**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFP SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFP NUMBER AND TITLE:** | **RFP# 202506088** Employee Engagement Survey |
| **RFP ISSUED BY:** | Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of Human Resources, Talent Management Division |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | July 30, 2025 |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | August 7, 2025 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | August 15, 2025, no later than 11:59 pm local time |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov) |

**Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Department’s answer.**

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| **1** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I: Introduction, Section A. Purpose and Background, p.5 | Can you elaborate on the key drivers behind the decision to seek external vendor support for the Employee Engagement Survey’s design, implementation, data collection, analysis, and reporting? What specific challenges or gaps is the TMD aiming to address, and what outcomes is the TMD hoping to achieve through engaging an external partner? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State of Maine is working to become an employer of choice. The data collected from the Workforce Engagement Survey provides departmental leadership with insights into their workforce to inform engagement and retention initiatives. Page 7 of the RFP has information on the purpose and scope of this project. The external partner will be a key resource in the data analysis as well as report creation and recommendations based upon the survey data collected. | |

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| **2** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I: Introduction, Section A. Purpose and Background, p.5 | Has the State of Maine previously contracted with a vendor to conduct the Employee Engagement Survey (e.g., the 2022 and 2024 surveys referenced in the RFP)? If so, who was the provider? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State of Maine designed and implemented the workforce engagement survey internally and contracted previously with Market Decisions Research for the analysis. | |

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| **3** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I: Introduction, Section A. Purpose and Background, p.5 | What survey and reporting technologies are the TMD using today, and does the TMD wish to continue to use these technologies moving forward? Alternatively, is the TMD interested in recommendations from bidders on best-fit survey and/or reporting technology? |
| **Answer** | |
| TMD used SurveyMonkey and PowerPoint for surveys and reports in the past. The TMD is open to recommendations from the Bidder(s) to achieve the objectives outlined in the RFP. | |

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| **4** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II: Scope of Services to be Provided, Section 1: Survey Planning, p.8 | What is driving the requirement for paper survey options? How, if at all, does employee and contractor access to electronic surveys (via State-issued or personal devices) influence that requirement? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State of Maine has more than 12,000 employees and contractors across every county in Maine. Not all of our employees are office based, and in order to meet the requirements of our diverse workforce we offer the survey in electronic and paper versions. The majority of our workforce takes the survey electronically, but we have several dozen paper versions completed each time. | |

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| **5** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II: Scope of Services to be Provided, Section 2: Survey & Design Parameters, p.9 | Would the State be interested in incorporating additional employee listening methods beyond surveys? If interested, would you like those included in the core approach or offered as a value-added service? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD is open to recommendations from the Bidder(s) to achieve the objectives outlined in the RFP | |

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| **6** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II: Scope of Services to be Provided, Section 3: Survey Analysis and Reporting, p.9 | Does the TMD currently use or prefer a specific data analysis and reporting platform (e.g., Power BI, Tableau) that the awarded vendor would be expected to leverage? Additionally, can you clarify the number and types of reporting consumers or consumer groups in scope, as well as the desired frequency of data refreshes for these audiences? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD has access to Power BI, but it has not used it yet for the Workforce Engagement Survey.    Previously we had 40 unique reports for Departments and Offices within the State of Maine. Refresh frequency would be based on the cadence of the survey. | |

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| **7** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II: Scope of Services to be Provided, Section 3: Survey Analysis and Reporting, p.9 | Are there any current or planned integrations between the employee engagement data and TMD’s HRIS or other third-party systems? If so, can you share the goals or use cases for these integrations? |
| **Answer** | |
| TMD has no current or planned integrations between the survey data and other systems. | |

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| **8** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II: Scope of Services to be Provided, Section 3: Survey Analysis and Reporting, p.9 | For any desired technologies or integrations that do not currently exist, would the awarded vendor be expected to fully provision these solutions as part of the scope? |
| **Answer** | |
| Bidder(s) are not required to fully provision any integrations or other technology products. | |

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| **9** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III: Key RFP Events, Section 3: Submission Format and Part IV: Proposal Submission Requirements, Proposal Format and Contents, Section IV: Cost Proposal, p. 12, p. 15 | In the Submission Format section (page 12), the instructions state, 'Excel format preferred,' but on page 15, the Proposal Submission Requirements indicate that 'Bidders must fill out Appendix E (Word document).' Can you clarify which format is required for the Cost Proposal—should bidders submit the Word document template (as a PDF) or use an Excel format? |
| **Answer** | |
| We will accept either way although Excel is preferred. | |

