



DATE: March 10, 2017
SUBJECT: Letter of Clarification
RE: Janitorial Services ITB
TO: All Prospective Bidders

It is of the utmost importance to Houston First Corporation (“HFC”) that the bidding process is conducted fairly and impartially. Accordingly, this Letter of Clarification is issued as part of the referenced solicitation for the purpose of answering questions timely received in response to this Invitation to Bid (“ITB”).

1. **Question:** How much will parking cost for Management staff?

Answer: HFC will provide a 20% discount off our current market rate of \$195.

2. **Question:** On P. 16, Section 2.19 of the collective bargaining agreement (“CBA”), there is reference to unionization of the current cleaning staff and the requirement for the successful bidder to “agree and hire” the personnel based on their skills and abilities. To effectively build our hourly rates for Exhibit D, should all bidders use the wages and benefits from the CBA provided on Houstonfirst.com?

If not, could Houston First please provide a wage determination or some mechanism that will ensure the contracting public bid using the same information?

Answer: HFC is not a party to the collective bargaining agreement; therefore, any agreement to provide wages, employee benefits, or other working conditions is a matter that must be negotiated by the successful bidder and the SEIU. HFC’s requirement is that all bidders pay the minimum hourly rates as set forth in the ITB.

3. **Question:** Who is responsible for supplying the janitorial supplies and equipment?

Answer: HFC will provide all necessary supplies and equipment for all facilities.

4. **Question:** What are you looking for in a Management Team?

Answer: Our desire is that the prime contractor present a forward-thinking management team (inclusive of subcontractors) able to provide unique and fresh ideas for janitorial operations while also representing the diverse array of Houstonians and their cultures.

5. **Question:** Who pays for the Project Manager’s salary?

Answer: The contractor is responsible for the Project Manager’s salary.

6. **Question:** How often will forklift operators be necessary?

Answer: Forklift operators are necessary 24/7.

7. **Question:** Is the number of full-time employees (162) flexible or will it be altered based on contractors plan?

Answer: Yes, this number is flexible, upon approval from HFC Facility Managers. Numbers may vary +/- 10 employees depending on the location and needs of each facility.

8. **Question:** How is the award process conducted? Are there subcommittees? Boards?

Answer: A selection committee will evaluate all bids based on the criteria listed under “Manner of Selection” in the ITB. HFC’s Board of Directors will approve the final agreement.

9. **Question:** What is the frequency of power washing? Can there be an alternative?

Answer: Power washing will be completed on an as needed basis. Yes, you may propose an alternative.

10. **Question:** Do we talk about pricing and uniform design during the oral presentation?

Answer: You may present uniform options. The uniforms at each location will be different, but the overall look and color will not change. Pricing is not an appropriate topic during the interviews.

11. **Question:** How long is the oral presentation and how many decision makers will be present?

Answer: Approximately one hour. The selection committee will be present as well as representatives from HFC’s staff.

12. **Question:** Who are the current diversity/minority subcontractors?

Answer: HFC does not have this information.

13. **Question:** Do temporary employees have to be members of the union?

Answer: No.

14. **Question:** Will the union work with the contractor on getting employees at the specified rates regardless of seniority?

Answer: This is a matter between the successful bidder and the SEIU.

15. **Question:** Will all employees be subject to the probationary period?

Answer: Yes.

16. **Question:** Can we obtain a two year spend report on employee utilization as per below:

- Contractor shall provide from 1 to 20 additional Housekeepers per shift upon four (4) hours notification, unless a shorter or longer period of time is mutually agreed upon by the Facility Managers and Contractor.

Answer: 1 to 3 times per year.

- Contractor shall provide from 1 to 5 Custodial Supervisors per shift upon four hours (4) notification, unless a shorter or longer period of time is mutually agreed upon by the Facility Managers and Contractor.

Answer: 0-2 times per year.

- Contractor shall provide from 21 to 50 additional Housekeepers, from 6 to 10 Custodial Supervisors per shift upon twelve (12) hours notification, unless a shorter or longer period of time is mutually agreed upon by the Facility Managers and Contractor.

Answer: 0-2 times per year.

- Contractor shall provide 51 to 150 additional Housekeepers, and from 11 to 20 Custodial Supervisors, per shift upon forty-eight (48) hours notification, unless a shorter or longer period of time is mutually agreed upon by the Facility Managers and Contractor.

Answer: 1 to 3 times per year depending on large events and/or emergencies.

17. **Question:** Can you provide either a two year spend report or an event report to show temporary employee usage as per below:

- For the Wortham Theater Center, Fish Plaza, Jones Hall, Jones Plaza, Talento Bilingue de Houston, and Sunset Coffee Building (Sunset Coffee Building will only employ temporary employees on an as needed basis).

