

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP Number: 3120001590

To Provide: Testing for 40+ genetic conditions utilizing Dried Blood Spot card specimens and provide quantitative and qualitative data reports.

Issue Date: December 17, 2018

CLOSING LOCATION

Mississippi State Department of Health
570 East Woodrow Wilson Avenue, Osborne Building Suite 200
Jackson, Mississippi 39216

PROPOSAL COORDINATOR

Anita Evans, MSDH Contract Analyst

Telephone: 601-576-8127

E-Mail: anita.evans@msdh.ms.gov

CLOSING DATE AND TIME

Proposals must be received by 5:00PM CST, January 17, 2019

SECTION 1. PROCUREMENT OVERVIEW

1.1 Proposal Acceptance Period

The original and five (5) copies of the proposal, six (6) copies total, shall be signed and submitted in a sealed envelope or package to the Mississippi State Department of Health, ATTN: Genetic Services, 570 East Woodrow Wilson Avenue, Osborne Building - Suite 200, Jackson, MS 39216 no later than the time and date specified for receipt of proposals. Timely submission is the responsibility of the respondent. Proposals received after the specified time shall be rejected and unopened in the Agency procurement file. The envelope or package shall be marked with the proposal opening date and time and Request for Proposal (RFP) number. Each proposal should include a cover sheet with RFP number and number of each proposal. The time and date of receipt shall be indicated on the envelope or package by the MSDH, Bureau of Genetic Services. Each page of the proposal and all attachments shall be identified with the name of the respondent. Modifications or additions to any portion of the procurement document may be cause for rejection of the proposal. The Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services reserves the right to decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether to reject a proposal with modifications or additions as non-responsive. As a precondition to proposal acceptance, the Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services may request the respondent to withdraw or modify those portions of the proposal deemed non-responsive that do not affect quality, quantity, price, or delivery of the service.

1.1.1 Timeline

- Request for Proposals (RFP) Issue Date: December 17, 2018
- Deadline for Vendor Questions to MSDH: January 4, 2019, 5:00 PM CST
- Anticipated Posting of Answers to Questions: January 11, 2019, 5:00 PM CST
- Proposals Submission Deadline: January 17, 2019, 5:00 PM CST
- Opening Date: January 22, 2019 at 10:00 AM CST
- Date of Notice to Intent to Award: Prior to March 12, 2019
- Post Award Debriefing Held by Date: March 15, 2019, 5:00p.m. CST
- Protest Deadline Date: March 22, 2019, 5:00p.m. CST

1.1.2 Rejection of Proposals

Proposals which do not conform to the requirements set forth in this Request for Proposals may be rejected by Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services. Proposals may be rejected for reasons which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) The proposal contains unauthorized amendments to the requirements of the Request for Proposals.
- 2) The proposal is conditional.
- 3) The proposal is incomplete or contains irregularities which make the proposal indefinite or ambiguous.

- 4) The proposal is received late. Late proposals will be maintained unopen in the procurement file.
- 5) The proposal is not signed by an authorized representative of the party.
- 6) The proposal contains false or misleading statements or references.
- 7) The proposal does not offer to provide all services required by the Request for Proposal.

1.2 Expenses Incurred in Preparing Offers

The Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services accepts no responsibility for any expense incurred by the respondent in the preparation and presentation of an offer. Such expenses shall be borne exclusively by the respondent.

1.3 Proprietary Information

The respondent should mark any and all pages of the proposal considered to be proprietary information which may remain confidential in accordance with Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-61-9 and 79-23-1 (1972, as amended). Any pages not marked accordingly will be subject to review by the general public after award of the contract. Requests to review the proprietary information will be handled in accordance with applicable legal procedures.

1.4 Registration with Mississippi Secretary of State

By submitting a proposal, the respondent certifies that it is registered to do business in the State of Mississippi as prescribed by the Mississippi Secretary of State or, if not already registered, that it will do so within seven (7) business days of being offered an award. Sole proprietors are not required to register with the Mississippi Secretary of State.

1.5 Debarment

By submitting a proposal, the respondent certifies that it is not currently debarred from submitting proposals for contracts issued by any political subdivision or agency of the State of Mississippi or Federal government and that it is not an agent of a person or entity that is currently debarred from submitting proposals for contracts issued by any political subdivision or agency of the State of Mississippi.

1.6 Competitive Proposals

Discussions may be conducted with respondents who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award. Likewise, Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services also reserves the right to accept any proposal as submitted for contract award, without substantive negotiation of proposed terms, services or prices. For these reasons, all parties are advised to propose their most favorable terms initially.

1.7 Additional Information

Questions about the contract portions of the procurement document must be submitted in writing to Anita Evans at 570 East Woodrow Wilson Avenue, Jackson, MS 39216, 601-576-8127, anita.evans@msdh.ms.gov. Questions concerning the technical portions of the procurement document should be directed to Dr. Alyce Stewart at 570 East Woodrow

Wilson Avenue, Jackson, MS 39216, 601-576-7619, alyce.stewart@msdh.ms.gov. Respondents are cautioned that any statements made by contact persons that cause a material change to any portion of the procurement document shall not be relied upon unless subsequently ratified by a formal written amendment to the procurement document.

1.8 Type of Contract

Compensation for services will be in the form of a firm fixed price agreement.

1.9 Written Proposals

All proposals shall be in writing.

SECTION 2

2.1 Purpose

The Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services is seeking to establish a contract for the purpose of selecting a qualified laboratory for the right to provide newborn screening laboratory testing services for Mississippi birthed newborns. This short-term follow-up process assist in the identification of certain serious or life-threatening conditions that may cause organ damage, developmental delay, or death if left undiagnosed and untreated. It is understood that any contract resulting from RFP 3120001590 requires approval by the Public Procurement Review Board. If any contract resulting from RFP 3120001590 is not approved by the Public Procurement Review Board, it is void and no payment shall be made.

2.2 Scope of Services

The selected laboratory will provide testing for 40+ conditions specified in the Rules and Regulations governing Newborn Screening and Birth Defects modified and adopted by the Mississippi State Board of Health on October 7, 2014 (See Appendix A). Laboratories submitting proposals must be located within the United States and must test a minimum of 40,000 specimens per year. All regulated laboratories must be successfully participating in an acceptable commercial proficiency testing program that will monitor the performance of testing methodologies. Laboratories must have either a certificate of compliance or a certificate of accreditation from the Department of Health and Human Services, Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) pursuant to Section 353 of the Public Health Service Act as revised by the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) of 1988. Laboratories must adhere to all quality control measures listed in the Rules and Regulations governing Newborn Screening and Birth Defects. The Mississippi Board of Health must approve any exceptions. The current quality control measures in the Regulations Governing Newborn Screening and Birth Defects Registry (See Appendix A) may be amended in the future, as necessary, to accommodate any new testing protocols. All changes in testing protocol must be submitted to the Genetic Services Bureau for review and acceptance, prior to laboratory implementation. Laboratories must submit copies of proficiency testing/performance evaluations upon request by the program. Laboratories must submit copies of validation or verification

documentation for all assays used if requested by the program. Any changes to the reference ranges/cut-off values or other indicators used to determine abnormal/presumptive positive results must be provided in writing to MSDH Genetic Services Bureau as they occur. The laboratory will provide up to twelve (12) training sessions and/or presentations for MSDH personnel and healthcare professionals each year, as requested by the MSDH. Times and locations will be determined by the MSDH Genetic Services.

