

**Professional Nursing Services PVL**  
**Amendment #1: Questions and Answers**  
 INVITATION FOR BIDS No. 2022-04  
 RFx: 3160005563

The following responses to Questions and Requests for Clarification amend the IFB as stated below:

	Question	Response
1	Please correct me if I'm wrong, but this is the bid that would update our rates and terms as discussed on last month's zoom meetings, correct?	Yes. OPSCR held informal meetings with current PVL vendors and State Agencies who require nursing services for information needed in the development of the IFB.
2	Is this for the home health care?	This IFB is to create a list of preapproved vendors available for State Agencies on an as-needed basis at fixed unit pricing. To the extent a State Agency requires home health care services that meet the scope of requirements of the IFB, the State Agency would be free to contract for such services.
3	Is this with the VA?	This IFB is to create a list of preapproved vendors available for State Agencies on an as-needed basis at fixed unit pricing. Mississippi Veterans Affairs is one of many agencies allowed and encouraged to use the Preapproved Vendor Lists.
4	Can we review the historical pricing?	Current vendors and rates are available at: <a href="https://www.dfa.ms.gov/preapproved-vendor-information">https://www.dfa.ms.gov/preapproved-vendor-information</a>
5	Please provide a list of incumbent suppliers and their bill rates.	See the response to Question #4.
6	What is the estimated annual spend of this contract?	This IFB is to create a list of preapproved vendors available for State Agencies on an as-needed basis at fixed unit pricing. It is not for a single contract. See the response to Question #4 for a list of current vendors. You can review the spending on those vendors' contracts at: <a href="https://www.transparency.ms.gov/">https://www.transparency.ms.gov/</a>

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		Click “CONTRACTS” on the menu bar and then “State of Mississippi Contracts” for a searchable database of State contracts.
7	On the rate sheet, can we provide ranges or do we need a specific rate?	A specific rate is required for each category of service.
8	Is orientation billable?	Orientation as discussed in Section 2.2.7. of the IFB is not billable. Orientation as discussed in Section 2.2.8. is billable. The Contracting Agency must affirmatively request an Orientation as described in Section 2.2.8. for the Orientation to be billable.
9	How long have the incumbent suppliers held this contract?	The current PVL has been effective since July 23, 2020. See the website linked in response to Question #4 for additional information.
10	What is the current amount of contractor usage over the past year? Entire contract period?	This information may be available on the Transparency Mississippi website, as described in the response to Question #6.
11	What was the dollar amount spent on Professional Nursing Services, broken down by state agency over the past year?	Additional information which is responsive to this question may be available on the Transparency Mississippi website, as described in the response to Question #6.
12	Which state agency programs utilize Professional Nursing Services the most?	Additional information which is responsive to this question may be available on the Transparency Mississippi website, as described in the response to Question #6.

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13	What technology is used currently to manage this program internally?	The technology used will vary depending on the State Agency with whom a vendor is contracted.
14	What is the expectation and frequency for on-call needs?	The on-call needs will vary depending on the State Agency with whom a vendor is contracted. The vendor must maintain a sufficient pool of qualified staff large enough to meet the Agency's needs within two hours. (See Section 2.3.1. of the IFB.)
15	What is expectation and frequency for replacing a candidate that is ill/calls off?	The vendor must maintain a sufficient pool of qualified staff large enough to meet the Agency's needs within two hours. (See Section 2.3.1. of the IFB.)
16	What is the average length of assignment (12 months, 3 months, per diem)?	The length of the assignment will vary depending on the State Agency with whom a vendor is contracted.
17	What is the current requisition process in place?	The requisition process will vary depending on the State Agency with whom a vendor is contracted. A State Agency will only be able to request nursing staff from vendors with whom it is contracted.
18	Can you provide details as to projected volume and headcount for each discipline included in the scope of work?	This IFB is to create a list of preapproved vendors available for State Agencies on an as-needed basis at fixed unit pricing. The volume and headcount will vary depending on the State Agency with whom a vendor is contracted.
19	How does a department/unit determine what company(s) to use after these contracts are awarded?	Agencies are encouraged, but not required, to contact the lowest bidder first. See Section 2.6.3. of the IFB and Section 3-208.01 of PPRB OPSCR Rules and Regulations.

