

Q&A's – RFP 23022 – Gambling, Health and Recreational Behaviors Study

Q1. We are aware that other departments within New York State allow electronic submissions in lieu of hard-copy submissions to lessen the environmental impact of proposal production. Would OASAS consider electronic submissions in lieu of hard-copy submissions? RFP Section 3: Proposal Format and Content, paragraph 4, Pg. 15

A1. Per Section 4.1, Proposals should be placed in an envelope/box as indicated on ATTACHMENT 1 - Checklist of Submission Requirements.

The Administrative, Fiscal, and Technical Proposals should be sealed in envelopes/boxes and delivered to OASAS at the address listed on page one (1) of this RFP. Complete proposals must be received by OASAS by the date and time listed in the Expected Timeline for Key Events.

Proposals must be submitted by U.S. mail, by courier/delivery service (e.g., FedEx, UPS, etc.) or by hand in a sealed package to the address listed on page one (1) of this RFP.

Q2. The RFP notes on pg. 33 that “Bidders are required to submit a completed SDVOB Utilization Plan with their bid”, however, the Checklist of Submission Requirements notes that the SDVOB Utilization Plan can be submitted during contract negotiations, and that “only the successful bidder is required to submit”. Can OASAS please confirm if the SDVOB Utilization Plan needs to be included with the proposal or only at contract negotiations? RFP Section II: SDVOB Utilization Plan, paragraph 1, Pg. 33

A2. Per Attachment 1 – Checklist of Submission Requirements, the Attachment VIII - SDVOB Utilization Plan may be submitted as part of the Administrative Proposal or submitted during contract negotiations. (Note: only the Successful Bidder will be required to submit these forms.)

Q3. The RFP notes to include “a sample of documentation provided to a previous client”. Can OASAS provide clarification on the type of sample documentation you are looking for? (E.G. Sample Plan, Weighting Plan, Meeting Notes/Minutes, Interviewing Guide, etc.). RFP Section 3.3 Technical Proposal, Part G: Return of Data/Production and Acceptance of OASAS Data File, Pg. 19

A3. Ideally, we are asking for a report document that was based on a data collection for another client (preferably already in the public domain as that avoids clearance requirements with the previous client) that includes clear description of the study conducted, methods (including sampling approach, weighting if used), analytical procedures, findings, discussion, and conclusion.

Q4. Can OASAS provide a copy of the prior questionnaire used for data collection in 2020? Alternatively, or in addition, can OASAS provide an estimated number of questions or survey length (in minutes) for the upcoming administration? RFP Section 2.3 Survey Years Data Collection, 1.d Survey Instrument Development documents, Pg. 11

A4. The surveys to be conducted in this RFP are very different from the 2020 survey. Regarding the number of questions, we are not able to provide an exact number of questions, as we expect this to vary across the survey years. We recognize this is also related to the survey

duration (minutes per participant). Following the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS survey) example, we are anticipating survey should last no more than 20 minutes. We expect a core set of questions that will be used across all surveys and use of rotating and optional question sets that could be used only in select survey years to better manage the length of the surveys and thus the average completion time.

Q5. Can OASAS provide any documentation from the 2020 administration that might help bidders better understand the prior methodology and data and gauge the level of effort needed for the preliminary task? RFP Section 2.2 Preliminary Step – Year 1 Only, Pg. 9

A5. The only documentation from the 2020 survey we have shared publicly can be found at the following page:

https://oasas.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/03/oasas_gambling_survey_2020.pdf. We anticipate the preliminary task referred to in the question to represent a basic review to understand what was done previously, as well as the data or main findings.

Q6. Can OASAS provide the prior cost to conduct the 2020 survey?

A6. The cost of the prior contract to conduct the 2020 survey was \$349,886.00. However, please be advised that the proposed RFP is very distinct from what was done in the 2020 survey.

Q7. Has OASAS previously published any abstracts or publications associated with the 2020 data?

A7. No, we have not. Please be advised that the proposed RFP is very distinct from what was done in the 2020 survey.

Q8. Is there a funding ceiling for this work?

A8. The amount available for this project will be determined based on the Successful Bidder's proposed costs to complete all activities described in the scope of work of this RFP. However, there is a benefit to keeping costs low because all bids will receive a fiscal score, with lower-cost proposals receiving a higher fiscal score. Additionally, per Section 1.3, all provisions of this RFP and the resulting contract award are contingent upon the availability of NYS funds, and approval of the Attorney General, Office of the State Comptroller and Division of the Budget (State Budget).