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| **10** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix E: Cost Proposal, p.26 | If bidders propose to include survey technology as part of their solution, how should those associated costs be reflected within the cost proposal template? |
| **Answer** | |
| Include as a separate line item | |
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| **11** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part IV, Section IV, page 15 and Appendix E, page 26 | On page 15, the RFP states that “Bidders must submit a cost proposal that covers the period starting 10/1/2025 and ending on 9/30/2030.” Does that mean that for the Cost Proposal Form, each key task (e.g., Survey planning and design, Data collection, and so on) would include the combined cost for that task for the Initial Period of Performance, Renewal Period #1, and Renewal Period #2? |
| Please provide the cost of the initial period of performance. Following the initial term of the contract, the Department may opt to renew the contract for two (2) renewal periods, as shown in the table below, and subject to continued availability of funding and satisfactory performance. | |
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| **12** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Page 14, Part IV, Section II | Can you clarify what you mean by documentation in the following statement from the RFP, “*Bidders may provide documentation of any applicable licensure/certification or specific credentials that are related to providing the proposed services of the RFP.”* |
| **Answer** | |
| Bidders may provide documentation of any applicable licensure/certification or specific credentials that are related to providing the proposed services of the RFP. | |

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| **13** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Page 25, Appendix D – Technical Assessment | Could TMD please clarify how respondents should complete Appendix D for this project? |
| **Answer** | |
| Please review the instructions tab on the Technical Assessment Form spreadsheet embedded in the RFP. Complete the spreadsheet for any IT products and services described in the proposal and listed on the BOM tab in the spreadsheet. | |

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| **14** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Page 8, Part II- 1.a. | What level of flexibility is allowed in modifying or adding survey questions based on qualitative insights from prior years? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD is open to recommendations from the Bidder(s) to achieve the objectives outlined in the RFP. | |

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| **15** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Page 9, Part II-2.b. | You want people to be able to fill out a paper survey if they want. Will the TMD be able to put those results into the data set or is the expectation that the contractor would? |
| **Answer** | |
| The expectation is that this would be done by the vendor/contractor. | |

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| **16** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Page 9, Part II-3.b. and c. | How was the data from the survey previously analyzed? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State of Maine designed and implemented the workforce engagement survey internally and contracted previously with Market Decisions Research for the analysis. | |

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| **17** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Page 5, Part I-A. | Is there an incumbent contractor(s) that was utilized in the design and/or implementation of the 2022 and 2024 workforce engagement surveys or were they designed internally? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State of Maine designed and implemented the workforce engagement survey internally and contracted previously with Market Decisions Research for the analysis. | |

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| **18** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Page 5, Part I-A. | Has the scope of employee distribution (e.g. employees and contractors) remained the same and could you provide an org chart? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD will work with the vendor on distribution methods. | |

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| **19** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Page 9, Part II-2.b. | Can you describe the challenges in reaching certain workforce segments (e.g., technical skills, computer access, field workers etc.)? And the approximate number and geographic spread of impacted workers? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State of Maine has more than 12,000 employees and contractors across every county in Maine. Not all of our employees are office based, and in order to meet the requirements of our diverse workforce we offer the survey in electronic and paper versions. The majority of our workforce takes the survey electronically, but we have several dozen paper versions completed each time. | |

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| **20** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Page 9, Part II | What accommodations are required for accessibility (e.g., language translation, screen readers, paper surveys)?  Are there any grants or public reporting requirements for which you will need to utilize certain survey data? |
| **Answer** | |
| All data, reports, and surveys must meet State accessibility standards. More information can be found on MaineIT’s website  [on digital accessibility](https://www.maine.gov/oit/accessibility) and [this policy](https://www.maine.gov/oit/sites/maine.gov.oit/files/inline-files/DigitalAccessibilityPolicy.pdf). The State of Maine provides reasonable accommodations for employees upon request. TMD does not have any grant reporting requirements at this time. | |

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| **21** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I.D, Page 7 | Can you confirm the Contract Term?  Should we plan for a one year gap between the Initial Period of Performance (10/1/25-9/30/26) and the Renewal Period #1 (10/1/27-9/30/28) and another one year gap between Renewal Period #1 and Renewal Period #2 (10/1/29 -9/30/30)? |
| **Answer** | |
| Following the initial term of the contract, the TMD may opt to renew it for two (2) renewal periods, as shown in the table below, subject to continued funding availability and satisfactory performance. | |