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20	Who is on the selection committee? What are their job titles?	Because this is an Invitation for Bids, there is no selection committee. OPSCR staff will evaluate the submitted bids to determine which bidders will be deemed responsive and responsible and then calculate which of those bidders will be placed on the PVL based on the pricing submitted. See Sections 4.1 and 4.2 of the IFB.
21	What is your current time to fill by discipline?	The time to fill by discipline will vary depending on the State Agency with whom a vendor is contracted. The vendor must maintain a sufficient pool of qualified staff large enough to meet the Agency's needs within two hours. (See Section 2.3.1. of the IFB.)
22	What is your current fill rate?	The fill rate will vary depending on the State Agency with whom a vendor is contracted.
23	What is your current EMR system/platform?	The electronic medical records system used will vary depending on the State Agency with whom a vendor is contracted.
24	Do you anticipate your current staffing volume to change in the next year or next 2 years? For example, do you have any significant projects coming up (EMR conversion, new facilities, etc.)?	This IFB is to create a list of preapproved vendors available for State Agencies on an as-needed basis at fixed unit pricing. Staffing volume will depend on the needs of the individual State Agencies with whom the vendor is contracted.
25	What is the estimated budget for this project?	The budget will vary depending on the State Agency with whom a vendor is contracted.

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26	What are the historical annual spending volumes in the project?	This information may be available on the Transparency Mississippi website, as described in the response to Question #6.
27	Is there an incumbent and current contract for this service? If so, can you please provide the vendor's name and current contract rate?	See the response to Question #4.
28	How many positions are currently open?	This will vary depending on the State Agency with whom a vendor is contracted.
29	Is it mandatory to bid on all positions?	No. See Section 2.4.3. of the IFB.
30	How many vendors does OPSCR expect to award a contract?	There is no limit to the number of vendors who are eligible to be awarded. See Section 4.2.3. of the IFB regarding how OPSCR will determine who is placed on the PVL.
31	Please clarify how needs for contractors will be distributed to vendors post-award?	See the response to Question #19.
32	How will vendors be scored against the evaluation criteria?	See the response to Question #20.
33	Please explain how points are allocated for pricing? (i.e. lowest bill rate receives maximum points, and next lowest vendor receives a prorated amount; lowest bill rate receives maximum points, and the next lowest vendor receives a predetermined amount of points)?	There are no "points" allocated for pricing. See Section 4.2.3. of the IFB for an explanation as to how OPSCR will evaluate bid pricing.

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34	Please provide name of all incumbent providers and their pricing for the services outlined in the RFP.	See the response to Question #4.
35	<p>Please can OPSCR provide the following information around usage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical usage by labor category</li> <li>• Contracted staff hours by year</li> <li>• Total spend by year</li> <li>• Current budget for this program</li> <li>• Anticipated volume of contract staff</li> <li>• Typical workday hours for each labor category</li> <li>• Average length of assignment</li> </ul>	Usage will vary depending on the State Agency with whom the vendor is contracted. Some of this information may be available on the Transparency Mississippi website, as described in the response to Question #6.
36	Why is OPSCR going out to bid at this time?	The current Preapproved Vendor List for nursing services expires on July 22, 2023.
37	Will OPSCR pay for travel between sites?	<p>Vendors should submit an all-inclusive hourly rate on each category of service in which it intends to submit a bid. Vendors will be paid for hours worked at the Contracting Agency only.</p> <p><b>**OPSCR will not make any payment to vendors placed on the PVL. Payments will be made by the individual State Agencies who contract with the vendor from the PVL.**</b></p>
38	Should vendor propose separate bill rates for travel and local assignments?	<p>Vendors should submit an all-inclusive hourly rate on each category of service in which it intends to submit a bid. Vendors will be paid for hours worked at the Contracting Agency only.</p> <p>Attachment C: Bid Form has a separate pricing category for travel nurse hourly rates.</p>

