

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS #2
AMAZON WEB SERVICES REQUEST FOR QUOTE
BPM049069
August 1, 2025

Question # 1

What is the vendor's responsibility regarding the new State of Maryland Tech Tax that went into effect on July 1, 2025?

- a. Is the 3% tax applicable to this contract? <https://www.marylandcomptroller.gov/content/dam/mdcomp/tax/legal-publications/technical-bulletins/tb-56.pdf>
- b. How should Vendors capture and report this tax charges on the price proposal?

Answer #1

The State of Maryland government is exempt from paying sales and use tax so it should not be included in any price submitted by an Offeror and Offerors should consult with their legal and/or tax counsel regarding any questions about their obligations under the new law.

Question #2

The following attachments and exhibits were included as part of the RFQ, however, submission of these attachments/exhibits are not mentioned in Section 4, 4.3, 4.4, or 4.4.1 – Format of Technical Proposal.

- Attachment A: Contract
- Attachment B: Bid/Proposal Affidavit
- Attachment C: Contract Affidavit
- Attachment E: Non-Exchange Entity Agreement
- Exhibit A: IRS Publication 1075
- Exhibit B: Federal Funds Attachment
 - o Exhibit B-1: Certification Against Lobbying
 - o Exhibit B-2: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Question: Please clarify which documents are required to be submitted with the Technical and Price Proposal volumes, and which documents are to be submitted

Answer #2

Please refer to RFQ Attachments in the RFQ – Page 21

Question #3

“For the Savings Plans and Reserved Instances columns in the pricing table, the discounted monthly unit cost will be dependent on what type of Savings Plan/Reserved Instance model that is purchased within the account. For example, there are 1 or 3 year options, all/partial/no upfront options, etc. that will affect the pricing/discounted rates. How would MD Health Benefit Exchange prefer these costs to be shown? Would it be viable if we made an assumption on the Savings Plan/Reserved Instance pricing model and based pricing off of that assumption?”

Answer #3

No, offerors may describe how Savings Plan and Reserved instances would help in their technical proposal.

Question #4

May respondents use the same organization and contact person as both a past performance example and as a reference?

Answer #4

Yes, if it meets the requirements stipulated in the RFQ in Section 4.4.18 Past Performance and Section 4.4.1.9 References

Question #5

Should we submit a signed Attachment B-2 with our response even if we do not have any Federal Lobbying activity to report?

Answer #5

You mean Exhibit B. Yes, you should submit the Federal Lobbying form with “NA” on top; and sign and date at the bottom.

Question #6

Is the intended use of VPCs to segregate data a result of PII, HIPPA, FedRAMP compliance considerations?

Answer #6

This question is not applicable to this RFQ, and the information is not needed.

Question #7

“3.2.3 The Offeror shall provide MHBE with recommendations for any cost savings on a quarterly basis.” How is MHBE currently monitoring and evaluating spend/trend analysis?

Answer #7

We are invoiced monthly and perform an analysis internally.

Question #8

If a subcontractor is proposed, is it required that the subcontractor also be an authorized AWS partner, or is it sufficient for only the prime Offeror to hold AWS partner authorization and submit proof of such?

Answer #8

The Offeror must meet the minimum qualification. Refer to Section 1.18

Question #9

Can MHBE clarify under what circumstances an oral presentation will be requested, and what topics or materials Offerors should be prepared to cover if invited?

Answer #9

An oral presentation would only be requested during the evaluation process by the Evaluation Committee. It is not mandatory.

Question #10

Do the required references need to be from AWS-related projects specifically, or can they include relevant experience with other cloud service providers?

Answer #10

Per the RFQ, at least three (3) references are requested from customers who are capable of documenting the Offeror’s ability to provide the services specified in this RFQ. MHBE is requesting AWS services in the RFQ.

Question #11

<p>Will MHBE provide historical AWS usage or spend data to help Offerors build more accurate financial proposals?</p>	
<p>Answer #11</p> <p>A response was provided in Question & Answers #1 (numbers 12 and 13)</p>	
<p>Question #12</p> <p>Clarify whether the 50-page limit for proposals includes resumes, and whether MHBE has set a specific page limit or guidance for including resumes within the proposal.</p>	
<p>Answer #12</p> <p>Yes, it includes resumes.</p>	
<p>Question #13</p> <p>Clarify whether State of Maryland experience is required from both the prime Offeror and any proposed subcontractors, or only from the prime Offeror</p>	
<p>Man</p>	
<p>Answer #13</p> <p>State of Maryland experience, if applicable, must be for the Offeror providing the services.</p>	
<p>Question #14</p> <p>Is there a specific format or naming convention required for files submitted via eMMA for Volume I and Volume II?</p>	
<p>Answer #14</p> <p>Refer to Section 4 – Proposal Format of the RFQ</p>	
<p>Question #15</p> <p>Will MHBE provide a budget range or target ceiling to guide Offerors in developing their financial proposals?</p>	
<p>Answer #15</p> <p>No.</p>	
<p>Question #16</p> <p>Can MHBE clarify whether the awarded vendor must support disaster recovery or backup solutions, or are these managed internally?</p>	