Q9. Survey research is increasingly characterized by highly complex sampling designs that marry probability and non-probability samples together and which employ multi-mode data collection approaches. Does OASAS have preferred methodologies related to sampling and fieldwork or is it sufficient to ensure that proposed designs ensure valid and reliable estimates with the specified margins of error?

A9. We understand there are multiple approaches, but we are prioritizing probability-based sampling process for the proposed survey years. In certain cases, it might be necessary to include a non-probabilistic-based sample in the study population, but this would only be allowed if it meets all the following conditions: a) it is clearly justified that use of this approach will help recruitment for specific subsets of the population; b) it accounts for a very small proportion of the overall sample ($\leq 15\%$); c) there is a clearly articulated approach for combining data, which is guided by established methods (e.g from the American Association for Public Opinion Research

[AAPOR]). Please note that this can only happen after discussion with, and approval is received from OASAS.

Q10. The RFP includes specified margins of error for the statewide sample. Are there desired margins of error for regional and/or county-level estimates?

A10. For county estimates there is no specific desired margins of error while for regional estimates, +/- 5% percentage points will apply. OASAS expects the successful bidder to propose a probabilistic sampling procedure that fully aims at representativeness and that considers the geographic diversity of New York State.

Q11. The RFP notes that NYS has specific set-asides for MWBEs and SVOBs. Could NYS OASAS provide a general estimate of how long it may take for a MWBE and/or SVOB that is not presently registered as such with NYS to register and be recognized?

A11. OASAS is not involved in the MWBE or SDVOB certification processes and therefore cannot comment on the length of time it takes to become certified. MWBE Certification is solely handled by Empire State Development (ESD) and SDVOB Certification is handled by NYS Office of General Services (OGS) Division of Service-Disabled Veterans Business Development (DSDVBD).

Q12. Is it acceptable to build the MWBE plan in the RFP response using current business partners that meet the criteria but that are not yet registered in New York?

A12. No, only New York State Certified MWBEs can be listed on the MWBE Utilization Plan.

Q13. We will have to request a waiver for the MWBE and the SDVOB work plans. As a private college, we do not track this information. On page 34, the document says we can reach out before submission to request the waiver and can work with OASAS on this. If you are able, please provide the contact information in the Q & A. (I would appreciate guidance on this.)

A13. Please refer to Section 1.7 Designated Contact for Bidder Communication for permissible contacts by a Bidder. Section 8.3 III. and IV provides information on the Request for Waiver process. Also refer to Attachment 1 – Checklist of Submission Requirements for guidance on when these Attachments are to be submitted.

Q14. For each phase of the survey (qualitative and quantitative), the document requests the bidder to attend conferences to present the data. Who will incur the cost of conference attendance (e.g., travel, registration, accommodations)? Should this be built into the proposal?

A14. The Successful Bidder will incur these costs and therefore these should be built into the proposal. While the cost of registration could vary depending on the conference type, we expect travel, accommodation, and daily rates to be guided by and typically reflect current transport cost levels and GSA allowances depending on geographical location of conference venue (see <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates> for more details). Please note only domestic travel (within the continental United States is allowed). There could be additional New York State specific guidance on cost limits (e.g. airline class tickets).

Q15. Is there a maximum budget that is allocated for this extensive project?

A15. Please see response to Question 8.

Q16. Can students participate in conference abstract or poster submissions?

A16. Yes. Students who are employed by the successful bidder during the duration of the contract and are allowed by the successful bidder are welcome to participate in abstract development, submission, and/or presentation.

Q17. Is there an opportunity to provide comments in the contract on the requirements regarding sections like IT or insurance? Are the contract requirements non-negotiable?

A17. The requirements in the IT and Insurance sections are non-negotiable. If there are other requirements in the RFP that a bidder does not believe they can meet, these should be identified in the proposal. Please refer to RFP Section 7.1 F.

Q18. Is there the ability to amend or renegotiate terms during the 10-year contract period?

A18. If there is a need to modify any requirements during the term of the contract, this could be done with a formal amendment, requiring review and approval by OASAS, the Attorney General and the Office of the State Comptroller.

Q19. Are there specific guidelines or restrictions for participant recruitment methods (e.g., incentives, outreach channels)?

A19. The successful bidder is expected to follow examples of established surveys such as the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and language regarding recruitment methods as documented in the RFP.

