

THE COUNTY OF GALVESTON

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COUNTY COURTHOUSE
722 Moody (21st Street)
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GALVESTON, TEXAS 77550

October 29, 2020

PROJECT NAME: Indigent Burial Services

SOLICITATION NO: RFP #B212001

Re: ADDENDUM #1

To All Prospective Proposers:

The following information is being provided to aid in preparation of your bid submittal(s):

Question #1: *Since the vendor is responsible for the actual purchasing of the plot does it matter where the plot is?*

Response: Yes, Galveston County Indigent Program services Galveston County Residents, so the cemetery will be in Galveston County. In addition, the Indigent Burial Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the maintenance of the cemetery on a monthly basis. From the Special Provisions:

“The contractor will ensure that the interment occurs in a cemetery that is approved by the State of Texas, maintained in a respectful and presentable manner and that the interment takes place in a plot obtained by the contractor within Galveston County.”

Question #2: *What would constitute adequate financial resources as referenced in the RFP under the “proper’s responsibility of the solicitation (General Provisions page 1). Would carrying sufficient insurance be enough? Is there a particular financial amount or specific resource? How can a vendor distinguish itself with respect to this category? Since the county is going to be paying for the services, what sort and amount of financial capacity/resource doe the vendor need to obtain?*

Response: These are general responsible items that the County expects, at a minimum, to be possessed by the contractor for the type of business requested in the Special Provisions. By complying with the items requested in the Special Provisions section, this section should be covered.

Question #3: *What constitute “satisfactory record or integrity and ethics” and a “satisfactory record of performance” (General Provisions Page 1). How is satisfaction judged and what criteria are used for such determination?*

Response: See response to Question 2.

Question #4: *When it indicates that all materials or equipment shall be “new (General Provisions page 3), does that also include commercial equipment such as refrigeration, vehicles, etc., if so, why would such items need to be “new” if fully functional and capable of performing their function?*

Response: This is a “general” statement that does not apply for the purposes of this solicitation. Please disregard.

Question #5: *What do you mean by “periods of performance may be extended” (General Provisions Page 5). In what manner will the periods be extended and would bidder be adequately compensated for said extension.*

Response: This provision is referencing any and all contract extension periods. The County will pay for any services rendered by the contractor in accordance with the resultant contract.

Question #6: *Under what circumstance can a bidder who has yet to submit a bid be able to anticipate pass through costs. Shouldn’t said costs be already included in the bid? Should a bid already anticipate and account for said costs as part of the bid or should the pricing not be included in said costs and requested subsequently. For example, is COVID-19 and performing services in the time of COVID-19 entail the possibly of pass-through costs, or does the fact that COVID-19 already exists prior to submission that any such costs should already form the basis of a bid. Should said costs be separated or identified in a different manner.*

Response: This provision applies mostly to supply contracts that the contracted materials cannot be delivered in a timely fashion due to reasons as described. For the purposes of this solicitation, this provision will most likely not come into play.

Question #7: *What constitutes an informality (General Provisions page 7) and under what circumstances can it be waived. How type of requirements are not considered informalities and cannot be waived at the discretion of the county.*

Response: The proposer should adhere to the RFP as close as possible. If there are statements submitted that are explained in a manner that differs from the request but are understood as to the intent, the County can waive it as an informality.

Question #8: *Can certain services (i.e. cremation) be subcontracted? Are there any particular services that cannot be subcontracted?*

Response: Normally, the cremations are not performed at the actual funeral home, and the funeral home will have a crematory in place that all cremations are performed.

The County prefers that the contractor provide all of the requested services, however, certain subcontractor arrangements may be allowable. Please include explanation of this in your proposal response.

Question #9: *Must credit card processing be included as part of the bid?*

Response: No. It is just a method of payment available from the County.

Question #10: *How many death certificates are to be included in the cost of the burial? How many death certificates is vendor required to provide and can vendor bill decedent's next of kin for any and all certificate requests? (Special Provisions, Page 7).*

Response: One (1) Certified Death Certificate is provided to Galveston County and the vendor MAY NOT charge any additional fees or services to decedent's Next of Kin.