Answer #16	Managed internally.
Question #17	Would the MHBE be open to a minimum yearly AWS spend commitment to provide an optimal cost savings plan? It would be negotiated with AWS?
Answer #17	No. MHBE will work with the incumbent.
Question # 18	Will oral presentations (if conducted) be factored into the technical evaluation score, or used only as a qualitative check?
Answer #18	Oral presentations, if conducted, will be factored into the technical evaluation.
Question #19	How will MHBE evaluate the qualifications and past performance of subcontractors—separately or as part of the prime Offeror’s proposal?
Answer #19	Please refer to Section 1.18 of the RFQ.
Question #20	Are there any restrictions or limitations on the percentage of work that can be subcontracted under this RFQ?
Answer #20	Work under this RFQ must be performed by an authorized AWS partner capable of providing AWS software and services.
Question #21	

	<p>Will subcontractors be required to sign the Non-Exchange Entity Agreement or other compliance documents separately, or is the prime Offeror responsible for their compliance?</p>
	<p>Answer #21</p> <p>The selected Offeror shall be responsible for all products and services required by this RFQ. All subcontractors must be identified and a complete description of their role relative to the Proposal (“Role”) must be included in the Offeror’s Proposal.</p> <p>If an Offeror that seeks to perform or provide the services required by this RFQ is the subsidiary of another entity, all information submitted by the Offeror, including but not limited to references, financial reports, or experience and documentation (e.g. insurance policies, bonds, letters of credit) used to meet minimum qualifications, if any, shall pertain exclusively to the Offeror, unless the parent organization will guarantee the performance of the subsidiary. If applicable, the Offeror shall submit with its Proposal an explicit statement, signed by an authorized representative of the parent organization, stating that the parent organization will guarantee the performance of the subsidiary.</p> <p>Section 5 of the Non-Exchange Entity Agreement states that “If AWS uses subcontractors, AWS will (a) impose appropriate contractual obligations upon subcontractors, and (b) be responsible for the acts or omissions of its subcontractors.” It is up to the Offeror how to fulfill these obligations through appropriate contractual obligations between the Offeror and any subcontractors. It is advised to consult with legal counsel regarding your compliance with this requirement in the Non-Exchange Entity Agreement.</p>
	<p>Question #22</p> <p>Can MHBE confirm if being an authorized AWS reseller is enough, or does the Offeror also need to be listed as an AWS Partner?</p>
	<p>Answer #22</p> <p>Refer to Section 2 – Minimum Qualifications</p> <p>Offeror must be an authorized AWS partner capable of providing AWS software and services. Offerors must provide proof of authorization to resell AWS software and services.</p>
	<p>Question #23</p> <p>Can MHBE confirm whether financial proposals will be evaluated solely based on total price, or will cost reasonableness or value-added services also be considered?</p>

	<p>Answer #23</p> <p>Refer to Section 5 of the RFQ - Evaluation Committee, Evaluation Criteria, and Selection Procedure (specifically 5.3) Financial proposals will be evaluated based upon dollar value of the proposal.</p>
	<p>Question #24</p> <p>Please clarify whether Offerors should propose services for all 16 AWS categories listed in Section 3.2.1, or only those that are relevant to their capabilities.</p>
	<p>Answer #24</p> <p>Offeror should propose services for all AWS categories listed in Attachment D – Financial Proposal.</p>
	<p>Question #25</p> <p>Is there an incumbent vendor currently providing AWS services to MHBE? Can you provide the current vendor details for AWS services being used by MHBE, if applicable?</p>
	<p>Answer #25</p> <p>This was answered in Questions & Answers #1</p>
	<p>Question #26</p> <p>Are there any anticipated additional option years beyond the two specified in the RFQ, or is five years the maximum contract term?</p>
	<p>Answer #26</p> <p>No.</p>
	<p>Question #27</p> <p>If oral presentations are requested, will they be conducted in person or virtually?</p>
	<p>Answer #27</p> <p>To Be Determined if oral presentations are needed.</p>
	<p>Question #28</p> <p>Can an Offeror propose to fulfil the AWS service requirements through an authorized AWS reseller as a subcontractor, and still be eligible to bid as the prime contractor?</p>
	<p>Answer #28</p> <p>No</p>

Question #29	Is the prime Offeror required to directly fulfill all RFQ requirements, or can key requirements be met through a subcontractor, provided proper authorization and oversight are in place?
Answer #29	The prime Offeror is required to directly fulfill all RFQ requirements.
Question #30	Does the MHBE require the Offeror to be an AWS-authorized partner specifically, or can other cloud service providers also be proposed for this contract?
Answer #30	Offeror must be an authorized AWS partner capable of providing AWS software and services. Offerors must provide proof of authorization to resell AWS software and services.
Question #31	Section 4.4.1.8 of the RFQ states that "at least two supporting references for each project example" are required, while Section 4.4.1.9 requests "at least three references" documenting the Offeror's capabilities. Can you please clarify the total number of distinct references required to satisfy both section?
Answer #31	Section 4.4.1.8 Past Performance is very clear; and asks for two supporting references. Section 4.4.1.9 References is very clear; and asks for three references.
Question #32	Can MHBE please provide additional detail or clarification on the relative weightage assigned to each technical evaluation criterion listed in Section 5.2?
Answer #32	No further detail other than what is stated in the RFQ.