Q20. What is the anticipated annual budget for this program?

A20. Please see response to Question 8.

Q21. Will out-of-state vendors be considered?

A21. Yes, the geographical location (anywhere in the United States) of the vendor is not a condition for meeting eligibility requirement. However, OASAS expects any vendor to be familiar with New York State in a manner that adequately informs data collection. Also, consult RFP documents to ensure compliance with other business-related requirements as indicated in various sections of the RFP.

Q22. To what extent is in person engagement (vs. virtual) desired from the project team?

A22. If this question relates to the qualitative component (or non-survey years), in-person is preferable, though OASAS is open to virtual data collection activities as well. The successful bidder must develop clear strategies to be shared with OASAS prior to data collection that ensures only individuals who are eligible including residing in or practice location (e.g., if treatment providers are the focus of a particular non-survey year) in New York State are recruited for data collection activities. In addition, successful bidder must carefully consider the uniqueness of the target population in determining if an in-person engagement is appropriate

(e.g. will a target population of older adults be computer and/or technology savvy to permit virtual interview logistics?). Lastly, the successful bidder must determine that non-survey data collection is not adversely impacted by a lack of in-person engagement.

Q23. To what extent will OASAS be involved in helping to facilitate participant recruitment for qualitative data collection activities (e.g., focus groups)?

A23. OASAS will not be directly involved in participant recruitment. However, OASAS will be open to providing letter(s) of support when necessary to reach certain groups, e.g., professional associations, if treatment providers are being recruited, to indicate the data collection is for OASAS and expressing the potential benefits of such data collection efforts.

Q24. Does OASAS have an internal review process required for research materials (for example surveys, focus group guides, recruitment material, etc.)? If yes, please describe.

A24. Yes, OASAS does have an internal review process. We will review the study plan, data collection tool, proposed analytic plans etc. before data collection can occur. It is expected that the successful bidder will make revisions based on OASAS feedback and share revised version with OASAS prior to data collection. Please refer to more details in Sections 2.3 and 2.4 in the RFP. Please note this internal review is not the same as an Institutional Review Board (IRB) review. The IRB process is a separate requirement.

Q25. Is there an established IRB exemption process for projects through NYS/OASAS, or will we be required independently to secure and submit that?

A25. There is an established process for submitting projects through OASAS' surrogate IRB at SUNY Buffalo which will be handled by the OASAS Evaluation Team. If the institution awarded the contract has an IRB, then the institution will also need to submit the project through the home institution's IRB. If the institution awarded the contract does not have an IRB, then the institution personnel working on the project will be added to the OASAS IRB.

Q26. Are incentives for participation in data collection activities allowed, and if so, is there a cap on the allowable amount per participant (if different for survey vs. qualitative efforts please provide separately)? Should incentives be budgeted within vendor budgets or will they be provided separately?

A26. Typically, monetary incentives or any other appropriate incentive is appropriate for adult population surveys and qualitative data collection activities (see examples of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System [BRFSS survey], Adult Tobacco Survey, etc.). However, we encourage successful bidders to carefully consider what is used in other surveys, what is appropriate for the level of participant engagement in the data collection activity, and importantly what an IRB will approve. Also, due to the nature of qualitative data collection, incentives provided usually (but perhaps not in all cases) exceed incentives provided for survey activities. Also, there could be differences in the level of incentives depending on who the data collection is geared towards and a thorough evaluation of what it takes to engage the specific population.

Q27. Can you share the name of the vendor who conducted past NYS data collection efforts?

A27. Yes: Research Triangle Institute, Inc.

Q28. Can the past NYS data collection tool be shared?

A28. The 2020 survey was not publicly shared, however you can review study details and findings from the 2020 survey here: https://oasas.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/03/oasas_gambling_survey_2020.pdf. Also, note that the proposed data collection for this RFP is very different from what was done in the 2020 survey.

Q29. Are there requirements for the languages other than English and Spanish in which the survey needs to be conducted?

A29. For the survey, the language requirements only apply to English and Spanish. No other language will be required for survey.

Q30. Are you open to receiving proposals with a recruitment strategy that achieves the required representative sample that relies on online recruitment?

A30. No, we are not open to a strategy that is only based on online recruitment. Please see more details on variety of recruitment methods in Section 2.3 of the RFP.

Q31. Is there an expectation on the length (number of questions) of the survey to be conducted?