2.2.1 SPECIFICATIONS

2.2.1.1 DETAILED MINIMUM SPECIFICATIONS:

Devise a written proposal that will ensure that selection procedures for screening applicants for jobs with the state service of Mississippi are job related and legally defensible. All information, results, conclusions, studies and other data arising out of the laboratory's performance may be utilized by the state in litigation. The written proposal should be such that it clearly and fully explains how the laboratory plans on:

- (1) Providing how laboratory is to receive specimens directly from the birthing hospitals and county health departments located in Mississippi. The applicant shall describe their current protocols for receiving and processing specimens and describe their plan to incorporate the approximately 40,000 DBS card to be received annually from Mississippi. The contractor will arrange for daily courier pick-up service at designated locations within each Mississippi birthing hospital for next day delivery to the contractor's laboratory and provide for tracking of such specimens (with exceptions for weekend and holiday days when no transport service is available). A minimum of six (6) day a week pick up and overnight delivery is expected for all birthing hospitals. Saturday delivery to the laboratory shall be provided for specimens shipped Fridays. The contractor shall also monitor the courier service for performance and timeliness.
- (2) Entering all demographic data fields from the DBS card (see Attachment C) in a format suitable for electronic transfer to the MSDH Genetic Services Bureau, according to program specifications. The Genetic Services Bureau will supply the DBS card to the birthing hospitals and county health departments.
- (3) Describing in detail their current laboratory information management system including an explanation of their capacity to capture and segregate Mississippi data. The following information shall be captured if provided on the DBS card:
 - Specimen status (i.e., first specimen, repeat specimen)
 - Infant's first and last name, previous last name, date of birth, time of birth in military time, sex, race, ethnicity, weight in grams at time of specimen collection, and feeding status at time of specimen collection, meconium ileus status at birth
 - Birth information (i.e., single birth, twin A or B, or other multiple births, and whether or not the infant was premature)

- Date of collection of specimen, and time of collection in military time
 - Infant's transfusion status and date of last transfusion
 - Hospital of birth, county health department, or hospital where specimen was collected (using the 3 digit designated hospital codes to be supplied by the MSDH Genetic Services Bureau)
 - Hospital medical record number for the infant
 - Mother's first and last name, mother's date of birth, residence (street address, city, state, Zip code, county) telephone number, social security number and Medicaid number
 - Name of infant's physician and contact information
 - Submitter's name and address
 - Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Test (UNHS) results
 - Critical Congenital Heart Defects (CCHD) Screening results
- (4) Conduct testing for specified conditions on specimens received. The bidder shall describe their current protocols and procedures for processing and testing specimens, and describe their ability to test for the following conditions:

Argininemia
 Argininosuccinic Aciduria (ASA Lyase Deficiency)
 Biotinidase Deficiency
 Carbamoylphosphate Synthetase Deficiency (CPS Deficiency)
 Carnitine Palmitoyltransferase I Deficiency (CPT I)
 Carnitine Palmitoyltransferase II Deficiency (CPT II)
 Carnitine/Acylcarnitine Translocase Deficiency (Translocase)
 Citrullinemia (ASA Synthetase Deficiency)
 Cystic Fibrosis (CF)
 Glutaric Aciduria Type I (GA I)
 Homocystinuria
 3-Hydroxy-3-Methylglutaryl-CoA Lyase Deficiency (HMG)
 Hyperammoninemia, Hyperornithinemia, Homocitrullinemia Syndrome (HHH)
 Hypermethioninemia
 Isobutyryl-CoA Dehydrogenase Deficiency
 Isovaleric Acidemia (IVA)
 Long-Chain 3-hydroxyacyl-CoA Dehydrogenase Deficiency (LCHAD)
 Malonic Aciduria
 Maple Syrup Urine Disease (MSUD)
 Medium-Chain Acyl-CoA Dehydrogenase Deficiency (MCAD)
 2-Methylbutyryl-CoA Dehydrogenase Deficiency
 3-Methylcrotonyl-CoA Carboxylase Deficiency (3MCC Def)
 3-Methylglutaconyl-CoA Hydratase Deficiency
 Methylmalonic Acidemia (MMA)
 Mitochondrial Acetoacetyl-CoA Thiolase Deficiency
 Mucopolysaccharidosis I (MPS I)
 Multiple Acyl-CoA Dehydrogenase Deficiency (MADD or GA II)

Multiple CoA Carboxylase Deficiency
5-Oxoprolinuria (Pyroglutamic aciduria)
Propionic Acidemia (PPA)
Severe Combined Immunodeficiency (SCID)
Short-Chain Acyl-CoA Dehydrogenase Deficiency (SCAD)
Short-Chain Hydroxy Acyl-CoA Dehydrogenase Deficiency (SCHAD)
Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA)
Trifunctional Protein Deficiency (TFP Deficiency)
Tyrosinemia Type I (TYR I)
Tyrosinemia Type II (TYR II)
Very Long-Chain Acyl-CoA Dehydrogenase Deficiency (VLCAD)

- (5) Reporting the results of all tests to the MSDH Genetic Services Bureau electronically according to program specified format and time frames. Certain inconclusive and presumptive positive test result must also be reported by telephone and fax (see Appendix D).
- (6) Providing MSDH with written emergency backup plan for temporary laboratory support services in the event of a natural disaster, terrorist event, an emergency, or other hazards preventing testing at the contracted laboratory.
- (7) Providing written laboratory policy on storage of dried blood spot specimens (e.g. use, storage and destruction where, and how long). The use, storage and destructions of specimens must be approved by MSDH Genetic Services Bureau.
- (8) Reporting test results to the MSDH Genetic Services Bureau via electronic transmission and allow electronic access to test results and other data via a secure connection. All electronic transmissions of data must meet all State and Federal security requirements including those in the Health Information Protection and Portability Assurance Act (HIPAA) and regulations and be compatible with provisions of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH Act). The laboratory IT personnel will provide training to the Program Manager and Follow-up personnel on how to use the applications. The bidder shall provide documentation of their ability to submit test results electronically according to the program specified format and to report inconclusive and presumptive positive results by telephone and fax as specified by the program.
- (9) Reporting test results to the facility where the specimen originated. The applicant shall provide documentation of their ability to provide electronic reports and/ or mail hard copy reports of all tests to the hospital, county health department, or other site where the dried blood specimen was collected within one workday after completion of all tests.
- (10) Availability of a Health Level Seven (HL7) interface engine to interface with Mississippi hospitals and/or Mississippi State Department of Health divisions. The various uses of the HL7 engine will be determined by the Bureau.

- (11) Informing the MSDH Genetic Services Bureau of invalid/unacceptable specimens received. The Genetic Services Bureau shall be notified of all invalid/unacceptable specimens. The applicant shall describe their current criteria for invalid/unacceptable specimen designation and provide historical data monthly to indicate the number of invalid/unacceptable specimens for each criterion.
- (12) Providing a plan shall include the personnel to be involved in each process, the qualifications of the individuals, and their length of service and experience. Additional information regarding staffing and personnel may be included if pertinent.

The applicant shall include details such as the primary screen assay for each condition that includes reference ranges/cut-off values or other indicators used to determine abnormal/presumptive positive results. The applicant shall also include details on the secondary assay used when to be performed, the control that will be included, and the expected turnaround time from date of birth to collection lab to date of results.

Any variations in testing that differ from the methods for specimen analysis listed in the MSDH Rules and Regulations Governing Newborn Screening and Birth Defects shall be noted and explained. All changes in testing protocol must be submitted to the Genetics Services Bureau for review and acceptance and prior to lab implementation.

Any deviations from the quality control measures listed in the MSDH Rules and Regulations Governing Newborn Screening and Birth Defects shall be noted and explained.

A detailed description of the entire testing process including specimen preparation, testing method with all instruments and reagents specified, a description of all control samples, the reportable reference ranges, and other pertinent information to be provided upon request by MSDH Genetic Services Bureau. Laboratories should be prepared to submit copies of their current Standard Operating Procedure Manuals that pertain to testing for the specified conditions if requested by the MSDH Genetic Services Bureau.

2.2.1.2 WRITTEN PROPOSAL SHALL CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING MINIMUM INFORMATION:

- (1) name of business, location of business, and the place of performance of the proposed contract,
- (2) age of business and the average number of employees over the past three (3) years;
- (3) resume listing abilities, qualifications and experience of all individuals who will be assigned to provide the required services;
- (4) The laboratory shall maintain a listing of qualified specialists in pediatric endocrine, metabolic, hemoglobin disorders, immunodeficiencies, pulmonology,

molecular genetics and a laboratory specialist who have agreed to provide medical consultation to the laboratory. This medical consultation may be related to establishing and monitoring screening test algorithms, and test performance, interpretation of screening test results, and recommendations for further evaluation;

- (5) listing of three contracts under which services similar in scope, size, or discipline were performed or undertaken, including at least two (2) references for current contracts or those awarded during the past three (3) years (On a proposal form, list three (3) projects to include the names and addresses of the projects, the scope of the project, and the names and telephone numbers of the clients for reference purposes. All information on the proposal form must be completed. Incomplete or unsigned proposal forms will be rejected.);
- (6) a project work plan providing as much detail as is practical explaining how the services will be implemented and performed; and,
- (7) an estimate of price.