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39	Should the hourly rates be inclusive of mileage and lodging?	See responses to Questions #37 and #38.
40	How can the new vendor enhance customer satisfaction?	This IFB is to create a list of preapproved vendors available for State Agencies on an as-needed basis at fixed unit pricing. Specifics regarding customer satisfaction will vary depending on the State Agency with whom a vendor is contracted. Competitive rates, which can be honored throughout the contract term, availability of nursing staff, and quality of nursing staff would enhance customer satisfaction across all State Agencies.
41	May we submit exceptions to contract terms and conditions?	A bid response that includes terms and conditions that do not conform to the terms and conditions in the bid document is subject to rejection as non-responsive. See Section 4.2.2.2. of the IFB.
42	Are the services provided per this IFB be on a per diem or contractual basis?	Vendors will be compensated per hour worked by the professional nursing staff at the Contracting Agency.
43	Can you provide examples of an “unanticipated market disruption” (as stated in section 2.6.2.1) that would qualify for a price adjustment?	“Unanticipated market disruptions” include but are not limited to epidemics and labor strikes. The individual Contracting Agency will ultimately decide what will constitute an “unanticipated market disruption” qualifying for a price adjustment.
44	Is there a criteria or scoring method employed by OPSCR to determine what qualifies as an unanticipated market disruption?	No. The Contracting Agency has the sole discretion in what qualifies as an unanticipated market disruption.

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45	Would the Department consider allowing additional time (e.g., 8-24 hours) to provide a replacement for such contract worker(s) (as stated in Page 9 – 2.2.14 (Contract Deliverables))?	Please see amendment to IFB Section 2.2.14. below.
46	Would the department consider adjusting the language on Page 9 – 2.2.4 requesting “a contact person for communication 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year” to a more reasonable window of availability?	Please see amendment to IFB Section 2.2.4. below.
47	To the extent the Contractor’s insurance policies may provide equivalent or similar coverage through alternate terms – such as clauses as opposed to endorsements – would the State consider reasonable changes to the language set forth under the Insurance Requirements to align with reasonable industry standards?	The ultimate decision regarding whether the vendor has submitted documentation proving it has current policies providing the required coverage will be with the Legal Counsel for the individual Contracting Agencies. Alternate terms would be acceptable to the extent the Agency’s legal counsel agrees that the coverage legally meets the requirements in the IFB.
48	In reference to Page 15, section 2.7. – Would the State consider reasonable changes to the language set forth under the Insurance Requirements to align with reasonable industry standards?	See the response to Question #47.
49	In reference to the Page 9 – section 2.2.15 clause – “Customary and Reasonable industry standards” – can OPSCR please elaborate upon what these industry standards are and how Contractor’s performance of them will be measured post potential award?	Vendors qualified to provide the services hereunder should have a general understanding of the customary and reasonable industry standards for the categories of nursing services.
50	Page 10 – section 2.2.19 – regarding contracting agency’s interviewing of personnel protocol. Should this not be an agency expense rather than a vender expense?	No. Vendors are responsible for factoring this cost into the bid prices they submit.



