

Responses to Questions
RFP Number 12105830001
Uses of Social Media in Emergency Management Exercise
Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Q. Section 3.2.5.1 asks if “your state” has a preference for instate vendors. Does this refer to the home state of the proposing contractor?

A. Yes, this refers to the vendor’s home state.

Q. Section 3.2.5.7 asks for the type of business. Earlier sections inquire as to the type of business entity. Can you clarify what information is sought in 3.2.5.7?

A. For both sections please provide a description of the type of business, for example training provider, equipment sales, social media provider, etc.

Q. Section 3.2.6.5 requests “letters of reference” from three previous customers. Is HSEMD requesting descriptions of past performance with previous customer contact information, or actual letters of reference?

A. Please provide a description of work and performance with previous customers, along with contact information for references.

Q. What is the budget for this project?

A. \$15,000

Q. Do you currently have any VOSTs?

A. No

Q. Will training be provided on-site or via the web?

A. Training will be provided via the web.

Q. How many participants will there be?

A. The estimated number of participants is 80-100.

Q. If training is to be in-person, will the state provide the site to host the training?

A. NA

Q. Have participants received any previous JIC or PIO training?

A. Most participants will have had PIO training, an unknown number will have had JIC training at local level, and all state-level PIOs have had PIO and JIC training

Q. Are you envisioning a functional exercise? If so, how long of an exercise (e.g.: 3 hours, 8 hours)?

A. Yes, we envision a functional exercise, approximately 2-4 hours in length

Q. As far as the exercise simulation platform is concerned, does replicating the functionality of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr mean exercise participants will actually interact with each of those sites or does it mean something else altogether?

A. Exercise participants must be able to interact with each of the sites in a simulated environment.

Q. Under point 1 in Scope of Work it says: "The chosen vendor will provide training on how social media can be used to disseminate information with partners and constituents during disasters. It will include crafting effective messages across the above-identified platforms." When they say "crafting effective messages across the above-identified platforms," what do they mean exactly? Creating the actual messages can be a lengthy process requiring many interviews by the vendor with their HSEM people covering any number of plausible scenarios. Or, does the RFP refer only to wanting the vendor to impart the principles of message development?

A. Training should cover principles of message development. Exercise simulation should include creation of actual messages.

Q. Do we know how many individuals would need to be trained? How many locations?

A. Estimate of participants is 80-100. Training/exercise will be conducted via web for approximately that number of locations.

Q. In section 1.4, bullet 3 under "The exercise platform must:" it states - "Replicate the functionality of Facebook, Twitter Instagram and Tumblr." In Section 4.3 bullet 3 under "The exercise platform must:" it states – "Replicate the functionality of Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube and other video and photo sharing web sites." Requesting clarification as to which platforms are to be replicated.

A. The exercise platform should replicate the functionality of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr, with a heavy emphasis on Facebook and Twitter.

Q. The RFP asks to "replicate the functionality of..." several Social Media sites as noted above. Is the intent to provide a functioning clone of each of these sites with the exact same look and layout?

A. Simulated social media platform must replicate functionality and look of actual social media sites.

Q. Are there specific functions that the social media simulation platform is required to have outside of the capability for users to interact remotely?

A. The social media simulation platform must be user-friendly and vendor must provide training/instruction on the platform and its use. In addition, the simulation platform must be developed and used with the utmost caution and security so no exercise messages can be mistaken for real-world messages.

Q. First Page of the RFP, RFP Coversheet states that the Firm Proposal Terms must be valid for at least 30 days; however, Section 3.2.13, Firm Proposal Terms states 60 days. Please clarify.

A. Terms must be valid for 60 days.

Q. Page 11 of the RFP, Section 2.12.7 references Proposal Security. Proposal security may mean a bid bond requirement. Is a bid bond or Proposal security required?

A. No

Q. Page 18 of the RFP, Section 3.2.5.12, requires vendor to register to do business in Iowa before payments can be made. Vendor currently holds a contract with the Iowa DNR so should be registered, please confirm.

A. Vendor does not need to register if it currently holds a contract with Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Q. Page 24 of the RFP, section 5.4, Evaluation Criteria states that the Maximum score possible is 1000 points but does not give the point values for each criterion.

Question: Would the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department list the individual point values for each evaluation Criterion?