Question #11: *What constitutes a reasonable length of time which a contractor should complete an interment or cremation after authorization from the Department? (Special Provisions, Page 7).*

Response: Once an approval and release are rendered from Galveston County, The Funeral Home has 24-hrs to pick up the body from the Medical Examiner's office. 3-5 business days for interment or cremation.

Question #12: *How much notice does the Department generally provide prior to a deceased being required to be picked up?*

Response: See Question #11 Response.

Question #13: *What are the requirements for the location of the burial plots within Galveston County? Are there any particular requirement pertinent to the burial plots and/or location of the burial grounds other than those included on Page 7 of the Special Provisions?*

Response: Refer to State of Texas Cemetery Regulation & Texas Health and Safety Code Section defines burial plots. Galveston County requires individual plots.

Question #14: *Can you clarify what type of contacts with the contractor assume should another funeral director claim a body at the request of the family for the deceased? Is Contractor required to transport said decedent to the new facility? Are the costs incurred prior to the transfer recoverable from the County?*

Response: ALL Indigent cases must go through the Indigent Coordinator for approval or denial. If bodies are released to any funeral home prior to approval, Galveston County will not get involved. Transportation cost from the Medical Examiners to Funeral Home is included in your proposal cost of cremation and burial.

Question #15: *What are the space and seating requirements for where services are to be conducted within contractor's facility?*

Response: Galveston County does not pay for additional funeral services, unless a set price is incorporated into your proposal cost for burial. For example, 2-hrs service will be provided if family is available. This is rare.

Question #16: *Does contractor's facility need to be located in Galveston County?*

Response: Galveston County's Indigent Program is serving Galveston County. It is preferred that the facility be located within Galveston County. Any exceptions to these conditions should be explained on a separate sheet of paper.

Question #17: *Could you please clarify the requirement for a "minimum of two similar or larger communities with whom you presently have or have provided Indigent Burial Services". Does this RFP require a prospective bidder to have a minimum of two counties for whom Indigent Services are provided? (Special Provisions, Page 9). Wouldn't having such a contingency preclude qualified vendors, who though experienced and qualified, lack government/county contracts. There are only 4 adjacent counties. If two communities means agreements with two (2) different counties, it is our understanding only one vendor currently interested in this solicitation would qualify; this might disqualify others. If you have experience with mortuary services regardless of experience with counties, why is this requirement present and isn't it effectively hindering and discriminating against competitive vendors? Also is the experience limited to "indigent burial services". What about burial services in general. Shouldn't this be factored and wouldn't qualified parties be excluded if experience is specific to indigent service. What constitutes as a community?*

Response: Galveston County does not require experience with other communities for Indigent Burial Services but does place significant value on previous experience with that activity in the selection process.

Question #18: *What constitutes a "service team" and is there a minimum required # of people necessary for a service team. (Special Provisions, Page 9).*

Response: Your Standard Funeral Protocol needs to be explained that includes the positions of personnel that will be providing these services.

Question #19: Could you elaborate on the details necessary for a contingency emergency plan?

Response: Every entity should have their own business contingency emergency plan based on your experience in the industry and other contracts obtained by your company.

Question #20: Are all services required to be performed in-house, or can certain services (i.e. cremation) be subcontracted. Would be looked up negatively if certain services are subcontracted and to what degree as it relates to scoring.

Response: The County prefers that the contractor provide all of the requested services, however, certain subcontractor arrangements may be allowable. Please include explanation of this in your proposal response.

Question #21: Having 70% of the scoring be subjective clearly places small minority owned businesses at a disadvantage because the only criteria small businesses can compete on due to their smaller size and lower overhead is the price. By price being only 30% isn't that making the entire process un-equitable for small minority owned businesses?

Response: No. This is the level of service that the County requires at this time.

Question #22: Please describe the methodology with scoring. Is there a matrix being used by the evaluators? Is there an evaluation committee?

