VERMONT

Department of Mental Health
166 Horseshoe Drive | Waterbury VT 05671-20110
802-241-0090 phone |802-241-0100 fax

SEALED BID
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP 146 DMH Annual Conference Logistics and Support

ISSUE DATE	**November, 13, 2026**
QUESTIONS DUE	**December, 1, 2026 – 4:00 PM (ET)** *All questions are to be submitted electronically via VT Buys*
RFP RESPONSES DUE BY	**December, 15, 2026 – 4:00 PM (ET)** *All proposals are to be submitted via VT Buys*

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT ALL NOTIFICATIONS, RELEASES, AND ADDENDUMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS RFP WILL BE POSTED AT:

Public Solicitations: Vermont Buys
Funding Opportunities | Department of Mental Health
And
http://www.bgs.state.vt.us/pca/bids/bids.php

STATE CONTACT: **Jennifer Rowell**
E-MAIL : **AHS.DMHSubmissions@vermont.gov**

THE STATE WILL MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO CONTACT INTERESTED PARTIES WITH UPDATED INFORMATION. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH BIDDER TO PERIODICALLY CHECK VT BUYS FOR ANY AND ALL NOTIFICATIONS, RELEASES AND ADDENDUMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS RFP.

If you speak a language not listed on the website below or require additional help, we offer free language assistance services. The State of Vermont contracts with several Translation Services organizations, and you can visit this page for more information **Language Access | Department of Mental Health.**

If you require assistance with technology, access, or have other issues with being able to complete your proposal, reach out to the single point of contact.

1. **OVERVIEW:**

1.1. **SCOPE AND BACKGROUND:** Through this Request for Proposal (RFP) the Department of Mental Health (DMH, hereinafter the "State") is seeking to establish a contract with a qualified vendor to plan, manage, and execute a one-day statewide annual conference to be held in late May or early June 2027. The State may choose to renew the contract annually for up to four additional years for future conferences. The State is not obligated to exercise any renewal option. Bidders are encouraged to propose pricing for the renewal years, in addition to 2027.

1.2. **DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION**: The Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS) strives to improve the conditions and well-being of Vermonters by ensuring all Vermonters have the opportunity to thrive in inclusive, equitable, and resilient communities. The scope of AHS is profound. Through its six departments, twelve district offices, and a network of community partners and providers, it is responsible for the implementation and delivery of all human service programs within the state. Each department has a distinct area of focus and responsibility and contributes to the creation and sustenance of an entire system of human service supports.

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) resides under AHS and has the same critical mission in mind. DMH promotes mental health as a vital part of overall well-being by advancing prevention, early intervention, and recovery-focused care. Our vision is that mental health serves as a cornerstone of health in Vermont, where inclusive communities respond with compassion and respect, enabling all Vermonters to thrive and participate fully in their lives. This work is guided by our core values of compassion, equity, integrity, collaboration, and accountability.

1.3. **CONTRACT PERIOD:** The State anticipates awarding a contract arising from this RFP with a term of up to five years. The State reserves the right to structure the initial contract period in phases, including an initial one-year pilot term followed by subsequent renewal periods at the State's discretion. The State anticipates the start date for such contract(s) will be in January 2027.

1.4. **SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT:** All communications concerning this RFP are to be submitted through VT Buys. In the event that a bidder is experiencing system issues with submitting a question through VT Buys, communications should be addressed in writing to the State Contact listed on the front page of this RFP. Actual or attempted contact with any other individual from the State concerning this RFP is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification.

1.5. **BIDDERS' CONFERENCE:** No bidders' conference will be held for this RFP.

1.6. **QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD:** Any bidder requiring clarification of any section of this RFP or wishing to comment on any requirement of the RFP must submit specific questions in VT Buys no later than the deadline for question indicated on the first page of this RFP. As noted in section 1.4, questions should be e-mailed to the single point of contact on the front page of this RFP if a bidder is experiencing system issues with VT Buys.

Questions or comments not submitted on or before the last day of the question period may not be addressed. At the close of the question period a copy of all questions and the State's responses will be posted to the State sites listed on the front page of this RFP.

Every effort will be made to post this information as soon as possible after the question period ends, contingent on the number and complexity of the questions. All information provided by vendors during this process will be public and bidders shall not provide confidential information.

1.7. **CHANGES TO THIS RFP:** Any modifications to this RFP will be made in VT Buys by the State through the issuance of an Addendum to this RFP as well as posted on the DMH website and the Vermont Business Registry. Modifications from any other source are not to be considered.