A. Values for each evaluation criterion are as follows:

- Demonstrated ability to enhance and/or expand the utilization of social media during an emergency at both Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and local emergency management agencies. 150 points
- Cost of goods and/or services 100 points
- Creativity and proposed innovative techniques that will extend or broaden the scope of social media activities 150 points
- Satisfactory performance on previous and present contracts similar in scope to the subject of this RFP. 150 points
- Contractor's professional experience and performance record 50 points
- Financial stability of Contractor 25 points
- Overall track record and reputation in the relevant industry 50 points
- Compliance with RFP and contract terms and conditions and Proposal format 50 points
- Contractor's proposed staffing plan 10 points
- References 25 points
- Contractor's proposed transition and work plans 20 points
- Demonstrated quality of proposed services and/or products 100 points
- Plans for assurance of high quality service 50 points
- Ability to integrate with Agency administrative applications 20 points
- Compliance with Agency information security policies 50 points

Q. Regarding the social media basic training identified on page 7, does HSEMD have additional information on anticipated number of trainings, number of participants, and format of training?

A. This will be a one-day training/exercise. The estimated number of participants is 80-100. The training and exercise will be conducted remotely. Training is expected to cover social media and an explanation/tutorial of the simulation software. Exercise will build on and utilize the training.

Q. Regarding the one-day social media exercise, does HSEMD have information on the anticipated number of participants, jurisdictions, or agencies?

A. Estimated number of participants is 80-100 from HSEMD and local emergency management agencies.

Q. Page 6 and 8 of the RFP state that the "exercise simulation platform must replicate the functionality of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr." Page 23, section 4.3 Mandatory Scored Technical Requirements, states "the simulation platform will replicate the functionality of Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube and other video and photo sharing web sites."

Will HSEMD provide a list clarifying all required social media platforms that need to be incorporated? For example, YouTube is mentioned on page 23, but not on page 6. On page 23 "blogs" are mentioned, but only Tumblr is mentioned on page 6. Additionally, "other video and photo sharing web sites" lacks clarity to ensure compliance.

A. The exercise platform should replicate the functionality of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr, with a heavy emphasis on Facebook and Twitter.

Q. When I downloaded the RFP it said that we were being added to the list of plan holders. Is it possible to see the current list? I did not see a link on the website.

A. HSEMD does not generate or have knowledge of such a list. If you received this message when you downloaded the RFP from the Iowa Department of Administrative Services website, you will need to contact that department for more information.

Q. Can companies from outside USA apply for this? (From India or Canada)

A. Yes

Q. Do we need to come over there for meetings?

A. Possibly. Meetings may be facilitated in person, via conference call or video conferencing.

Q. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (From India or Canada)

A. Yes

Q. Can we submit our proposals via email?

A. No. Proposals must be submitted in hard copy and on a CD via postal mail as per section 3.1.2.

Q. I have been trying to download the Uses of Social Media in Emergency Management Exercise RFP, and the file will not open I was wondering if you could email me the document?

A. The RFP may be downloaded from two locations:

- www.homelandsecurity.iowa.gov/quick_links/vendors.html
- http://bidopportunities.iowa.gov/?pgname=viewrfp&rfp_id=10948

If you continue to have difficulty downloading the RFP, please contact Terry Brown at terry.brown@iowa.gov.

Q. I was wondering if there is a bidder's conference scheduled for this grant that we could participate in? If not, what do you suggest is the best mechanism for us to gather more information and direct questions/clarifications?

A. There will be no bidder's conference. For information, submit questions to Terry Brown at terry.brown@iowa.gov.

Q. Item 3.2.5.1, page 18, asks if the vendor's state has preference for instate vendors; is this for vendors located in Iowa only or for all vendors submitting a proposal?

A. This refers to the vendor's state. Vendors from all states may respond to this RFP.

Q. Why is the vendor's accounting firm requested in item 3.2.5.11, page 18?

A. This information is requested to ensure the vendor is in good financial standing.

Q. Item 3.2.7.3, page 19, requests years of experience and employment history for all proposed staff. Is this employment history with the current vendor or all employment history?

A. Please include the employment history, including duties and areas of expertise, for the listed years of experience for proposed staff.

Q. Is solicitor providing additional personnel for control and evaluation of the exercise or will this be sole responsibility of vendor?

A. The vendor must provide personnel for control and evaluation of exercise, however, HSEMD may supplement with personnel for various functions, if needed.