A31. There is no specific number of questions at this point. Each survey cycle will be preceded by decision on the number of questions to be fielded. However, it is expected that each survey administration should not exceed 20 minutes for completion.

Q32. Can you please confirm that MWBE and SDVOB documentation is to be provided after award, and not with the proposal submission?

A32. Please see response to Question 2.

Q33. Is mail the only option for delivering the proposal materials? Is there an email option?

A33. Please see response to Question 1.

Q34. In Section 2.3, there is a reference to a 5 percentage point margin of error for "targeted subpopulations within the statewide sample". Would it be possible to get some examples of what these targeted subpopulations might be? For example, it may be easier to hit that target for Latinos than Asian residents, given their relative share of the state population. Depending on which subpopulations are targeted, we might recommend oversampling certain populations to meet this requirement, rather than increasing the overall sample size.

A34. Oversampling of certain subpopulations is fine with a clear description of the process for achieving this when needed.

Q35. There is a mention of incentives for survey participants in Part C-3 (Sample Design). Could you confirm that OASAS is permitted to offer incentives to survey respondents?

We ask because we had another New York client (a regional planning agency) that told us they were not allowed to offer incentives on a survey project.

A35. Incentives are generally recognized as appropriate if well matched to the level of resources (e.g. time involvement) expected of participants. However, we defer to whatever is allowed by IRB for the surveys in this contract. We are also aware of other population-based surveys such as the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS survey) and Adult Tobacco Survey conducted in New York and for which some incentives are provided. Please refer to these surveys for specifics on incentives provided.

Q36. Finally, does OASAS have a maximum budget amount in mind for this project?

A36. Please see response to Question 8.

Q37. Section 2.2 1#b - Is surveying transitional age youth in this context (16+ years old) outside of the scope despite data collected and analyzed by our bidding team showing a rise of activity in illicit or gray online gambling occurring at these ages?

A37. While we recognize gambling activities is occurring at younger ages, the focus for this specific RFP is adult population aged 18 years or older only.

Q38. For Attachment 11, the years of experience checklist, should bidder respond as the institution's years of experience in providing this service, or the collective years of experience of the bidding team more specifically?

A38. OASAS is primarily interested in the experience of the team that will provide the services outlined in the RFP, rather than the institution's years of experience. Please see more details in Sections 1.4 and 3.3.

Q39. Related to Section 2.3b's data collection procedures and IRB exemption, for ease of data transfers and security measures, does NYS/OASAS have an IRB that may be utilized in a joint protocol with the bidder's IRB?

A39. Yes.

Q40. Section 8.26.2 requires compliance with New York State Enterprise Information Security Policies. Should bidders provide evidence of this compliance in the proposal (i.e. exhibits of protocols and procedures consistent with these security standards)?

A40. Documentation is not required to be submitted with bid proposal. However, OASAS may require the successful bidder to provide documentation during contract negotiations and/or any time during the term of the resulting contract.

Q41. Section 8.2 states the requirement Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) to promote opportunities for the maximum feasible participation of New York State-certified Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises ("MWBEs") and the employment of minority group members and women in the performance of OASAS contracts. However, it does not appear that this is a part of the evaluation consideration. Can you please elaborate how our MWBE will be promoted against competition without these two certifications?

A41. Per Section 5.3 section C of the RFP, the Evaluation Process consists of 3 components, one being Diversity Practices. Refer to Section 8.4 for more information on Diversity Practices, as well as Attachment 6.

Q42. Related to this question, should bidders prepare a MWBE Utilization Plan, Form #1 (ATTACHMENT III) with their proposal? The timeline for this is unclear as the section says “submission should be prepared with the bid, proposal or proposed negotiated contract or within a reasonable time thereafter, but prior to contract award.”

A42. Per Attachment 1 – Checklist of Submission Requirements, the Attachment III - (Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises) Form #1 and/or Form #2, Form #4 and Form #6 may be submitted as part of the Administrative Proposal or submitted during contract negotiations. (Note: only the Successful Bidder will be required to submit these forms.)

Q43. Similarly, can you confirm that we should prepare a utilization plan for SDVOB alongside our proposal submission as the RFP states to be prepared alongside the bid, but attachments for contracts suggest it may be submitted prior to contracting? If yes, can you please provide guidance on what section of the proposal these should be included in (Administrative, for example).

A43. Please see response to Question 2.

Q44. Section 8.26.7 affirms that data ownership by OASAS. As part of this, will the successful bidders be eligible to use data for future scientific journal publications with the approval and inclusion of OASAS?