2.2.1.3 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Bidders' proposals shall conform to all instructions, conditions, and requirements included in the Request for Proposal. Prospective bidders are expected to carefully examine all documentation, schedules and requirements stipulated in this Request for Proposal, and respond to each requirement in the format prescribed. The proposal shall consist of four parts:

- Part I – Qualifications and experience of principals and staff;
- Part II – Proposal for screening for all 40+ conditions listed, capturing and transferring the demographic data and test results;
- Part III – Deliverables;
- Part IV – Certification of laboratory qualifications; and
- Part V – Cost per specimen.

All proposals shall be submitted on letter size (8.5" X 11") paper with one-inch margins using 12-point font. Responses to this request for proposals should not exceed 50 pages in length, excluding attachments. To facilitate the proposal evaluation process, one (1) original, clearly identified as such, and five (5) copies of the entire proposal should be submitted. The copy marked "original" shall take precedence over any other copies, should there be a discrepancy.

Part I – Qualifications/ Experience of Staff

This part shall contain the name of the bidder, location of the bidder's principal place of business, and provide satisfactory evidence for the bidder's capability to provide the services described in section **2.2.1.1**. The discussion shall include the background and relevant experience of the bidder and any of the bidders' subsidiaries and subcontractors expected to be

involved in the provision of these services. Qualifications, experience, and length of service of all personnel involved in performing these services shall be provided along with their titles and responsibilities. Specify for all key professional staff their roles and responsibilities. Identify numbers and qualifications of staff maintained for laboratory operations by area, e.g. specimen accessioning/processing, data entry, testing (by area), reporting, initial notifications, filter paper management, etc.).

Part II – Proposal

This part shall provide a description of the bidders' proposal to provide the services as specified in section 2.2.1.1. Any proposed services that are offered in addition to those services specified in section 2.2.1.1, and for which there would be no additional charge, may be included as an addendum to Part II (examples: testing of compulsory repeat specimens, consultation services regarding need for further testing of individuals with positive screen results, DNA testing, performing confirmatory tests).

The proposal must be prepared and organized in a clear and concise manner that is easily understandable. In the proposal, the applicant shall address all aspects of each component listed in section 2.2.1.1 and provide a comprehensive description of how the bidder proposes to ensure effective integration of activities within the existing service delivery structure.

Part III – Deliverables

The selected respondent will provide reports to the MSDH Genetic Services Bureau pertaining to its operations in support of the newborn screening program as indicated below. All reports will identify the period being reported, will be submitted electronically, and are to be submitted in the timeframe and format requested by MSDH Genetics Bureau.

Section A below lists the reports that the selected respondent will be required to submit to MSDH Genetic Services Bureau as noted (weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.). Section B below lists the reports that MSDH Genetic Services Bureau may request of the selected respondent, but that will not be required on a regular basis. For reports in section B below, the selected respondent is expected, as part of its internal quality assurance program, to maintain an electronic database that contains all of the information required for each report and to regularly evaluate these reports. MSDH Genetic Services Bureau reserves the right to request additional reports or remove reports from these lists at any time.

Section A:

Monthly NBS Statistics Report

This report will include the following information:

- Time period covered by the report
- Number of initial screens conducted, listed by collection source
- Number of repeat screens conducted, listed by collection source
- Number of invalid specimens, listed by collection source
- Number of confirmed abnormal results, listed by collection source

- Number of presumptive positive results, listed by collection source
- Number of confirmed positive results, listed by collection source

Monthly Transit Turnaround Time Report

This report will list the number of screening specimens, by collection source, received by the selected respondent after being collected by the collection source within the given time period. All transit reports should include the following:

- Newborns born in the facility
- Initial newborn specimens submitted
- Total Specimens (Includes initial repeat specimens)
- Unsatisfactory specimens
- Specimens drawn early (<24 hours)
- Initial specimens collected post-transfusion
- Average turn-around time from birth to report (days)
- Average time from birth to collection
- Average time collection to receipt at the screening lab
- Average time from receipt to report

Monthly Transit Turnaround Time – Patient Detail Report

This report will include the following information for all screening specimens that were received by the selected respondent more than two (2) days after being collected by the collection source within the given time period.

- Time period covered by the report
- Name of collection source and ID number
- Infant’s name
- Date of birth
- Date specimen was drawn
- Date specimen was received by the selected respondent
- Was the specimen quality/quantity acceptable (Yes or No)?
- Were the screen results normal (Yes or No)?

Weekly UNHS Statistics Report

This report will include the following information:

- Number of hearing screens conducted, listed by collection source
- Number of repeat screens conducted, listed by collection source
- Number of infants passed screens, listed by collection source
- Number of infants who did not pass screens, listed by collection source
- Number of infants not screened, listed by collection source

Section B:

The selected respondent, as part of its internal quality assurance program, is expected to maintain statistics on its own laboratory operations, as well as on the NBS activities of the birthing facilities/collection sources that submit newborn screening specimens.

In order to support MSDH's ability to completely assess the statewide NBS program, the selected respondent will submit to the MSDH Genetic Services Bureau the following annual statistics on each collection source and on overall program performance. These statistical reports are in addition to those reports required to be submitted by the selected respondent as described in Function 6.

Annual NBS Statistical Report

The selected respondent will submit these reports to the MSDH Genetic Services Bureau no later than March 1, each year (covering the period of the preceding January through December). This report will also include cumulative statistics for the entire calendar year.

All reports will identify the time period being reported. These reports will include information pertaining to the operation of the newborn screening program for each collection source and overall program performance for at least the following areas:

- Number of initial screens conducted
- Number of repeat screens conducted
- Total number of all screens conducted
- Average age of infants when initial specimen collected
- Percentage of infants who did not require any repeat screens

In addition to the statistical compilation listed above, respondents are encouraged to submit additional statistical indices that they feel would contribute to an assessment of the MSDH Genetic Services Bureau.

The selected respondent will assist MSDH Genetic Services to complete national surveys and statistical reports upon request.

Part IV – Laboratory Certifications

This part shall contain copies of certificates and other forms of documentation that indicate the laboratory meets all specifications, terms, and conditions for professional services as stated in section 2.2.1.1. The applicant shall submit copies of all proficiency testing submissions/performance evaluations for the last two years. Where no external proficiency testing program is available, the applicant shall submit the results of the laboratory's semi-annual proficiency evaluations for the last two years.

Part V– Proposed Cost Summary

In order to be considered, bidders' proposal must include documentation about cost. This cost summary must identify a maximum charge per specimen for performing screening tests for over 40 specified conditions and reporting all required data in the specified manner. An explanation of this cost may be included if considered by the bidder to be advantageous. The MSDH will not pay any costs above this amount. The price proposed shall remain in effect through June 30, 2022, under the same price terms and conditions.

2.3 Term

The term of the contract shall be for a period of July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020. Upon written agreement of both parties at least 60 days prior to each contract anniversary date, the contract may be renewed by the Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services for a period of 1 successive one-year period(s) under the same prices, terms, and conditions as in the original contract subject to approval by PPRB. The total number of renewal years permitted shall not exceed 4.

2.3.1 Multi-Term Contracts

Unless otherwise provided by law, a contract for services may be entered into for a period of time not to exceed four (4) years with an option to renew for one (1) year, provided the term of the contract and conditions of renewal or extension, if any, are included in the solicitation and funds are available for the first fiscal period at the time of contracting. Payment and performance obligations for succeeding fiscal periods shall be subject to the availability and appropriation of funds.

2.3.1.1 Requirements

- a) Laboratories submitting proposals must be located within the United States and must test a minimum of 40,000 specimens per year.
- b) A unit price shall be given for each service, and that unit price shall be the same throughout the contract.
- c) A multi-term contract will be canceled if funds are not appropriated or otherwise made available to support the continuation of performance in any fiscal period succeeding the first; however, this does not affect either the State's right or the contractor's rights under any termination clause in the contract.
- d) The Procurement Officer must notify the contractor on a timely basis that the funds are or are not available for the continuation of the contract for each succeeding fiscal period.
- e) A multi-term contract may be awarded.