Answer: Rarely are temporary employees required at Wortham Theatre and Jones Hall. Two temporary employees will be used at Jones Plaza on average 20 times per year. The number of temporary employees at Sunset Coffee Building is undetermined at this time.

18. **Question:** Do we have to provide for uniform cleaning or can we provide a more launder friendly alternative?

Answer: Yes, the successful bidder must provide uniform cleaning at their own expense. However, any cleaning method must be pre-approved by HFC to ensure clean uniforms are available for employees every day.

19. **Question:** Can you confirm that the hourly rate (Charged to HFC) in the janitorial services bid form will be constant for the 3-year contract and for the two 1-year renewal options?

Answer: The hourly rates will remain constant, unless a pay rate increase agreement is agreed upon by both parties.

20. **Question:** Since the current SEIU contract expired on 3/1/17, has a new agreement been signed? If so, can you please provide an updated copy?

Answer: The SEIU contract was extended through June 30, 2017.

21. **Question:** Would a joint venture partnership with a certified MWBE count toward the 33% diversity goal?

Answer: No, joint ventures between a prime and a certified MWBE contractor will not count toward the diversity goal.

22. **Question:** Section 2.22 of the ITB states employees may be tested at random or upon reasonable suspicion of abuse, but Section C, 12.0 stated that Contractor shall subject its employees to drug testing if there is reasonable suspicion of abuse. Can you please clarify whether drug testing of employees is required at random and/or upon reasonable suspicion of abuse?

Answer: Employees of both the contractor and subcontractors are required to undergo drug testing when hired. They may be asked to undergo additional drug testing upon reasonable suspicion of alcohol or drug abuse.

23. **Question:** Is the Bidder permitted to provide any information in their Submittal which they deem beneficial to the Selection Committee in addition to responses to items a. through g. as cited in Response Format on ITB page 2?

Answer: Yes.

24. **Question:** Does the CBA in effect with SEIU Local 1 apply to regular, full time subcontractor employees performing work under this contract?

Answer: No.

25. **Question:** ITB Section 1.17 on page 10 describes the Full-Time staff required at each Facility. Does this include the janitorial personnel who work during events and post events or would those individuals be in addition to the personnel cited on pages 10-11?

Answer: The staff described does not include part-time or temporary staff provided during events.

26. **Question:** ITB Section 3.11 Miller Outdoor Theatre Uniforms on page 21 states Bidder to provide seven uniform shirts, pants and shorts total however the numbers of each color add up to five, not seven. Please clarify.

Answer: The appropriate number of uniforms that should be provided is seven.

27. **Question:** ITB Section 3.15 on page 22 describes Digital Radios to be provided by the Bidder. Please provide the vendor name currently furnishing radios to this contract. Is the Facilities repeater(s) available for use by the Bidder?

Answer: Bear Com, Houston 2-Way Radio. Yes, the repeaters are available for use.

28. **Question:** ITB Section 3.18 on page 23 describes the biometric time clock system may be linked to HFC's computerized accounting system. Please provide the specifications for any software or hardware which may be required by the Bidder to ensure compatibility with HFC's accounting system?

Answer: The time clock system does not have to be linked to HFC's finance and accounting system. HFC's only requirement is that the contractor's system must be able to provide spreadsheets in EXCEL format. HFC presently utilizes the Kronos time clock software.

29. **Question:** Please indicate the number and locations of office and storage spaces available for use by the janitorial contractor?

Answer: One office and a break room.

30. **Question:** On page 4 the requirements for a PREFORMANCE BOND are spelled out. Typically, we see requirements for Bid Bonds. Is a Bid Bond required for this submittal?

Answer: No.

31. **Question:** Exhibit C, PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE PROGRAM. Was this program in place with the current contract and, if so, did the incumbent contractor meet or exceed the requirements of the program and receive cash incentive monies?

Answer: No. The Performance Incentive Program was not in place with the current contractor.

32. **Question:** ITB Section 2.4.1 on page 13 discusses the use of biometric time keeping systems. Please provide all bidders with the current number and locations of required biometric clocks.

Answer: One at the George R. Brown Convention Center and Jones Hall.

33. **Question:** Section C. “Compliance/MWBE Certification,” list the Houston Minority Supplier Development Council. If MWBE firms are certified through the Dallas/Fort Worth Minority Supplier Development Council, do these firms qualify or do you only consider local participation?

Answer: No. The following is a complete list of acceptable certification sources:

- City of Houston
- Houston Minority Supplier Development Council
- METRO’s Small Business Certification Program
- Women’s Business Enterprise Alliance
- Texas Department of Transportation’s Unified Certification Program
- Texas Small Business Association

When issued, Letters of Clarification automatically become a part of the ITB and supersede any previous specifications and/or provisions in conflict therewith. By submitting a bid, Bidders shall be deemed to have received all Letters of Clarification and to have incorporated them into their bid.