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| **22** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.1e., Page 8 | Item 1e requests “maximum participation or a statistically significant response rate.” Can you define what you mean by maximum participation?    For what level of analysis does Maine want statistical significance?  For example, are you seeking statistical significance for the total of 12,000 Maine employees, or are you looking at statistical significance within different departments of state agencies, different bureaus within state departments, or different personnel categories (tenure, demographic or type of work)? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD would like to see levels of participation in future survey iterations match or exceed those of prior surveys, which have been approximately 60%. In the RFP, we ask vendors to recommend best practices in engagement survey implementation and provide communication support for all survey periods (pre, during, post) in an effort to meet these expectations. Best practices should include recommended approaches for electronic, paper, and in person/telephonic survey communication, distribution, and collection. TMD is open to recommendations from the vendor on best practices in statistical significance. | |

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| **23** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.3c, Page 9 | Do you expect a dashboard to be created? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes | |

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| **24** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.3c, Page 9 | If a dashboard is required, what is your preferred dashboard technology? |
| **Answer** | |
| Power BI | |

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| **25** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.3f, Page 10 | Item 3f requires the vendor to “weight survey data based on statewide and department demographics, including (but not limited to) total number of employees, age, race, tenure, gender, income, etc.”    How would Maine want survey responses to be weighted? Should the vendor weight bureaus as if they all matched the overall demographics of their department? Or should the vendor weight departmental data to match the overall state employee demographics? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD will provide the vendor with the data and methodology for weighting based on past survey practices. | |

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| **26** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part IV. Section IV.2a, Page 15 | The RFP requests a cost proposal covering both the Initial Period of Performance and the 2 Renewal Periods.  Can you define how much of the scope of work you expect completed in the Initial Period of Performance? |
| **Answer** | |
| The survey, analysis, and reporting as outlined in the RFP | |

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| **27** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Can you share what the budget was for the 2024 study? |
| **Answer** | |
| A budget maximum was not identified for this RFP. The Bureau of Human Resources encourages competitive bids. | |

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| **28** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Page 26; Cost Proposal Form | The RFP states: “Bidders must submit a cost proposal that includes the costs necessary for the Bidder to fully comply with the contract terms, conditions, and RFP requirements. The total proposed cost will be used to score the cost proposal…”    Would you like us to provide:   * The total costs for the Initial Period of Performance only, * The costs for the Initial Period of Performance and each of the two Renewal Periods separately, or * The total, combined costs for the Initial Period of Performance and both Renewal Periods? |
| **Answer** | |
| Please provide the cost of the initial period of performance. | |

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| **29** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| IT Worksheet; BoM Tab | The IT Worksheet (BoM tab) states: “Bidders must exhaustively list ALL the products that are being proposed as part of this bid…Products must be listed even if they are free downloads. All responses in ALL other tabs must cover ALL the products listed in the BoM here.”    The responses are to be provided as a “Product URL.”    The services we are providing will not have a URL.  None of the deliverables will be provided online, so we cannot provide a “Product URL.”    How should we handle that? |
| **Answer** | |
| Please provide the name of any products sold as part of single SKU in the “Product Name” column. If Bidder(s) have a website describing the product, please provide the URL in the “Product URL” column. Please refer to the instructions and the example given for additional information. | |

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| **30** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| IT Worksheet; Several Items | Many of the Controls listed in the IT Worksheet are not framed as questions or do not specify which component of a linked document we should address.    Likewise, many Controls are related to applications, products, or services that we would not be using or providing as part of a survey research engagement.    Can you provide more clarity about which component of each linked document we should address?    Can you tell us how we should indicate that a Control is not related to the services we would be providing in a way that doesn’t have our response deemed ‘incomplete’? |
| **Answer** | |
| Please explain how the IT products and services described in the proposal and listed on the BOM complies with each of the applicable linked documents and controls. In the event that a particular document or control is inapplicable, please explain why they are not relevant to the proposed applications, products or services. | |

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| **31** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, Page 6 | Will the Department provide access to previous survey instruments, response datasets, and reports from the 2022 and 2024 surveys to inform the survey planning and benchmarking process? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD will provide all available data, surveys, and reporting to the contracted vendor. | |

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| **32** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II –Page 8–9 | Can the State please clarify whether the vendor is expected to independently design the full survey instrument or if the State will provide a base set of questions (from the 2022/2024 surveys), with the vendor's role limited to reviewing, refining, and advising on potential improvements or additions? |
| **Answer** | |
| The vendor will review the current survey questions and work with TMD on perceived gaps and additional question development as necessary. | |