A44. Yes, the successful bidder can use the data with the approval and inclusion of OASAS. We have included requirements for both conference abstracts and manuscript preparation as deliverables under the RFP contract. Nevertheless, we welcome additional use of the data to develop manuscripts beyond the minimum requirement of the contract as we seek to maximize data dissemination. However, in such circumstances, OASAS reserves the right to participate in such activities. Written permission will be required from OASAS before successful bidder can proceed to use the data for additional scientific publications. OASAS also reserves the exclusive right to decline use of the data after internal agency deliberations.

Q45. Section 2.3 #12b and Section 2.4 10b includes requests for recommendations. Can you please elaborate on the types of recommendations OASAS is interested in?

A45. OASAS is requesting recommendations that are guided by evidence or data collected from the executed contract. OASAS expects the successful bidder to use data generated from the contract to inform suggestions for policy and/or interventions, or in some cases indicate new areas to focus on for data collection.

Q46. Section 3 requests that all proposal documents (administrative, technical and fiscal) be packaged separately. For ease of physical delivery, may we prepare these documents in separate envelopes, but package them together? Or is it preferred each envelope be mailed independently with its own tracking ID?

A46. Per Section 4.1, the proposal documents should be packaged in separate envelopes but mailed in one package with one tracking ID.

Q47. Per Section 8.9, if our proposal includes subcontracting a portion of the scope out that is approaching \$100,000, should we include the subcontractor's vendor responsibility form as part of this proposal, or should we prepare that contingent upon successful award?

A47. You may include the subcontractor's vendor responsibility form as part of your proposal, but it is only contingent upon successful award.

Q48. Per Section 2.1B, as it relates to qualitative methods, does OASAS have preference or general assumptions around in-person versus online methodology?

A48. In-person is preferable, though OASAS is open to virtual data collection activities as well. The successful bidder must develop clear strategies to be shared with OASAS prior to data collection that ensures only individuals who are eligible including residing in or practice location (e.g., if treatment providers are the focus of a particular non-survey year) in New York State are recruited for data collection activities. In addition, successful bidder must carefully consider the uniqueness of the target population in determining if an in-person engagement is appropriate (e.g., will a target population of older adults be sufficiently computer- and/or technology- savvy to permit virtual interview logistics?). Lastly, the successful bidder must determine that non-survey data collection is not adversely impacted by a lack of in-person engagement.

Q49. Section 2.3, paragraph 1 - Does the Annual Study proposal include a plan for developing the survey instrument or the actual survey instrument?

A49. The Annual Study proposal should include a draft survey with description of how the questions were developed or source (please consult sections 2.3.1 and 2.4.1 in the RFP for full details). Prior to developing the draft survey, the successful bidder will meet with OASAS to discuss potential topics to be included in each survey round. Survey questions will be drawn from (but not limited to) topics already identified in the RFP (see Section 2.3). The Revised Annual Study proposal is expected to include the final set of questions agreed upon by both the bidder and OASAS.

Q50. Section 3.1, paragraph 1-10 - Would OASAS accept electronic signatures on the cover letter and attachments?

A50. OASAS requires ink signatures on any documents that require a notarized signature.

Q51. Section 3.2 - Could the state confirm if it has an anticipated amount of funding per year?

A51. Please see response to Question 8.

Q52. Section 3.2 - Could the state confirm that vendors are allowed to escalate rates across the 10 years of the project to avoid high base rates?

A52. Any anticipated escalation rates should be factored into the annual amounts submitted on the Attachment 2-Financial Proposal.

Q53. Section 3.3 - Is there a page limit for the technical proposal?

A53. There is no page limit.

Q54. Section 3.3, Part C, paragraph 2 - Does OASAS have an expectation regarding the length of the survey (e.g., number of questions) or the amount of time it should take for the respondents to complete it?

A54. There is no specific number of questions at this point. Each survey cycle will be preceded by decision on the number of questions to be fielded. However, it is expected that each survey administration should not exceed 20 minutes for completion.

Q55. Section 3.3, Part F, paragraph 1 - Does OASAS have an expectation for the number of interviews to conduct in the non-survey years?

A55. There is no specific number, however we included considerations for data saturation in the Section 2.4.1 of the RFP. It is expected that discussions around the target number will be part of discussion each non-survey year prior to data collection and will be influenced by the specific group targeted for recruitment, considerations for potential challenges for recruitment, timeline, other logistics etc.