SECTION 3

3.1 Insurance

The successful vendor shall maintain at least the minimum level of workers' compensation insurance, comprehensive general liability or professional liability insurance, with minimum limits of \$0.00 per occurrence and fidelity bond insurance with minimum limits of \$0.00. All workers' compensation, comprehensive general liability,

professional liability, and fidelity bond insurance will provide coverage to the Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services as an additional insured. The Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services reserves the right to request from carriers, certificates of insurance regarding the required coverage. Insurance carriers must be licensed or hold a Certificate of Authority from the Mississippi Department of Insurance. The vendor shall be prepared to provide evidence of required insurance upon request by the Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services at any point during the contract period and should consult with legal counsel regarding its obligations. (Insurance is not a PPRB requirement. The agency has discretion when determining whether to require insurance in the procurement and should consult with its agency legal counsel regarding its obligations.)

SECTION 4

4.1 Written Proposals Shall Contain the Following Minimum Information

- 1) The name of the respondent, the location of the respondent’s principal place of business and, if different, the place of performance of the proposed contract;
- 2) The age of the respondent’s business and average number of employees over a previous period of time, as specified in the Request for Proposal;
- 3) The qualifications, including licenses, certifications, education, skills, and experience of all persons who would be assigned to provide the required services; and,
- 4) A listing of other contracts under which services similar in scope, size, or discipline to the required services were performed or undertaken within a previous period of time, as specified in the Request for Proposal; and,
- 5) A plan giving as many details as is practical explaining how the services will be performed.

4.2 Evaluation Procedure

4.2.1 Step One:

Proposals will be reviewed to assure compliance with the minimum specifications. Proposals that do not comply with the minimum specifications will be rejected immediately, receiving no further consideration.

4.2.1.1 Responsive Respondent

Respondent must submit a proposal which conforms in all material respects to this Request for Proposals, RFP 3120001590, as determined by Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services.

4.2.1.2 Responsible Respondent

Respondent must have capability in all respects to perform fully the contract requirements and the integrity and reliability which will assure good faith performance, as determined by Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services.

4.2.2 Step Two:

Proposals that satisfactorily complete Step One will be reviewed and analyzed to determine if the proposal adequately meets the needs of Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services. Factors to be considered are as follows:

Technical factors (Proposed methodology):

- Does the offeror's proposal or qualification demonstrate a clear understanding of the scope of work and related objectives? (10%)
- Is the offeror's proposal or qualification complete and responsive to the specific RFP or RFQ requirements? (5%)
- Has the past performance of the offeror's proposed methodology been documented? (5%)
- Does the offeror's proposal or qualification use innovative technology and techniques? (5%)

Cost Factors:

- (a) Cost of goods to be provided or services to be performed:
 - a. Relative cost: How does the cost compare to other similarly scored proposals or qualifications? (35%)
 - b. Full explanation: Is the price and its component charges, fees, etc. adequately explained or documented? (1%)
- (b) Assurances of performance:
 - a. If required, are suitable bonds, warranties or guarantees provided? (1%)
 - b. Does the proposal or qualification include quality control and assurance programs? (1%)
- (c) Offeror's financial stability and strength: Does the offeror have sufficient financial resources to meet its obligations? (2%)

Management factors:

- (a) Project management (5%):
 - a. How well does the proposed scheduling timeline meet the needs of the soliciting agency?
 - b. Is there a project management plan?
- (b) History and experience in performing the work (10%):
 - a. Does the offeror document a record of reliability of timely delivery and on-time and on-budget implementation?

- b. Does the offeror demonstrate a track record of service as evidenced by on-time, on-budget, and contract compliance performance?
- c. Does the offeror document industry or program experience?
- d. Does the offeror have a record of poor business ethics?
- (c) Availability of personnel, facilities, equipment and other resources (10%):
 - a. To what extent does the offeror rely on in-house resources vs. contracted resources?
 - b. Are the availability of in-house and contract resources documented?
- (d) Qualification and experience of personnel (10%):
 - a. Documentation of experience in performing similar work by employees and when appropriate, sub-contractors?
 - b. Does the offeror demonstrate cultural sensitivity in hiring and training staff?

***The percentage assigned is at the Evaluation Committee's discretion.**

4.2.3 Step Three:

The Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services Executive Director or his/her designee will contact the respondent with the proposal which best meets Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services needs (based on factors evaluated in Step Two) and attempt to negotiate an agreement that is deemed acceptable to both parties.

4.3 The Following Response Format Shall Be Used for All Submitted Proposals:

- 1) **Management Summary:** Provide a cover letter indicating the underlying philosophy of the firm in providing the service.
- 2) **Proposal:** Describe in detail how the service will be provided. Include a description of major tasks and subtasks.
- 3) **Corporate experience and capacity:** Describe the experience of the firm in providing the service, give number of years that the service has been delivered, and provide a statement on the extent of any corporate expansion required to handle the service.
- 4) **Personnel:** Attach resumes' of all those who will be involved in the delivery of service (from principals to field technicians) that include their experience in this area of service delivery. Indicate the level of involvement by principals of the firm in the day-to-day operation of the contract.
- 5) **References:** Give at least three (3) references for contracts of similar size and scope, including at least two (2) references for current contracts or those awarded during the past three (3) years. Include the name of the organization, the length of the contract, a brief summary of the work, and the name and telephone number of a responsible contact person.

- 6) **Acceptance of conditions:** Indicate any exceptions to the general terms and conditions of the proposal document and to insurance, bonding, and any other requirements listed.
- 7) **Additional data:** Provide any additional information that will aid in evaluation of the response.
- 8) **Cost data:** Estimate the annual cost of the service. Cost data submitted at this stage is binding, but is subject to being negotiated down if your firm is chosen as a finalist. Include the number of personnel proposed to be assigned to the contract and the total estimated cost of the labor portion of the contract (include a sample staffing chart). Identify all non-labor costs and their estimated totals.

4.4 Nonconforming Terms and Conditions

A proposal response that includes terms and conditions that do not conform to the terms and conditions in the proposal document is subject to rejection as non-responsive. The Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services reserves the right to permit the respondent to withdraw nonconforming terms and conditions from its proposal response prior to a determination by the Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services of non-responsiveness based on the submission of nonconforming terms and conditions.

4.5 Conditioning Proposal Upon Other Awards

Any proposal which is conditioned upon receiving award of both the particular contract being solicited and another Mississippi contract shall be deemed non-responsive and not acceptable.

4.6 Award

Award shall be made to the responsible respondent whose proposal is determined in Writing, within 40 of days, to be the most advantageous to the State taking into consideration price and the evaluation factors set forth in the Request for Proposals. No other factors or criteria shall be used in the evaluation.

4.6.1 Notification

All participating vendors will be notified of the Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services intent to award a contract. In addition, the Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services will identify the selected vendor. Notice of award is also made available to the public.

4.7 Acknowledgment of Amendments

Bidders shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to the solicitation by signing and returning the amendment with the bid, by identifying the amendment number and date in the space provided for this purpose on the bid form, or by letter. The acknowledgment must be received by the [agency] by the time and at the place specified for receipt of bids.

SECTION 5

5.1 Post-Award Vendor Debriefing

A respondent, successful or unsuccessful, may request a post-award debriefing, in writing, by U.S. mail or electronic submission. The written request must be received by the Director of the Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services within three (3) business days of notification of the contract award. A post-award debriefing is a meeting and not a hearing; therefore, legal representation is not required. A debriefing typically occurs within five (5) business days of receipt of the request. If a respondent prefers to have legal representation present, the respondent must notify the Director of the Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services in writing and identify its attorney by name, address, and telephone number. The Mississippi State Department of Health – Genetic Services will schedule and/or suspend and reschedule the meeting at a time when a Representative of the Office of the Mississippi Attorney General can be present.

For additional information regarding Post-Award Debriefing, as well as the information that may be provided and excluded, please see Section 7-114 through 7-114.07, Post-Award Vendor Debriefing, of the *Public Procurement Review Board's Office of Personal Service Contract Review's Rules and Regulations*.