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| **33** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II – Scope of Services, Page 9 | Can the State clarify whether the vendor is expected to manage the physical printing, distribution, and collection of hard copy surveys, or will the State provide support in handling these logistics at agency locations? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD will make paper copies of the survey available to our workforce and will work with agencies on submitting any completed copies. | |

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| **34** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Page 9 | Approximately what percentage of the workforce is expected to require non-digital survey access (paper or telephonic)? Will the Department handle printing/distribution or should the vendor include this in pricing? |
| **Answer** | |
| Historically only a small percentage of survey participants have submitted paper surveys (2-3%). The TMD will make paper copies of the survey available to our workforce and will work with agencies on submitting any completed copies. | |

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| **35** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II –Page 10 | Will the State provide its own Single Sign-On (SSO) or Identity Provider (IdP) for survey access authentication, or should vendors propose their own secure access mechanism? |
| **Answer** | |
| If Bidder(s) desire, MaineIT can integrate with the vendor’s Single Sign-On (SSO) or Identify Provider (IDP). Bidder(s) may also propose other secure access mechanisms. | |

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| **36** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, Page 5 | Is the State open to both Commercial Off-The-Shelf (COTS) platforms and custom-developed survey solutions tailored to its needs? |
| **Answer** | |
| Bidder(s) should propose solutions meeting the requirements outlined in the RFP, noting that the TMD does not require Bidder(s) to fully provision any technology solutions. | |

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| **37** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, Page 6 | Who was the vendor responsible for administering the 2022 and 2024 workforce engagement surveys, and are they eligible to participate in this RFP process? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State of Maine designed and implemented the workforce engagement survey internally and contracted previously with Market Decisions Research for the analysis. The RFP is open for all competitive bids. | |

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| **38** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Page 8 | Can the State confirm the core workforce engagement and organizational improvement challenges it aims to address through this survey? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State of Maine is working to become an employer of choice. The data collected from the Workforce Engagement Survey provides departmental leadership with insights into their workforce to inform engagement and retention initiatives. Page 7 of the RFP has information on the purpose and scope of this project. The external partner will be a key resource in the data analysis as well as report creation and recommendations based upon the survey data collected. | |

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| **39** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Page 9 | What is the expected number of survey respondents for the 2025 engagement survey, and how many typically require non-digital formats (e.g., paper, telephonic)? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD would like to see levels of participation in future survey iterations match or exceed those of prior surveys, which were approximately 60%. Historically only a small percentage of survey participants have submitted paper surveys (2-3%). | |

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| **40** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Page 9 | Will the State require assistance migrating or referencing historical survey data (2022, 2024), and in what format is that data currently stored (e.g., Excel, CSV)? |
| **Answer** | |
| Data for previous iterations of the Employee Engagement Survey are stored in an Excel format. Bidder(s) should describe how they plan to meet any requirements for comparison to historical data listed in the RFP in their proposal. | |

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| **41** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II – Survey Analysis and Reporting, Page 10 | Can the State confirm whether a dashboard-based reporting solution is required to display survey results (e.g., with filters by department, demographics, and trends)? If yes, does the State have any technology preferences (e.g., Power BI, Tableau) for dashboard delivery? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. The TMD has access to Power BI as a dashboard with filters based on survey parameters. | |

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| **42** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Page 10 | Does the State expect dashboards with role-based access, including department-specific views for leadership, or a centralized reporting interface? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD has access to Power BI as a dashboard with filters based on survey parameters. | |

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| **43** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Page 10 | What is the State’s preference regarding survey hosting — cloud-based, on-premises, or hybrid? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD previously used a cloud-based platform to implement the survey. Bidder(s) should recommend their preferred technology-solution as part of their RFP. | |

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| **44** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Page 10 | How frequently does the State expect the dashboard or reporting data to be refreshed (real-time, weekly, or post-survey)? |
| **Answer** | |
| Refresh frequency would be based on the cadence of the survey. | |

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| **45** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Page 10 | What are the State’s expectations regarding benchmarking — should vendors provide peer-state or industry comparison data as part of their reporting? |
| **Answer** | |
| TMD is interested in peer state comparison data as part of the reporting deliverable. | |

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| **46** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Page 9 | Can all services (survey design, support, analysis, and reporting) be performed remotely, or is any on-site presence required? |
| **Answer** | |
| An on-site presence is not required. | |