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51	Page 11 – 2.2.21.7 – regarding the Department’s right to search providers’ personal vehicles. Can a search of a personal car or belonging be conducted without cause/reason? Are there any limitations to this stipulation?	Agencies can search vehicles at any time they are on the grounds of the State Agency, with or without cause. Where the vehicle is not on the grounds of the State Agency, Section 2.2.21.7 does not apply.
52	Is this a re-compete RFP?	The current preapproved vendor list for professional nursing services expires on July 23, 2023. OPSCR has issued this IFB to create a new list. This is the first time OPSCR has issued a solicitation to replace the expiring PVL.
53	Could you please the name of Current Suppliers (who are currently providing services to Agency)?	See the response to Question #4.
54	Could you please share current Supplier’s pricing and Proposals?	See the response to Question #4. The current suppliers did not submit proposals. Bid prices submitted by current suppliers are available at the link provided in response to Question #4.
55	How many awards were made in the Past?	See the response to Question #4.
56	When was the existing contract started, and what is the annual monetary spent value of the current contract since inception?	The existing Preapproved Vendor List became effective on July 23, 2020. See the response to Question #11 for more on the value of the current list and resulting contracts. Additional information may be available on the websites in response to Questions #4 and #6.
57	How many resources are currently engaged in the current contract?	See the response to Question #26.

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58	Can you please share the no. of positions served in previous years under this contract?	The number of positions served will vary depending on the individual State Agency with whom the vendor is contracted.
59	Can you please share the amount of business each vendor did under this contract in previous years?	See the response to Question #26.
60	Is there any issue that the agency is currently facing with the incumbents?	Issues vary depending on the individual State Agency and depending on the incumbent. State Agencies have broad discretion to address the problems with contracted vendors and have the option of notifying OPSCR of severe or continuing issues that may warrant removal from the Preferred Vendor List.
61	Are incumbents allowed to bid on this RFP? Please confirm.	Yes.
62	Please share the historical spending for the year 2021 and 2022?	To the best of OPSCR's knowledge, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2021 - \$2,396,319.65</li> <li>• 2022 - \$3,152,110.59</li> </ul>
63	How many nurses were used in year 2021 and 2022?	The number of nurses is unknown and varies by Contracting Agency.
64	What will be the estimated annual budget for this project?	See the response to Question #25.
65	We understand that it is a multi-award contract, so can you please confirm the total number of vendors to be awarded for each region in this contract?	See the response to Question #30.

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66	How will job requests be shared among multiple awarded vendors?	See the response to Question #19. Placement on the PVL does not guarantee that any contracts will be issued. See Section 5.2 of the IFB. Once placed on the PVL, vendors are welcome to market their services to the State Agencies eligible to contract under the PVL.
67	Will all job requests be shared among all awarded vendors simultaneously?	See the response to Question #66.
68	Is there any ranking system for sharing job requests among awarded vendors such as primary bidder, secondary bidder, and then other awarded bidders?	See the response to Question #66.
69	Can you share details from where we can get old RFP details?	A copy of the previous IFB is located at: <a href="https://www.dfa.ms.gov/preapproved-vendor-information">https://www.dfa.ms.gov/preapproved-vendor-information</a> .
70	Can you please tell us where we can see the records for the old contract?	See the responses to Questions #4, #6, and #69.
71	Can you please share the email id/details where we can raise the public record request for old RFP?	You can find more info about public records requests, including a request form and a physical/mailling address, at the following link: <a href="https://www.dfa.ms.gov/public-information-office">https://www.dfa.ms.gov/public-information-office</a>
72	How many positions are required under this contract?	The volume and headcount will vary depending on the State Agency with whom a vendor is contracted.
73	How many positions are currently open?	See response to Question #28.

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74	How many positions are currently used in a single day? Please give rough estimate.	The number of positions used daily will vary depending on the State Agency with whom a vendor is contracted.
75	Out of mentioned staffing positions, what are the most filled positions? Please share.	The most-filled positions will vary depending on the State Agency with whom the vendor is contracted.
76	In order to be responsive, is it mandatory to bid on all listed staffing positions for a one category? Please confirm.	No. See Sections 2.1. and 2.4.4. of the IFB.
77	What would be the shift timings for the given positions?	The shift timings will vary depending on the individual State Agency with whom the vendor has a contract.
78	What would be the estimated hours for given positions?	The estimated hours will vary depending on the individual State Agency with whom the vendor has a contract. Any contract resulting from this IFB will be for an indefinite quantity of hours to be furnished as requested by the Contracting Agency for fixed hourly rates. See Section 2.8.2. of the IFB.
79	Please confirm minimum guaranteed hours per week for these positions.	A Contracting Agency cannot guarantee any vendor a minimum number of hours. See Section 2.8.2. of the IFB.
80	Are these full-time positions or weekly assignments?	These are as-needed positions. Depending on the needs of the Contracting Agency, the assignment could range from a single shift to recurring shifts for an indefinite amount of time.
81	Can you please confirm the weekly assignments duration (7 week/13 week or more) if any?	The contracting Agency cannot guarantee any vendor a minimum number of hours. See Section 2.8.2. of the IFB.