5.2 Protest of Award

Any actual or prospective respondent or contractor who is aggrieved in connection with this solicitation or the outcome of the Request for Proposals may file a protest with the Proposal Coordinator, Anita Evans, Contract Analyst. The protest shall be submitted on or before March 22, 2019, 5:00p.m. CST in writing after such aggrieved person or entity knows or should have known of the facts giving rise thereto. All protests must be in writing, dated, signed by the respondent or an individual authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the protesting respondent, and contain a statement of the reason(s) for protest, citing the law(s), rule(s) or regulation(s), and/or procedure(s) on which the protest is based. The written protest letter shall contain an explanation of the specific basis for the protest. The protesting respondent must provide facts and evidence to support the protest. A protest is considered filed when received by the Proposal Coordinator, Anita Evans, Contract Analyst, via either U.S. mail, postage prepaid, or personal delivery. Protests filed after March 22, 2019, 5:00p.m. will not be considered.

5.3 Required Contract Terms and Conditions

Any contract entered into between a Contracting Agency and a vendor/respondent shall include the required clauses found in **Attachment B** and those required by the *Public Procurement Review Board's Office of Personal Service Contract Review's Rules and Regulations* as updated.

5.4 Optional Contract Terms and Conditions

Any contract entered into between a Contracting Agency and a vendor/respondent may have, at the discretion of the Contracting Agency, the optional clauses found in **Attachment C** and those within the *Public Procurement Review Board's Office of Personal Service Contract Review's Rules and Regulations* as updated.

5.5 Mississippi Contract/Procurement Opportunity Search Portal

This Request for Proposals, and the questions and answers concerning this Request for Proposals, are posted on the Contract/Procurement Opportunity Search Portal.

5.6 Attachments

The attachments to this Request for Proposals are made a part of this Request for Proposals as if copied herein in words and figures.

By signing below, the Company Representative certifies that he/she has authority to bind the company, and further acknowledges on behalf of the company:

1. That he/she has thoroughly read and understands this Request for Proposals, RFP 3120001590, and the attachments herein;
2. That the company meets all requirements and acknowledges all certifications contained in this Request for Proposals, RFP 3120001590, and the attachments herein;
3. That the company agrees to all provisions of this Request for Proposals, RFP 3120001590, and the attachments herein;
4. That the company has, or will secure, at its own expense, applicable personnel who shall be qualified to perform the duties required to be performed under this Request for Proposals.

Printed Name: _____

Signature/Date: _____

ATTACHMENT A

Certifications and Assurances

I/We make the following certifications and assurances as a required element of the offer to which it is attached, of the understanding that the truthfulness of the facts affirmed here and the continued compliance with these requirements are conditions precedent to the award or continuation of the related contract(s):

1. REPRESENTATION REGARDING CONTINGENT FEES

Contractor represents that it **has/has not** retained a person to solicit or secure a state contract upon an agreement or understanding for a commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingent fee, except as disclosed in Contractor’s proposal.

2. REPRESENTATION REGARDING GRATUITIES

The Respondent or Contractor represents that it **has/has not** violated, is not violating, and promises that it will not violate the prohibition against gratuities set forth in Section 6-204 (Gratuities) of the Mississippi Public Procurement Review Board’s Office of Personal Service Contract Review’s Rules and Regulations.

3. CERTIFICATION OF INDEPENDENT PRICE DETERMINATION

The respondent certifies that the prices submitted in response to the solicitation **have/have not** been arrived at independently and without, for the purpose of restricting competition, any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other respondent or competitor relating to those prices, the intention to submit a proposal, or the methods or factors used to calculate price.

4. PROSPECTIVE CONTRACTOR’S REPRESENTATION REGARDING CONTINGENT FEES

The prospective Contractor represents as a part of such Contractor’s proposal that such Contractor **has/has not** retained any person or agency on a percentage, commission, or other contingent arrangement to secure this contract.

Name/Title: _____

Signature/Date: _____

*Note: Please be sure to **circle the applicable word or words** provided above. Failure to circle the applicable word or words and/or to sign the proposal form may result in the proposal being rejected as nonresponsive. **Modifications or additions to any portion of this proposal document may be cause for rejection of the proposal.***

ATTACHMENT B

Required Clauses for Service Contracts Resulting from this Request for Proposals

1. Applicable Law. The contract shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Mississippi, excluding its conflicts of laws, provisions, and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the courts of the State. Contractor shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
2. Availability of Funds. It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligation of the Agency to proceed under this agreement is conditioned upon the appropriation of funds by the Mississippi State Legislature and the receipt of state and/or federal funds. If the funds anticipated for the continuing fulfillment of the agreement are, at any time, not forthcoming or insufficient, either through the failure of the federal government to provide funds or of the State of Mississippi to appropriate funds or the discontinuance or material alteration of the program under which funds were provided or if funds are not otherwise available to the Agency, the Agency shall have the right upon ten (10) working days written notice to Contractor, to terminate this agreement without damage, penalty, cost or expenses to the Agency of any kind whatsoever. The effective date of termination shall be as specified in the notice of termination.
3. Compliance with Laws. Contractor understands that the Agency is an equal opportunity employer and therefore, maintains a policy which prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, physical handicap, disability, genetic information, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. All such discrimination is unlawful and Contractor agrees during the term of the agreement that Contractor will strictly adhere to this policy in its employment practices and provision of services. Contractor shall comply with, and all activities under this agreement shall be subject to, all applicable federal, State of Mississippi, and local laws and regulations, as now existing and as may be amended or modified.
4. E-Payment. Contractor agrees to accept all payments in United States currency via the State of Mississippi's electronic payment and remittance vehicle. The agency agrees to make payment in accordance with Mississippi law on "Timely Payments for Purchases by Public Bodies," which generally provides for payment of undisputed amounts by the agency within forty-five (45) days of receipt of invoice. Mississippi Code Annotated § 31-7-305.
5. E-Verification. If applicable, Contractor represents and warrants that it will ensure its compliance with the Mississippi Employment Protection Act of 2008, and will register and participate in the status verification system for all newly hired employees. Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 71-11-1 *et seq.* The term "employee" as used herein means any person that is hired to perform work within the State of Mississippi. As used herein, "status verification system" means the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 that is operated by the United States Department of Homeland Security, also known

as the E-Verify Program, or any other successor electronic verification system replacing the E-Verify Program. Contractor agrees to maintain records of such compliance. Upon request of the State and after approval of the Social Security Administration or Department of Homeland Security when required, Contractor agrees to provide a copy of each such verification. Contractor further represents and warrants that any person assigned to perform services hereafter meets the employment eligibility requirements of all immigration laws. The breach of this agreement may subject Contractor to the following:

- a. termination of this contract for services and ineligibility for any state or public contract in Mississippi for up to three (3) years with notice of such cancellation/termination being made public;
 - b. the loss of any license, permit, certification or other document granted to Contractor by an agency, department or governmental entity for the right to do business in Mississippi for up to one (1) year; or, in the event of such cancellation/termination, Contractor would also be liable for any additional costs incurred by the State due to Contract cancellation or loss of license or permit to do business in the State.
 - c. both.
6. Paymode. Payments by state agencies using the State's accounting system shall be made and remittance information provided electronically as directed by the State. These payments shall be deposited into the bank account of Contractor's choice. The State may, at its sole discretion, require Contractor to electronically submit invoices and supporting documentation at any time during the term of this Agreement. Contractor understands and agrees that the State is exempt from the payment of taxes. All payments shall be in United States currency.
7. Procurement Regulations. The contract shall be governed by the applicable provisions of the *Mississippi Public Procurement Review Board's Office of Personal Service Contract Review's Rules and Regulations*, a copy of which is available at 501 North Woolfolk Street, Suite 1301, Jackson, Mississippi 39201 for inspection, or downloadable at <http://www.dfa.ms.gov>.
8. Representation Regarding Contingent Fees. Contractor represents that it has not retained a person to solicit or secure a state contract upon an agreement or understanding for a commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingent fee, except as disclosed in Contractor's proposal.
9. Representation Regarding Gratuities. Contractor represents that it has not violated, is not violating, and promises that it will not violate the prohibition against gratuities set forth in Section 6-204 (Gratuities) of the *Mississippi Public Procurement Review Board's Office of Personal Service Contract Review's Rules and Regulations*.