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| **47** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Page 10 | Are there any restrictions or preferences regarding the use of off-shore resources for survey platform development or data analysis? |
| **Answer** | |
| Please refer to [MaineIT’s list of prohibited technologies](https://www.maine.gov/oit/prohibited-technologies) for additional information on the State’s legal standards regarding offshore technologies. Additionally, Bidder(s) must comply with all applicable Federal and State laws pertaining to offshore labor. | |

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| **48** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III, Page 11 | Does the State have a target go-live date for the 2025 workforce engagement survey deployment? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State recognizes that the actual contract effective date depends upon completion of the RFP process, date of formal award notification, length of contract negotiation, and preparation and approval by the State Procurement Review Committee. BHR will work with the contractor to establish a timeline for the work, including project kick-off, once the contract is encumbered | |

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| **49** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part IV, Page 14 | Can the State share a target budget or expected budget range to help guide the cost proposal development? |
| **Answer** | |
| A budget maximum was not identified for this RFP. The Bureau of Human Resources encourages competitive bids. | |

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| **50** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I – Contract Term, Page 6 | Can the State confirm the target go-live date or survey launch window for the 2025 employee engagement survey, following the contract start date of October 1, 2025? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State recognizes that the actual contract effective date depends upon completion of the RFP process, date of formal award notification, length of contract negotiation, and preparation and approval by the State Procurement Review Committee. BHR will work with the contractor to establish a timeline for the work, including project kick-off, once the contract is encumbered | |

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| **51** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Page 5, Part I, Section A. | Were participation incentives offered to respondents in prior versions of the study? If not, is the State open to offering them (e.g. gift card, etc) with the goal of boosting participation above 50%? |
| **Answer** | |
| No monetary incentives are offered due to our collective bargaining agreements. | |

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| **52** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Are there any employees for who participation depends on the survey being available in any language other than English? If so, which language(s)? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD requests that the vendor provide multiple methods for survey participation to meet the needs of a diverse workforce, particularly for those with limited computer access/literacy. This may include individuals who prefer to take the survey in languages other than English. | |

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| **53** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Page 8, Part II, Section 1.e. | Is the ability to offer the survey via phone, on paper, or in-person (in addition to online) a function of specific employee conditions that would make online completion difficult or impossible, or is it in order to maximize cooperation by allowing people to take the survey in the mode most comfortable for them personally? |
| **Answer** | |
| Both. The State of Maine has more than 12,000 employees and contractors across every county in Maine. Not all of our employees are office based, and in order to meet the requirements of our diverse workforce we offer the survey in electronic and paper versions. The majority of our workforce takes the survey electronically, but we have several dozen paper versions completed each time. | |

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| **54** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | What does the State consider under the rubric of workforce engagement? Other than employee satisfaction, workplace culture, sense of belonging, professional development opportunities, physical/emotional safety, compensation and related policies, are there any other broad areas the State is hoping to measure in this research? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State of Maine is working to become an employer of choice. The data collected from the Workforce Engagement Survey provides departmental leadership with insights into their workforce to inform engagement and retention initiatives. | |

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| **55** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Ideally, when would the State want the survey to be fielded and by what date does the State hope to have usable results? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State recognizes that the actual contract effective date depends upon completion of the RFP process, date of formal award notification, length of contract negotiation, and preparation and approval by the State Procurement Review Committee. BHR will work with the contractor to establish a timeline for the work, including project kick-off, once the contract is encumbered | |

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| **56** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Page 5, Part I, Section A. | The RFP outlines potential “ad hoc survey design” that may include brief pulse surveys. Does the State have an estimate regarding the cadence or frequency of these ad hoc surveys, and should proposers include pricing for these types of surveys in their Cost Proposal Form? |
| **Answer** | |
| Frequency of the pulse surveys will vary based on need, however at this time it is anticipated to be quarterly or less. The number of questions will also vary. Pricing should be included as a separate line item in a cost proposal. | |

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| **57** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Page 6, Part I, Section C.A | The RFP describes eligible vendors as having provided comprehensive workforce engagement survey services to state governments and comparable employers. Will the State consider proposals from firms that have conducted survey research of a similar size and scope with constituencies (e.g., faculty, members, students, etc) rather than employees? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, we will consider bids from this type of firm. | |

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| **58** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Page 6, Part I, Section C.A. | Will the State consider proposals from firms that have conducted survey research of a similar size and scope for organizations other than state governments, such as non-profits, higher education institutions, or similar organizations? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, we will consider bids from this type of firm. | |

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| **59** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| D. Contract Term  & Page 7 | Can Maine TMD confirm if there will be a year gap between the optional contract renewals? The provided Contract Renewal table in Part I, Section D depicts a year gap in service. |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. Currently the survey is offered biennially. | |

