicable
- Chapter 271 form, where applicable
- MacBride Principles
- Source Disclosure
- Business Registration Certificate
- Affirmative Action Compliance
- Certification of Non-Involvement in Prohibited Activities in Russia or Belarus
- Evidence of Insurance
- State of New Jersey Standard Terms and Conditions
- Waivered Contracts Supplement to the State of New Jersey Standard Terms and Conditions

Contractors are under a continuing obligation to report updates to the information contained in its required forms.

Unless otherwise specified, forms must contain an original, physical signature, or electronic signature. Winning Bidder(s) must register with NJSTART as a Contractor for the State of NJ.

www.njstart.gov

8.2 MACBRIDE PRINCIPLES CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:34-12.2, a Bidder is required to certify that it either has no ongoing business activities in Northern Ireland and does not maintain a physical presence therein or that it will take lawful steps in good faith to conduct any business operations it has in Northern Ireland in accordance with the MacBride principles of nondiscrimination in employment as set forth in N.J.S.A. 52:18A-89.5 and in conformance with the United Kingdom's Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act of 1989, and permit independent monitoring of their compliance with those principles.

8.3 OWNERSHIP DISCLOSURE FORM

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:25-24.2, in the event the Bidder is a corporation, partnership, or limited liability company, the Bidder must disclose all 10% or greater owners by (a) completing and submitting the Ownership Disclosure Form with the Proposal; (b) if the Bidder has submitted a signed and accurate Ownership Disclosure Form dated and received no more than six (6) months prior to the Proposal submission deadline for this procurement, the State may rely upon that form; however, if there has been a change in ownership within the last six (6) months, a new Ownership Disclosure Form must be completed, signed and submitted with the Proposal; or, (c) a Bidder with any direct or indirect parent entity which is publicly traded may submit the name and address of each publicly traded entity and the name and address of each person that holds a 10 percent or greater beneficial interest in the publicly traded entity as of the last annual filing with the federal Securities and Exchange Commission or the foreign equivalent, and, if there is any person that holds a 10 percent or greater beneficial interest, also shall submit links to the websites containing the last annual filings with the federal Securities and Exchange Commission or the foreign equivalent and the relevant page numbers of the filings that contain the information on each person that holds a 10 percent or greater beneficial interest. N.J.S.A. 52:25-24.2.

8.4 DISCLOSURE OF INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES IN IRAN

The Bidder should submit Disclosure of Investment Activities in Iran form to certify that, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:32-58, neither the Bidder, nor one (1) of its parents, subsidiaries, and/or affiliates (as defined in N.J.S.A. 52:32-56(e)(3)), is listed on the Department of the Treasury's List of Persons or Entities Engaging in Prohibited Investment Activities in Iran and that neither the Bidder, nor one (1) of its parents, subsidiaries, and/or affiliates, is involved in any of the investment activities set forth in N.J.S.A. 52:32-56(f). If the Bidder is unable to so certify, the Bidder shall provide a detailed and precise description of such activities as directed on the form. If a Bidder does not submit the form with the Quote, the Bidder must comply within seven (7) business days of the State's request or the State may deem the Quote non-responsive.

8.5 BUSINESS REGISTRATION

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 52:32-44(b), a Bidder and its named Subcontractors must have a valid Business Registration Certificate ("BRC") issued by the Department of the Treasury, Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services prior to the award of a contract. To facilitate the Proposal evaluation and contract award process, the Bidder should submit a copy of its valid BRC and those of any named Subcontractors with its Proposal. See Section 2.1 of the State Standard Terms and Conditions.

Any Bidder, inclusive of any named Subcontractors, not having a valid business registration at the time of the Proposal opening, or whose BRC was revoked prior to the submission of the Proposal, should proceed immediately to register its business or seek reinstatement of a revoked BRC.