10. Stop Work Order.

- a. *Order to Stop Work:* The Procurement Officer, may, by written order to Contractor at any time, and without notice to any surety, require Contractor to stop all or any part of the work called for by this contract. This order shall be for a specified period not exceeding 90 days after the order is delivered to Contractor, unless the parties agree to any further period. Any such order shall be identified specifically as a stop work order issued pursuant to this clause. Upon receipt of such an order, Contractor shall forthwith comply with its terms and take all reasonable steps to minimize the occurrence of costs allocable to the work covered by the order during the period of work stoppage. Before the stop work order expires, or within any further period to which the parties shall have agreed, the Procurement Officer shall either:
 - i. cancel the stop work order; or,
 - ii. terminate the work covered by such order as provided in the Termination for Default clause or the Termination for Convenience clause of this contract.
- b. *Cancellation or Expiration of the Order:* If a stop work order issued under this clause is canceled at any time during the period specified in the order, or if the period of the order or any extension thereof expires, Contractor shall have the right to resume work. An appropriate adjustment shall be made in the delivery schedule or Contractor price, or both, and the contract shall be modified in writing accordingly, if:
 - i. the stop work order results in an increase in the time required for, or in Contractor's cost properly allocable to, the performance of any part of this contract; and,
 - ii. Contractor asserts a claim for such an adjustment within 30 days after the end of the period of work stoppage; provided that, if the Procurement Officer decides that the facts justify such action, any such claim asserted may be received and acted upon at any time prior to final payment under this contract.
- c. *Termination of Stopped Work:* If a stop work order is not canceled and the work covered by such order is terminated for default or convenience, the reasonable costs resulting from the stop work order shall be allowed by adjustment or otherwise.

11. Termination for Convenience.

- a. *Termination.* The Agency Head or designee may, when the interests of the State so require, terminate this contract in whole or in part, for the convenience of the State. The Agency Head or designee shall give written notice of the termination to Contractor specifying the part of the contract terminated and when termination becomes effective.
- b. *Contractor's Obligations.* Contractor shall incur no further obligations in connection with the terminated work and on the date set in the notice of termination Contractor will stop work to the extent specified. Contractor shall also terminate outstanding orders and subcontracts as they relate to the terminated work. Contractor shall settle the liabilities

and claims arising out of the termination of subcontracts and orders connected with the terminated work. The Agency Head or designee may direct Contractor to assign Contractor's right, title, and interest under terminated orders or subcontracts to the State. Contractor must still complete the work not terminated by the notice of termination and may incur obligations as are necessary to do so.

12. Termination for Default.

- a. *Default.* If Contractor refuses or fails to perform any of the provisions of this contract with such diligence as will ensure its completion within the time specified in this contract or any extension thereof, or otherwise fails to timely satisfy the contract provisions, or commits any other substantial breach of this contract, the Agency Head or designee may notify Contractor in writing of the delay or nonperformance and if not cured in ten (10) days or any longer time specified in writing by the Agency Head or designee, such officer may terminate Contractor's right to proceed with the contract or such part of the contract as to which there has been delay or a failure to properly perform. In the event of termination in whole or in part, the Agency Head or designee may procure similar supplies or services in a manner and upon terms deemed appropriate by the Agency Head or designee. Contractor shall continue performance of the contract to the extent it is not terminated and shall be liable for excess costs incurred in procuring similar goods or services.
- b. *Contractor's Duties.* Notwithstanding termination of the contract and subject to any directions from the procurement officer, Contractor shall take timely, reasonable, and necessary action to protect and preserve property in the possession of Contractor in which the State has an interest.
- c. *Compensation.* Payment for completed services delivered and accepted by the State shall be at the contract price. The State may withhold from amounts due Contractor such sums as the Agency Head or designee deems to be necessary to protect the State against loss because of outstanding liens or claims of former lien holders and to reimburse the State for the excess costs incurred in procuring similar goods and services.
- d. *Excuse for Nonperformance or Delayed Performance.* Except with respect to defaults of subcontractors, Contractor shall not be in default by reason of any failure in performance of this contract in accordance with its terms (including any failure by Contractor to make progress in the prosecution of the work hereunder which endangers such performance) if Contractor has notified the Agency Head or designee within 15 days after the cause of the delay and the failure arises out of causes such as: acts of God; acts of the public enemy; acts of the State and any other governmental entity in its sovereign or contractual capacity; fires; floods; epidemics; quarantine restrictions; strikes or other labor disputes; freight embargoes; or unusually severe weather. If the failure to perform is caused by the failure of a subcontractor to perform or to make progress, and if such failure arises out of causes similar to those set forth above, Contractor shall not be deemed to be in default, unless the services to be furnished by the subcontractor were reasonably obtainable from other sources in sufficient time to permit Contractor to meet the contract requirements. Upon request of Contractor, the Agency Head or designee shall ascertain the facts and extent of such failure, and, if

such officer determines that any failure to perform was occasioned by any one or more of the excusable causes, and that, but for the excusable cause, Contractor's progress and performance would have met the terms of the contract, the delivery schedule shall be revised accordingly, subject to the rights of the State under the clause entitled in fixed-price contracts, "Termination for Convenience". (As used in this Paragraph of this clause, the term "subcontractor" means subcontractor at any tier).

- e. *Erroneous Termination for Default.* If, after notice of termination of Contractor's right to proceed under the provisions of this clause, it is determined for any reason that the contract was not in default under the provisions of this clause, or that the delay was excusable under the provisions of Paragraph (4) (Excuse for Nonperformance or Delayed Performance) of this clause, the rights and obligations of the parties shall, if the contract contains a clause providing for termination for convenience of the State, be the same as if the notice of termination had been issued pursuant to such clause.
 - f. *Additional Rights and Remedies.* The rights and remedies provided in this clause are in addition to any other rights and remedies provided by law or under this contract.
13. Termination Upon Bankruptcy. This contract may be terminated in whole or in part by Agency upon written notice to Contractor, if Contractor should become the subject of bankruptcy or receivership proceedings, whether voluntary or involuntary, or upon the execution by Contractor of an assignment for the benefit of its creditors. In the event of such termination, Contractor shall be entitled to recover just and equitable compensation for satisfactory work performed under this contract, but in no case shall said compensation exceed the total contract price.
14. Trade Secrets, Commercial and Financial Information. It is expressly understood that Mississippi law requires that the provisions of this contract which contain the commodities purchased or the personal or professional services provided, the price to be paid, and the term of the contract shall not be deemed to be a trade secret or confidential commercial or financial information and shall be available for examination, copying, or reproduction.
15. Transparency. This contract, including any accompanying exhibits, attachments, and appendices, is subject to the "Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983," and its exceptions. See Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-61-1 *et seq.* and Mississippi Code Annotated § 79-23-1. In addition, this contract is subject to the provisions of the Mississippi Accountability and Transparency Act of 2008. Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 27-104-151 *et seq.* Unless exempted from disclosure due to a court-issued protective order, a copy of this executed contract is required to be posted to the Department of Finance and Administration's independent agency contract website for public access at <http://www.transparency.mississippi.gov>. Information identified by Contractor as trade secrets, or other proprietary information, including confidential vendor information or any other information which is required confidential by state or federal law or outside the applicable freedom of information statutes, will be redacted.
16. Acknowledgement of Amendments. Bidders shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to the solicitation by signing and returning the amendment with the bid, by identifying the amendment number and date in the space provided for this purpose on the bid form, or by

letter. The acknowledgment must be received by the MSDH by the time and at the place specified for receipt of bids.