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| **60** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| A. Purpose and Background  & Page 5 | Can Maine TMD share how many questions are typically included in their current survey instrument? |
| **Answer** | |
| Previously there have been approximately 70 questions. | |

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| **61** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided – 1. Survey Planning  & Page 8 | If paper surveys are required, will Maine TMD assist in the printing, distribution, and collection, or is the vendor responsible for full logistics? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD can assist agencies with the printing, distribution, and collection of paper surveys. The vendor will be responsible for incorporating the data into the overall results. | |

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| **62** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided – 1. Survey Planning  & Page 8 | Can Maine TMD clarify how often pulse surveys will be administered and how many questions are required in each pulse survey? |
| **Answer** | |
| Frequency will vary based on need, however at this time it is anticipated to be quarterly or less. The number of questions will also vary. Pricing should be included as a separate line item in a cost proposal. | |

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| **63** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided – 1. Survey Planning  & Page 8 | Beyond the Talent Management Division, which other stakeholders (e.g., specific departments, leadership groups, or employee representatives) should the vendor engage with during the survey planning phase to ensure alignment with organizational goals? |
| **Answer** | |
| None at this time, however, the TMD will make introductions as necessary. | |

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| **64** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided – 1. Survey Planning  & Page 8 | Are there specific communication channels or branding guidelines that the vendor should incorporate to align with the State of Maine’s internal communication practices? |
| **Answer** | |
| The vendor will develop a communication plan with the support of the TMD for the project's timeline and phases- pre, during, post. The TMD will work with the selected vendor on branding. | |

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| **65** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided – 1. Survey Planning  & Page 8 | Could you provide more details on the specific geographic regions, work location types (e.g., urban vs. rural, office vs. field), or employee demographics (e.g., proportion of employees with limited computer access) that the vendor should prioritize to ensure inclusivity? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State of Maine has more than 12,000 employees and contractors across every county in Maine. Not all of our employees are office based, and in order to meet the requirements of our diverse workforce we offer the survey in electronic and paper versions. The majority of our workforce takes the survey electronically, but we have several dozen paper versions completed each time. | |

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| **66** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided – 1. Survey Planning  & Page 8 | While the RFP notes that ad hoc surveys are not required but preferred, can you clarify the anticipated frequency, scale, or specific use cases for these surveys to help assess resource allocation? |
| **Answer** | |
| Frequency will vary based on need, however at this time it is anticipated to be quarterly or less. The number of questions will also vary. Pricing should be included as a separate line item in a cost proposal. | |

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| **67** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided – 2. Survey and Design Parameters  & Page 9 | Are there specific themes or areas of focus (e.g., employee retention, leadership trust, or specific DEI aspects) that the Talent Management Division anticipates emphasizing in the 2025 survey, or should the vendor conduct an independent analysis to propose question updates? |
| **Answer** | |
| There is no specific theme at this time. The vendor and TMD will review current survey questions and work with TMD on perceived gaps and additional question development as necessary. | |

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| **68** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided – 1. Survey Planning  & Page 8 | Is there a specific response rate target or a minimum threshold for statistical validity that the vendor should aim for in their communication and distribution strategies? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD would like to see levels of participation in future survey iterations match or exceed those of prior surveys, which were approximately 60%. In the RFP, we ask vendors to recommend the best practices in engagement survey implementation and provide communication support for all survey periods (pre, during, post) in an effort to meet these expectations. Best practices should include recommended approaches for electronic, paper, and in person/telephonic survey communication, distribution and collection. TMD is open to recommendations from the vendor on best practices in statistical significance. | |

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| **69** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided – 2. Survey and Design Parameters  & Page 10 | Can you provide examples of specific accommodations (e.g., language translations, screen reader compatibility, or alternative formats) used in past surveys or anticipated for this iteration to ensure compliance with accessibility standards? |
| **Answer** | |
| Prior survey iterations met State accessibility requirements and were offered in both electronic and paper format, with the option for a telephonic survey as well. All data, reports, and surveys must meet State accessibility standards. More information can be found on [MaineIT's website](https://www.maine.gov/oit/accessibility) as well as the [Digital Accessibility Policy](https://www.maine.gov/oit/sites/maine.gov.oit/files/inline-files/DigitalAccessibilityPolicy.pdf). The State of Maine provides reasonable accommodations for employees upon request. | |