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	Question	Response
82	Can you please share shift timings and location of services?	The shift timings and locations will vary depending on the needs of the individual State Agency with whom the vendor has a contract.
83	What is average response time to provide resume of qualified resources?	The vendor must maintain a sufficient pool of qualified staff large enough to meet the Agency's needs within two hours. See Section 2.3.1. of the IFB.
84	Do we have to provide Sample Insurance Certificate with the proposal response? Please confirm.	No.
85	In order to be responsive, is it mandatory to provide Employee Dishonesty Insurance or Fidelity Bond Insurance? Please confirm.	No. The vendor must obtain the required insurance before beginning work under any contract resulting from this IFB. It is not required to be obtained to be responsive to the IFB.
86	If yes, can we provide insurance after the award?	See the response to Question #85.
87	Will you award this contract to the lowest responsive bidders? Please confirm.	See Section 4.2.3. (Bid Evaluation Process) for how OPSCR will determine who is placed on the PVL. Agencies are encouraged, but not required, to contact the lowest bidder on the PVL first. See Section 2.6.3. of the IFB and Section 3-208.01 of PPRB OPSCR Rules and Regulations.
88	Will the agency be giving any preference to local vendors? Please confirm.	No.
89	In order to be responsive, is it mandatory to have physical office in each region that we are bidding for? Please confirm.	No. If you are not physically located in a region, the Bid Form (Attachment C) provides space for an explanation as to how you will provide services in the region.

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90	In order to be responsive, is it mandatory to provide Business Registration Certificate (BRC) and good standing certificates with the proposal response? Please confirm.	No. Bidders are required to submit <u>either</u> documentation demonstrating that they are currently registered and in good standing with the Mississippi Secretary of State <u>or</u> a certification that if named an intended awardee, the bidders will so register within seven days. See Section 4.1.5. of the IFB.
91	Can we provide BRC and good standing certificates after the award? Please confirm.	Yes. If bidders are not currently registered with the Mississippi Secretary of State, they must do so within seven days of receiving the Notice of Intent to Award. See Section 4.1.5. of the IFB.
92	We understand that for each region we must submit separate bid form. So, our question is:  Question: Do we have to mention pricing on each bid form for separate regions? Please confirm.	Yes.
93	What type of licenses or permits is the agency looking for?	You can find the license requirements for each category of service in Section 2.1 (Scope of Services) of the IFB.
94	Why is the contract out for bid? Is it required to be put out for bid?	See the response to Question #36.
95	Who are your current incumbent vendors for these services?	See the response to Question #4.
96	Are your needs being met by your current vendors?	As a result of the rising pay rates and shortage of nurses due to the COVID-19 pandemic and inflationary pressure, some incumbents have had difficulty providing the number of nurses needed for hourly rates bid before COVID.

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97	What are your current hourly bill rates by classification?	See the response to Question #4.
98	What were your hours of usage by each classification for the last two years?	See the response to Question #35.
99	Can vendors submit rate tiers, i.e., standard, incentive, and crisis?	See Section 2.6 (Bid Prices) of the IFB regarding variable rates which may be bid. No other rates will be accepted.
100	Is a Certificate of Insurance required to be submitted with our response?	See the response to Question #85.
101	What types of facilities will the healthcare professionals be assigned to (nursing homes, hospitals, clinics, etc.)?	The type of facility will vary, depending on the needs of the Contracting Agency with whom the vendor has contracted.
102	Additional insured requirement does not apply to Worker's Compensation coverage. Can this requirement be amended?	See the response to Question #47.