ATTACHMENT C

Optional Clauses for Use in Service Contracts Resulting from this Request for Proposals

1. Anti-assignment/Subcontracting. Contractor acknowledges that it was selected by the State to perform the services required hereunder based, in part, upon Contractor's special skills and expertise. Contractor shall not assign, subcontract, or otherwise transfer this agreement, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the State, which the State may, in its sole discretion, approve or deny without reason. Any attempted assignment or transfer of its obligations without such consent shall be null and void. No such approval by the State of any subcontract shall be deemed in any way to provide for the incurrence of any obligation of the State in addition to the total fixed price agreed upon in this agreement. Subcontracts shall be subject to the terms and conditions of this agreement and to any conditions of approval that the State may deem necessary. Subject to the foregoing, this agreement shall be binding upon the respective successors and assigns of the parties.
2. Approval. It is understood that this contract requires approval by the Public Procurement Review Board. If this contract is not approved, it is void and no payment shall be made hereunder.
3. Attorney's Fees and Expenses. Subject to other terms and conditions of this agreement, in the event Contractor defaults in any obligations under this agreement, Contractor shall pay to the State all costs and expenses (including, without limitation, investigative fees, court costs, and attorney's fees) incurred by the State in enforcing this agreement or otherwise reasonably related thereto. Contractor agrees that under no circumstances shall the customer be obligated to pay any attorney's fees or costs of legal action to Contractor.
4. Authority to Contract. Contractor warrants: (a) that it is a validly organized business with valid authority to enter into this agreement; (b) that it is qualified to do business and in good standing in the State of Mississippi; (c) that entry into and performance under this agreement is not restricted or prohibited by any loan, security, financing, contractual, or other agreement of any kind; and, (d) notwithstanding any other provision of this agreement to the contrary, that there are no existing legal proceedings or prospective legal proceedings, either voluntary or otherwise, which may adversely affect its ability to perform its obligations under this agreement.
5. Information Designated by Contractor as Confidential. Any disclosure of those materials, documents, data, and other information which Contractor has designated in writing as proprietary and confidential shall be subject to the provisions of Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-61-9 and 79-23-1. As provided in the contract, the personal or professional services to be provided, the price to be paid, and the term of the contract shall not be deemed to be a trade secret, or confidential commercial or financial information.

Any liability resulting from the wrongful disclosure of confidential information on the part of Contractor or its subcontractor shall rest with Contractor. Disclosure of any confidential

information by Contractor or its subcontractor without the express written approval of the Agency shall result in the immediate termination of this agreement.

6. Confidentiality. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary contained herein, it is recognized that Agency is a public agency of the State of Mississippi and is subject to the Mississippi Public Records Act. Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-61-1 *et seq.* If a public records request is made for any information provided to Agency pursuant to the agreement and designated by the Contractor in writing as trade secrets or other proprietary confidential information, Agency shall follow the provisions of Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-61-9 and 79-23-1 before disclosing such information. The Agency shall not be liable to the Contractor for disclosure of information required by court order or required by law.
7. Contractor Personnel. The Agency shall, throughout the life of the contract, have the right of reasonable rejection and approval of staff or subcontractors assigned to the work by Contractor. If the Agency reasonably rejects staff or subcontractors, Contractor must provide replacement staff or subcontractors satisfactory to the Agency in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the Agency. The day-to-day supervision and control of Contractor's employees and subcontractors is the sole responsibility of Contractor.
8. Debarment and Suspension. Contractor certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it:
 - (1) is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transaction by any federal department or agency or any political subdivision or agency of the State of Mississippi;
 - (2) has not, within a three-year period preceding this proposal, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction;
 - (3) has not, within a three-year period preceding this proposal, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for a violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;
 - (4) is not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state or local) with commission of any of these offenses enumerated in paragraphs two (2) and (3) of this certification; and,
 - (5) has not, within a three-year period preceding this proposal, had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default.
9. Disclosure of Confidential Information. In the event that either party to this agreement receives notice that a third party requests divulgence of confidential or otherwise protected information and/or has served upon it a subpoena or other validly issued administrative or judicial process ordering divulgence of confidential or otherwise protected information that party shall promptly inform the other party and thereafter respond in conformity with such subpoena to the extent mandated by law. This section shall survive the termination or

completion of this agreement. The parties agree that this section is subject to and superseded by Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-61-1 *et seq.*

10. Exceptions to Confidential Information. Contractor and the State shall not be obligated to treat as confidential and proprietary any information disclosed by the other party (“disclosing party”) which:
 - (1) is rightfully known to the recipient prior to negotiations leading to this agreement, other than information obtained in confidence under prior engagements;
 - (2) is generally known or easily ascertainable by nonparties of ordinary skill in the business of the customer;
 - (3) is released by the disclosing party to any other person, firm, or entity (including governmental agencies or bureaus) without restriction;
 - (4) is independently developed by the recipient without any reliance on confidential information;
 - (5) is or later becomes part of the public domain or may be lawfully obtained by the State or Contractor from any nonparty; or,
 - (6) is disclosed with the disclosing party’s prior written consent
11. Errors in Extension. If the unit price and the extension price are at variance, the unit price shall prevail.
12. Failure to Deliver. In the event of failure of Contractor to deliver services in accordance with the contract terms and conditions, the Agency, after due oral or written notice, may procure the services from other sources and hold Contractor responsible for any resulting additional purchase and administrative costs. This remedy shall be in addition to any other remedies that the Agency may have.
13. Failure to Enforce. Failure by the Agency at any time to enforce the provisions of the contract shall not be construed as a waiver of any such provisions. Such failure to enforce shall not affect the validity of the contract or any part thereof or the right of the Agency to enforce any provision at any time in accordance with its terms.
14. Final Payment. Upon satisfactory completion of the work performed under this contract, as a condition before final payment under this contract, or as a termination settlement under this contract, Contractor shall execute and deliver to the Agency a release of all claims against the State arising under, or by virtue of, the contract, except claims which are specifically exempted by Contractor to be set forth therein. Unless otherwise provided in this contract, by state law, or otherwise expressly agreed to by the parties in this contract, final payment under the contract or settlement upon termination of this contract shall not constitute waiver of the State’s claims against Contractor under this contract.
15. Force Majeure. Each party shall be excused from performance for any period and to the extent that it is prevented from performing any obligation or service, in whole or in part, as a result of causes beyond the reasonable control and without the fault or negligence of such party and/or its subcontractors. Such acts shall include without limitation acts of God,

strikes, lockouts, riots, acts of war, epidemics, governmental regulations superimposed after the fact, fire, earthquakes, floods, or other natural disasters (“force majeure events”). When such a cause arises, Contractor shall notify the State immediately in writing of the cause of its inability to perform, how it affects its performance, and the anticipated duration of the inability to perform. Delays in delivery or in meeting completion dates due to force majeure events shall automatically extend such dates for a period equal to the duration of the delay caused by such events, unless the State determines it to be in its best interest to terminate the agreement.

16. HIPAA Compliance. Contractor agrees to comply with the “Administrative Simplification” provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, including electronic data interchange, code sets, identifiers, security, and privacy provisions, as may be applicable to the services under this contract.
17. Indemnification. To the fullest extent allowed by law, Contractor shall indemnify, defend, save and hold harmless, protect, and exonerate the agency, its commissioners, board members, officers, employees, agents, and representatives, and the State of Mississippi from and against all claims, demands, liabilities, suits, actions, damages, losses, and costs of every kind and nature whatsoever including, without limitation, court costs, investigative fees and expenses, and attorney’s fees, arising out of or caused by Contractor and/or its partners, principals, agents, employees and/or subcontractors in the performance of or failure to perform this agreement. In the State’s sole discretion, Contractor may be allowed to control the defense of any such claim, suit, etc. In the event Contractor defends said claim, suit, etc., Contractor shall use legal counsel acceptable to the State. Contractor shall be solely responsible for all costs and/or expenses associated with such defense, and the State shall be entitled to participate in said defense. Contractor shall not settle any claim, suit, etc. without the State’s concurrence, which the State shall not unreasonably withhold.
18. Independent Contractor Status. Contractor shall, at all times, be regarded as and shall be legally considered an independent contractor and shall at no time act as an agent for the State. Nothing contained herein shall be deemed or construed by the State, Contractor, or any third party as creating the relationship of principal and agent, master and servant, partners, joint ventures, employer and employee, or any similar such relationship between the State and Contractor. Neither the method of computation of fees or other charges, nor any other provision contained herein, nor any acts of the State or Contractor hereunder creates, or shall be deemed to create a relationship other than the independent relationship of the State and Contractor. Contractor’s personnel shall not be deemed in any way, directly or indirectly, expressly or by implication, to be employees of the State. Neither Contractor nor its employees shall, under any circumstances, be considered servants, agents, or employees of the Agency, and the Agency shall be at no time legally responsible for any negligence or other wrongdoing by Contractor, its servants, agents, or employees. The Agency shall not withhold from the contract payments to Contractor any federal or state unemployment taxes, federal or state income taxes, Social Security tax, or any other amounts for benefits to Contractor. Further, the Agency shall not provide to Contractor any insurance coverage or other benefits, including Worker’s Compensation, normally provided by the State for its employees.