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| **70** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided – 2. Survey and Design Parameters  & Page 9 | Are there specific metrics or real-time data points (e.g., response rates by department, completion status by demographic) that the vendor should prioritize in the monitoring dashboard or reporting tools provided to TMD staff? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD will provide all available data, surveys, and reporting to the vendor from prior surveys. Based on prior trends and the results received in the next survey iteration, the TMD is open to recommendations from the Bidder(s) to achieve the objectives outlined in the RFP | |

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| **71** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided – 2. Survey and Design Parameters  & Page 9 | Are there additional state-specific cybersecurity requirements or certifications that the vendor must adhere to, particularly for handling sensitive employee data? |
| **Answer** | |
| Requirements for handling sensitive employee data are described in Part 3 of the RFP, which includes MaineIT Policies and Standards: https://www.maine.gov/oit/policies-standards. | |

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| **72** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided – 3. Survey Analysis and Reporting  & Page 10 | Can you clarify the number of departments and bureaus that will require individual reports, and are there specific sub-units or teams within these levels that should also be analyzed separately? |
| **Answer** | |
| Previously, 40 reports have been created. This includes a state level report, departmental reports, and reports for some sub-units (offices, bureaus). | |

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| **73** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided – 3. Survey Analysis and Reporting  & Page 10 | Are there specific demographic categories or weightings (e.g., proportional representation by department size or region) that the vendor should prioritize, and will TMD provide the necessary demographic data for accurate weighting, if necessary? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD will provide the vendor with the data and methodology for weighting based on past survey practices. | |

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| **74** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided  & Page 8 | For presentations to state leadership, are there preferred formats (e.g., PowerPoint, interactive dashboards, or executive summaries) or specific audiences (e.g., agency heads, executive leadership) that the vendor should tailor the content for? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD will provide all available reporting to the vendor from prior surveys. Based on prior trends and the results received in the next survey iteration, the TMD is open to recommendations from the Bidder(s) to achieve the objectives outlined in the RFP. | |

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| **75** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of services to be provided – 3. Survey Analysis and Reporting  & Page 10 | Are there specific formats or examples of action planning tools that TMD has found effective in past surveys and would like the vendor to build upon? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD is open to recommendations from the Bidder(s) to achieve the objectives outlined in the RFP | |

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| **76** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part IV Proposal Submission Requirements – Section II  & Page 14 | Due to the sensitive nature of sharing balance sheets and income (Profit/Loss) statements, would the State of Maine consider allowing respondents to reference this financial information in Section II and submit the documents separately via a secure email? |
| **Answer** | |
| Please do not send any part of the proposal via a secure email. Proposal information must be available/accessible at the time of submission and be submitted according to the delivery instructions outlined in Part III of the RFP. Bidders should be aware that copies of their proposals are not published publicly unless requested pursuant to the Freedom of Access Act (FOAA). It is standard practice for the State to request financial viability information from bidders, which generally is not confidential, unless it is within an exception to the Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA). 1 M.R.S. § 402(3). The RFP contains specific provisions related to FOAA – please see Part I, B, 7 & 8. | |

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| **77** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III Key RFP Events – C. Proposal Submission  & Page 12 | It is our understanding that we will be providing four files in our submission. Do all four files need to be sent in a single email? Would it be acceptable to send each file separately, as long as we abide by the specific email instructions? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes | |

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| **78** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, Section A, page 5 | For the 2022 and 2024 iterations of the survey, how were paper surveys 1) distributed to employees and 2) returned to the survey administrator? |
| **Answer** | |
| Historically only a small percentage of survey participants have submitted paper surveys (2-3%). The TMD will make paper copies of the survey available to our workforce and will work with agencies on submitting any completed copies. | |

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| **79** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, Section A, page 5 | For the 2022 and 2024 iterations of the survey, how many paper surveys were 1) distributed and 2) returned complete? |
| **Answer** | |
| Historically only a small percentage of survey participants have submitted paper surveys (2-3%). The TMD will make paper copies of the survey available to our workforce and will work with agencies on submitting any completed copies. | |

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| **80** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, Section A, page 5 | For the 2022 and 2024 iterations of the surveys, how were the engagement items measured? For example, did they use Likert-type response scales such as strongly agree, agree, etc.? And were the response scales consistent across the items? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, a 5- point Likert type scale was used, with answers from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The response scales were consistent across all survey questions with the exception of demographic questions and an open- ended question. | |