In addition to the foregoing, the following sections of the Invitation for Bids are amended as follows:

**Section 2.2.4 is amended as follows:**

**2.2.4.** Designate a contact person for communication with the Contracting Agency; **the contact person shall be** available 24 hours per day, seven days per week, 365 days per year, **or any appropriate timeframe as determined by the Contracting Agency**; at the discretion of the Contracting Agency, the Vendor may designate more than one person to meet this requirement;

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**Section 2.2.14 is amended as follows:**

**2.2.14.** Replace any contract worker(s) or employee(s) not performing to the satisfaction of the Contracting Agency within two hours **of the Contracting Agency's request to do so or any appropriate timeframe as determined by the Contracting Agency** and at no additional expense to the Contracting Agency;

**Section 2.6.1.6. is amended as follows:**

**2.6.1.6. Standard Rate Applies Unless Bid Otherwise**

The standard rate will apply where a Vendor bids on a category of service but does not bid on any particular type of hourly rate.

**2.6.1.6.1.** As an example, if a Vendor bids \$50.00 for the standard hourly rate and does not bid on the weekend hourly rate, any hours that would have been billed under the weekend hourly rate will be billed at \$50.00.

**2.6.1.6.2.** Section 2.6.1.6. does not apply to the rate for Travel Nurses. Any Vendor placed on the PVL who does not bid a rate for the Travel Nurse Hourly Rate, will not be eligible to assign Travel Nurses to any Contracting Agencies.

**~~2.6.1.6.~~ 2.6.1.7. Overtime**

Overtime shall be defined as hours in excess of 40 worked by a single individual at the Contracting Agency's facility in a one-week period. The Contracting Agency shall pay the applicable hourly rate plus a direct reimbursement for costs paid by the vendor to the individual NP, RN, LPN, CNA, or PCA due to the overtime hours worked.

**~~2.6.1.6.1.~~ 2.6.1.7.1.** As an example, a vendor bid \$50.00 per hour for the standard hourly rate and compensates the nurse \$40.00 per hour for standard business hours. Assuming the nurse is paid time-and-a-half by the vendor for overtime hours worked during standard business hours, or \$60.00 per hour, the additional cost to the vendor is \$20.00 per hour. Therefore, the Contracting Agency would pay the vendor \$70.00 per overtime hours worked during standard business hours (\$50.00 for the standard hourly rate plus the \$20.00 direct reimbursement for the additional overtime payment to the nurse).

**~~2.6.1.6.2.~~ 2.6.1.7.2.** To be compensated for additional costs due to overtime work, the vendor must provide documentation of its direct costs paid to the individual NP, RN, LPN, CNA, or PCA to the reasonable satisfaction of the Contracting Agency.



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~~2.6.1.6.3.~~ **2.6.1.7.3.** For purposes of calculating overtime, the week shall begin at 12:00 am Sunday and end at 11:59 pm the following Saturday, unless the Contracting Agency states otherwise. The Contracting Agency has the sole discretion to determine when the week shall begin for overtime purposes.

~~2.6.1.6.4.~~ **2.6.1.7.4.** Any work to be paid at an overtime rate shall be requested and/or approved by the Contracting Agency prior to the hours being worked. Should the vendor fail to obtain approval for the overtime rate prior to the hours being worked, no overtime compensation shall be paid.

~~2.6.1.6.5.~~ **2.6.1.7.5.** Hours worked for other employers or at facilities other than the Contracting Agency's facilities shall not be considered in the determination as to whether overtime compensation is due.

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**Receipt of Amendment #1 Acknowledged: (signature)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (Print):**\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Company:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Title:**\_\_\_\_\_