Response: Page 12, Special Provisions, item U, Evaluation Criteria and Award, describes this process.

Question #23: Why type of experience or expertise does the evaluation committee have and are there any social workers on the committee? Do the evaluators hold any licenses?

Response: Evaluation Committees can be made up of Galveston County employees as well as outside personnel.

Question #24: What constitutes "completeness of the proposal" (Special Provisions, page 12). The point allocation is 35 points. If multiple parties turn in completed proposals do they all receive 35 points? How are the different prospective bidders differentiated from each other on this category?

Response: Completeness is understood to be a submittal that addresses every request made in the solicitation document that needs to be returned as evidence. All proposers meeting the criteria will receive the total points in each category. The Commissioners' Court has the final say in the selection of the contractor in case of tie scores and equal recommendations by the Evaluation Committee.

Question #25: *Would the size of contractor impact the scoring even if the contractor is able to meet the specifications for capacity? Would a small minority owned family business be scored lower than a large corporate owned business even if it met or exceeds the minimum requirements? How does the scoring vary for a business which can meet the requirements vs a business which exceeds the minimum requirements. Does this allow for larger vendors with excessive resources to be favored?*

Response: All proposals that meet or exceed the requested minimum criteria and specifications are eligible for award.

Question #26: *How are points for pricing allocated? Does the lower bidder automatically get full points? What about the next lowest bid, how is that scored? How are distinctions in scoring made with respect to pricing?*

Response: There is a matrix built into the evaluation spreadsheet that calculates the amount of points allocated in this area.

Question #27: *Record keeping accounts for 15 points, or 15% of the score? How is this criteria being evaluated and scored? What constitutes "record keeping"? How do different parties differentiate themselves on this category? What would constitute sufficient record keeping or not. What factors are taken into consideration with respect to "record keeping" and how are points allocated among these factors.*

Response: Proposers should submit explanation of how records are kept for reference and possible audit if the need arises.

Question #28: *Location of burial plots amounts to 10% of the score? How is this category evaluated and scored? What methodology is being considered for this criteria and how are distinctions between locations made. Are there favored locations the county wants considered? If multiple locations are ideal, how are the scores differentiated among the different bidders.*

Response: The locations matter to the department personnel that have to attend and monitor the resultant contract provisions.

Question #29: *The last two categories of 5 points each are not clearly visible. Can you clarify the criteria/category; how it is to be evaluated and scored, including how one evaluates the criteria "sensitivity to families" and differentiates the scoring among parties.*

Response: Sensitivity to Families and Hours of Access by a designated County Staff: (one point for each hour available by phone or fax). The Evaluation Committee will be responsible for scoring this.

Question #30: *Are there any specific requirements on the storage capabilities of the contractor and/or freezer capacity?*

Response: See Question #18 Response.

Question #31: *Do certain services have to be performed on certain days? How long must cremated remains be stored at the facility?*

Response: If the funeral home allows services at no cost to the family or Galveston County, service must be held Monday-Friday because the Indigent Coordinator must attend the services.

Question #32: *Where does burial plots have to be located?*

Response: Plots must be located in Galveston County with the exception of (Veterans) Houston National Cemetery and if the decedent has a local family plot and the Opening & Closing is paid for (proof is required).

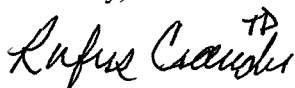
As a reminder, all questions regarding this proposal must be submitted in writing to:

Rufus G. Crowder, CPPO CPPB
Galveston County Purchasing Agent
722 Moody, Fifth (5th) Floor
Galveston, Texas 77550
E-mail: purchasing.bids@co.galveston.tx.us

If you have any further questions regarding this proposal, please address them to Rufus Crowder, CPPO CPPB, Purchasing Agent, via e-mail at purchasing.bids@co.galveston.tx.us, or contact the Purchasing Department at (409) 770-5371.

Please excuse us for any inconvenience that this may have caused.

Sincerely,



Rufus G. Crowder, CPPO CPPB
Purchasing Agent
Galveston County