The Bidder is cautioned that it may require a significant amount of time to secure the reinstatement of a revoked BRC. The process can require actions by both the Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services and the Division of Taxation. For this reason, a Bidder's early attention to this requirement is highly recommended. The Bidder and its named Subcontractors may register with the Division of Revenue and

Enterprise Services, obtain a copy of an existing BRC or obtain information necessary to seek reinstatement of a revoked BRC online at https://www1.state.nj.us/TYTR_BRC/jsp/BRCLoginJsp.jsp.

A Bidder otherwise identified by the DOH as a responsive and responsible Bidder, inclusive of any named Subcontractors, but that was not business registered at the time of submission of its Proposal must be so registered and in possession of a valid BRC by a deadline to be specified in writing by the DOH. A Bidder failing to comply with this requirement by the deadline specified by the Division will be deemed ineligible for contract award. Under any circumstance, the Division will rely upon information available from computerized systems maintained by the State as a basis to verify independently compliance with the requirement for business registration.

8.6 DISCLOSURE OF INVESTIGATIONS AND OTHER ACTIONS INVOLVING BIDDER FORM

The Bidder should submit the Disclosure of Investigations and Other Actions Involving Bidder Form, with its Proposal, to provide a detailed description of any investigation, litigation, including administrative complaints or other administrative proceedings, involving any public sector clients during the past five (5) years, including the nature and status of the investigation, and, for any litigation, the caption of the action, a brief description of the action, the date of inception, current status, and, if applicable, disposition. If a Bidder does not submit the form with the Proposal, the Bidder must comply within seven (7) business days of the State's request, or the State may deem the Proposal non-responsive.

8.7 SOURCE DISCLOSURE

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:34-13.2, prior to an award of a contract, the Bidder is required to submit a completed Source Disclosure Form. The Bidder's inclusion of the completed Source Disclosure Form with the Proposal is requested and advised.

8.8 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The intended Contractor must submit a copy of a New Jersey Certificate of Employee Information Report, or a copy of Federal Letter of Approval verifying it is operating under a federally approved or sanctioned Affirmative Action program. Awarded Contractors not in possession of either a New Jersey Certificate of Employee Information Report or a Federal Letter of Approval must complete the Affirmative Action Employee Information Report (AA-302) located on the web at <https://www.state.nj.us/treasury/purchase/forms.shtml>.

Bidders should verify its Affirmative Action Compliance status on the "Maintain Terms and Categories" Tab within its profile in NJSTART. In the event of an issue with a Contractor's Affirmative Action Compliance status, NJSTART provides a link to take corrective action.

8.9 INSURANCE CERTIFICATES

The Contractor shall provide the State with current certificates of insurance for all coverages required by the terms of this contract naming the State as an Additional Insured. See Section 4.2 of the State Standard Terms and Conditions accompanying this Request for Proposal. The Bidder should verify its Insurance Certification Compliance status on the “Maintain Terms and Categories” Tab within its profile in NJSTART.

8.10 Certification of Non-Involvement in Prohibited Activities in Russia or Belarus

On March 9, 2022, Governor Murphy signed P.L.2022, c.3, which prohibits certain government dealings with businesses engaged in prohibited activities in Russia or Belarus. The new law requires the Department of the Treasury to develop a list of persons and entities that engage in prohibited activities in Russia or Belarus and an accompanying form for use statewide.

Prior to entering into, renewing, amending, or extending a contract, the intended Contractor must certify that they are not engaged in prohibited activities in Russia or Belarus using the provided Certification Of Non-Involvement In Prohibited Activities In Russia Or Belarus Pursuant To P.L.2022, c.3.

References

- Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI). (2022). *Workplace wellness: Mental health*. <https://habri.org/research/mental-health/workplace-wellness/>
- Stone, K.W., Kintziger, K.W., Jagger, M.A., & Horney, J.A. (2021). Public health workforce burnout in the COVID-19 response in the U.S. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(8). <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18084369>
- Wilkin, C. L., Fairlie, P., & Ezzedeen, S. R. (2016). Who let the dogs in? A look at pet-friendly workplaces. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 9(1), 96–109. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJWHM-04-2015-0021>