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| **81** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, Section A, page 5 | Were the 2022 and 2024 iterations of the survey conducted internally by the TMD or by an external vendor? If the former, could the TMD explain why it is shifting to using an external vendor? If the latter, who was the vendor for these surveys? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State of Maine designed and implemented the workforce engagement survey internally and contracted previously with Market Decisions Research for the analysis. | |

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| **82** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, Section A, page 5 and Part 1, Section D, page 7 | On page 5 the RFP notes that the TMD “plans to offer the survey on an annual to biennial basis moving forward.” In the table on page 7 it appears that the survey is intended to be conducted biennially (once in the Initial Period of Performance, once in Renewal Period #1, and once in Renewal Period #2). In order for us to provide an accurate proposal (both in terms of description of work and in budgeting), can you clarify whether the vendor should write a proposal for an annual survey or a biennial survey? |
| **Answer** | |
| The survey will be offered biennially at this time. | |

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| **83** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section 1, page 8 | The RFP notes a preference for “bidders who can support periodic, ad hoc survey requests based on the annual/biennial workforce engagement survey (i.e. pulse surveys).” Given that no pulse surveys are included in the scope of work for this project, would the pulse surveys be a separate contract or would there be a modification to this contract if pulse surveys were desired? Conversely, should vendors propose a number and cost of pulse surveys as a part of this proposal? |
| **Answer** | |
| Frequency of the pulse surveys will vary based on need, however at this time it is anticipated to be quarterly or less. The number of questions will also vary. Pricing should be included as a separate line item in a cost proposal. | |

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| **84** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section 1, page 8 | Does the TMD anticipate including any open-ended (i.e., open text box) survey items? If yes, is the vendor expected to code the responses into categories/themes, or provide verbatim responses to the TMD? If the TMD wishes to have a file with verbatim responses, should the vendor redact PII (such as mentions of employee’s names) from the responses? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, we anticipate a handful of open-ended questions. Most are within the demographic section, in case the standard answers do not appropriately capture all identities. We also provide an open text box in case there are additional comments participants wish to share. Coding the responses would be helpful to capture trends, and the TMD would also want to review all verbatim responses. Redactions are not necessary, as the TMD would redact any identifying information prior to sharing any concerning comments with the appropriate HR teams. | |

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| **85** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section 2, Page 9 | In order for the survey vendor to provide employees with a secure survey link via email, will the TMD provide the vendor with an employee contact database that would include, at minimum, employee names and email addresses? And will this database include any additional information, such as employees’ department/bureau and demographic characteristics? |
| **Answer** | |
| TMD will work with the vendor on distribution methods and provide the vendor with the data and methodology for weighting based on past survey practices. | |

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| **86** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section 3, Page 9 | In addition to an organization-wide report, does the TMD wish for the vendor to create individual reports at the bureau and department levels? If yes, 1) what is the approximate number of bureaus and departments that would receive reports, and 2) does the TMD have a preferred format for these reports (e.g., Word or Excel)? |
| **Answer** | |
| Previously, 40 reports have been created. This includes a state-level report, departmental reports, and reports for some sub-units (offices, bureaus). TMD is interested in recommendations from the vendor on the best format for the reports. | |

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| **87** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section 3, Page 10 | The RFP notes a desire for “industry benchmark comparisons” and provides several examples. However, the benchmarks noted in those examples are either benchmark goals (e.g., 80% satisfaction) or comparing data to previous years within the same state. Is the desired benchmarking a comparison to previous years’ data from Maine and/or specific departments? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD would like to look at Maine State Government statewide and department level trends on a year-over-year basis as part of the survey analysis and reporting process. The TMD is also interested in peer-state comparison data as part of the reporting deliverable. | |

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| **88** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section 3, Page 10 | For weighting data, does the TMD have complete information on employees' age, race, tenure, gender, and income? |
| **Answer** | |
| The TMD will provide the vendor with the data and methodology for weighting based on past survey practices. | |
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| **89** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section 3, Page 10 | Could any presentations of results be done virtually (e.g., via Teams or Zoom)? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. | |

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| **90** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III, Section C3, page 12 and Appendix E, page 26 | On page 12, the RFP states that the preferred format for the Cost Proposal is an Excel file, but the Cost Proposal Form (Appendix E) is not formatted as an Excel file. Does the TMD wish the vendor to provide an Excel file in addition to Appendix E, and if yes, what should the Excel file include? |
| **Answer** | |
| We will accept either way although Excel is preferred.  Please include a cost proposal that includes the costs necessary for the Bidder to fully comply with the contract terms, conditions, and RFP requirements. The proposed cost must be presented as an itemized total cost broken down by service). | |