19. Integrated Agreement/Merger. This agreement, including all contract documents, represents the entire and integrated agreement between the parties hereto and supersedes all prior negotiations, representations or agreements, irrespective of whether written or oral. This agreement may be altered, amended, or modified only by a written document executed by the State and Contractor. Contractor acknowledges that it has thoroughly read all contract documents and has had the opportunity to receive competent advice and counsel necessary for it to form a full and complete understanding of all rights and obligations herein. Accordingly, this agreement shall not be construed or interpreted in favor of or against the State or Contractor on the basis of draftsmanship or preparation hereof.
20. (Contract Modification means any written alteration in contract requirements, deliverables, delivery point, rate of delivery, period of performance, price, quantity, or other provisions of any contract accomplished by mutual action of the parties to the contract. Modifications must be approved by the PPRB pursuant to Section 7-111 (Modifications) of the Mississippi Public Procurement Review Board’s Office of Personal Service Contract Review’s Rules and Regulations. Modifications shall not grant extra compensation, fee, or allowance to any Contractor after service is rendered or contract is made, unless contemplated within the contract itself or unless the scope of services is increased.) Modification or Renegotiation. This agreement may be modified only by written agreement signed by the parties hereto. The parties agree to renegotiate the agreement if federal and/or state revisions of any applicable laws or regulations make changes in this agreement necessary.
21. No Limitation of Liability. Nothing in this agreement shall be interpreted as excluding or limiting any tort liability of Contractor for harm caused by the intentional or reckless conduct of Contractor or for damages incurred through the negligent performance of duties by Contractor or the delivery of products that are defective due to negligent construction.
22. Notices. All notices required or permitted to be given under this agreement must be in writing and personally delivered or sent by certified United States mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested, to the party to whom the notice should be given at the address set forth below. Notice shall be deemed given when actually received or when refused. The parties agree to promptly notify each other in writing of any change of address.

For the Agency:	For Contractor:
[Name, Title]	[Name, Title]
[Agency Name]	[Contractor Name]
[Address]	[Address]
[City, State, Zip]	[City, State, Zip]

23. Non-solicitation of Employees. Each party to this agreement agrees not to employ or to solicit for employment, directly or indirectly, any persons in the full-time or part-time employment of the other party until at least six (6) months after this agreement terminates unless mutually agreed to in writing by the State and Contractor.

24. Oral Statements. No oral statement of any person shall modify or otherwise affect the terms, conditions, or specifications stated in this contract. All modifications to the contract must be made in writing by the Agency and agreed to by Contractor.
25. Ownership of Documents and Work Papers. Agency shall own all documents, files, reports, work papers and working documentation, electronic or otherwise, created in connection with the project which is the subject of this agreement, except for Contractor's internal administrative and quality assurance files and internal project correspondence. Contractor shall deliver such documents and work papers to Agency upon termination or completion of the agreement. The foregoing notwithstanding, Contractor shall be entitled to retain a set of such work papers for its files. Contractor shall be entitled to use such work papers only after receiving written permission from Agency and subject to any copyright protections.
26. Priority. The contract consists of this agreement with exhibits, the procurement Request for Proposals RFX #3120001590 (hereinafter referred to as RFP and attached as Schedule [], and the response dated [date] by [CONTRACTOR NAME] (hereinafter referred to as Proposal and attached as Schedule [____]). Any ambiguities, conflicts or questions of interpretation of this contract shall be resolved by first, reference to this agreement with exhibits and, if still unresolved, by reference to the RFP and, if still unresolved, by reference to the Proposal. Omission of any term or obligation from this agreement or attached Schedules [____] or [____] shall not be deemed an omission from this contract if such term or obligation is provided for elsewhere in this contract.
27. Quality Control. Contractor shall institute and maintain throughout the contract period a properly documented quality control program designed to ensure that the services are provided at all times and in all respects in accordance with the contract. The program shall include providing daily supervision and conducting frequent inspections of Contractor's staff and ensuring that accurate records are maintained describing the disposition of all complaints. The records so created shall be open to inspection by the Agency.
28. Record Retention and Access to Records. Provided Contractor is given reasonable advance written notice and such inspection is made during normal business hours of Contractor, the State or any duly authorized representatives shall have unimpeded, prompt access to any of Contractor's books, documents, papers, and/or records which are maintained or produced as a result of the project for the purpose of making audits, examinations, excerpts, and transcriptions. All records related to this agreement shall be retained by Contractor for three (3) years after final payment is made under this agreement and all pending matters are closed; however, if any audit, litigation or other action arising out of or related in any way to this project is commenced before the end of the three-year period, the records shall be retained for one (1) year after all issues arising out of the action are finally resolved or until the end of the three-year period, whichever is later.
29. Recovery of Money. Whenever, under the contract, any sum of money shall be recoverable from or payable by Contractor to the Agency, the same amount may be deducted from any sum due to Contractor under the contract or under any other contract between Contractor

and the Agency. The rights of the Agency are in addition and without prejudice to any other right the Agency may have to claim the amount of any loss or damage suffered by the Agency on account of the acts or omissions of Contractor.

30. Right to Audit. Contractor shall maintain such financial records and other records as may be prescribed by the Agency or by applicable federal and state laws, rules, and regulations. Contractor shall retain these records for a period of three (3) years after final payment, or until they are audited by the Agency, whichever event occurs first. These records shall be made available during the term of the contract and the subsequent three-year period for examination, transcription, and audit by the Mississippi State Auditor's Office, its designees, or other authorized bodies.
31. Right to Inspect Facility. The State may, at reasonable times, inspect the place of business of a Contractor or any subcontractor which is related to the performance of any contract awarded by the State.
32. Severability. If any part of this agreement is declared to be invalid or unenforceable, such invalidity or unenforceability shall not affect any other provision of the agreement that can be given effect without the invalid or unenforceable provision, and to this end the provisions hereof are severable. In such event, the parties shall amend the agreement as necessary to reflect the original intent of the parties and to bring any invalid or unenforceable provisions in compliance with applicable law.
33. State Property. Contractor will be responsible for the proper custody and care of any state-owned property furnished for Contractor's use in connection with the performance of this agreement. Contractor will reimburse the State for any loss or damage, normal wear and tear excepted.
34. Third Party Action Notification. Contractor shall give the customer prompt notice in writing of any action or suit filed, and prompt notice of any claim made against Contractor by any entity that may result in litigation related in any way to this agreement.
35. Unsatisfactory Work. If, at any time during the contract term, the service performed or work done by Contractor is considered by the Agency to create a condition that threatens the health, safety, or welfare of the citizens and/or employees of the State of Mississippi, Contractor shall, on being notified by the Agency, immediately correct such deficient service or work. In the event Contractor fails, after notice, to correct the deficient service or work immediately, the Agency shall have the right to order the correction of the deficiency by separate contract or with its own resources at the expense of Contractor.
36. Waiver. No delay or omission by either party to this agreement in exercising any right, power, or remedy hereunder or otherwise afforded by contract, at law, or in equity shall constitute an acquiescence therein, impair any other right, power or remedy hereunder or otherwise afforded by any means, or operate as a waiver of such right, power, or remedy. No waiver by either party to this agreement shall be valid unless set forth in writing by the party making said waiver. No waiver of or modification to any term or condition of this

agreement will void, waive, or change any other term or condition. No waiver by one party to this agreement of a default by the other party will imply, be construed as or require waiver of future or other defaults.

37. Requirements Contract. During the period of the contract, Contractor shall provide all the service described in the contract. Contractor understands and agrees that this is a requirements contract and that the Agency shall have no obligation to Contractor if no services are required. Any quantities that are included in the scope of work reflect the current expectations of the Agency for the period of the contract. The amount is only an estimate and Contractor understands and agrees that the Agency is under no obligation to Contractor to buy any amount of the services as a result of having provided this estimate or of having any typical or measurable requirement in the past. Contractor further understands and agrees that the Agency may require services in an amount less than or in excess of the estimated annual contract amount and that the quantity actually used, whether in excess of the estimate or less than the estimate, shall not give rise to any claim for compensation other than the total of the unit prices in the contract for the quantity actually used.