1.8. **SOURCE OF FUNDS**: The Department anticipates using federal and state funding for the resulting contract(s). The Department may choose to modify the source of funding contingent upon the availability of funds at the time of award. Any selected Vendor will be subject to the requirements in the Assistance Listing Number (ALN) #93.958, Block Grants for Community Mental Health Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

This project is being funded in whole or in part using federal monies. If a bidder requires assistance in preparing their proposal or needs guidance on socioeconomic certifications, the bidder may contact the VT APEX Accelerator. The APEX Accelerator specializes in helping small businesses navigate the documentation associated with State and Federal procurement. Their website is: http://apex.vermont.gov

2. DETAILED REQUIREMENTS/DESIRED OUTCOMES:

2.1. The State of Vermont seeks bids to provide event logistics and support for an annual one-day statewide conference to be held in late May or early June 2027 and continuing annually for the subsequent four years. Although DMH will contract directly for the venue, the logistics contractor will be responsible for organizing, coordinating, and supporting all venue-related logistics in consultation with DMH. The event will convene up to 350 participants and focus on advancing mental health systems, workforce, and community partnerships. The contractor will provide comprehensive logistical, marketing, and operational support in coordination with DMH staff and the planning committee.

2.2. The State of Vermont seeks to achieve the following Business Values:

2.2.1. Cost Effectiveness: Deliver a high-quality conference within the established budget through efficient planning, resource management, and cost-conscious coordination of vendors and services.

2.2.2. Attendee Experience: Provide a well-organized, accessible, and engaging conference experience through effective registration, communication, event logistics, and on-site support.

2.2.3. Operational Efficiency: Reduce the administrative burden on Department staff through comprehensive event planning, coordination, and management, including timely communication and execution of conference deliverables.

2.2.4. Educational Value: Support a meaningful professional development experience through effective coordination of speakers, breakout sessions, continuing education credits, and attendee evaluations.

2.3 Scope of Work & Expected Activities

Respondents will address each of the following:

2.3.1 **Venue Logistics**

Contractor will support the communication and coordination with the venue for the conference. Contractor will organize, coordinate, and support venue logistics in consultation with DMH. Logistics include but are not limited to:

a) Meeting space and hotel accommodations

b) Parking

c) Electricity access for vendors

d) Wireless internet

e) Room layouts

f) Food and beverage (breakfast, lunch, breaks)

g) Audio/visual technology management

h) Room block management (in coordination with DMH)

2.3.2 **Programming Development**

Contractor will work with DMH to:

a) Call for speakers

b) Manage speakers proposal submissions and coordinate selection of speakers with DMH

c) Speakers' travel & logistics

d) Assist with conference agenda & schedule

e) Manage registration of conference attendees: DMH may use its established JotForm-based registration process; however, bidders may also propose an alternative registration platform. Proposed solution must support full registration management, including credit card payment processing, session sign up, and attendee tracking.

f) Other conference-related logistics as identified by DMH.

g) Contractor will work with DMH to coordinate all logistics for speakers. Contractor will arrange travel and provide honoraria to up to five (5) speakers, as determined by DMH, namely keynotes or other spotlight presenters.

h) Contractor will create a conference agenda that will be agreed upon by the planning committee.

i) Contractor will limit conference registration to 350 (or as venue allows) participants, or a number as requested by DMH. Registration cost per attendee will be determined by DMH and funds will need to be collected via credit card payment, keeping processing fees to a minimum. Depending on the proposed setup, the vendor may maintain a specific account for the revenue, less fees, and would be required to submit revenue to State rather than deducting from invoices.

2.3.3 **Conference Marketing**

a) Maintain conference website. All digital and printed materials must meet WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards and align with the State of Vermont's brand and plain-language guidelines. State will likely prefer to have content created and provided to State to be placed on DMH Website rather than third party domain.

b) Contractor will create a marketing plan that will encourage registration of speakers, attendees and exhibitors. Plan will be agreed upon by DMH to ensure the conference participation goals are met and the intended audiences are reached.

c) Contractor will track marketing success and deliver a concise summary report each month highlighting progress. Marketing progress reports and engagement metrics shall be submitted monthly until the conference date.

d) Contractor will be responsible for conference branding and graphic design of online and print materials. Online and print materials to include a conference logo will be utilized in all marketing efforts. All graphics will be submitted to the conference planning committee for approval before use.

e) Contractor will be responsible for creating, printing and distributing all conference materials including save the date information, conference agendas and registration packets with handouts for attendees.

f) Contractor will recruit exhibitors/vendors for the conference as determined by the conference planning committee.

g) All materials, branding, logos, website content, and domain names created for the conference are owned by the State and shall be transferred to DMH upon request or contract end.

2.3.4 **Conference Execution**

a) Contractor will assign a project manager who will serve as the primary contact for DMH and be available throughout the planning and event phases.

b) Contractor will be accountable for all conference logistics. The contractor will need to arrive on site(s) prior to the conference to assure all logistics are in place. The contractor will need to be present on site throughout the course of the conference.

c) Contractor will arrange and provide continuing education credits as determined by the planning committee. Contractor will coordinate with DMH to ensure compliance with the Office of Professional Regulation (OPR) and possibly the University of Vermont Continuing Medical Education (CME) requirements for CEU approval.

d) Contractor will create a method for obtaining attendee feedback and evaluations in a format required for continuing education credits and will summarize the data in a report to DMH.

e) Contractor will gather all presentations and ensure permission to post slides and materials on DMH website after conference. All slides and materials must meet Section 508/WCAG accessibility standards and be provided in approved formats for DMH website posting.

f) Contractor will coordinate having computers on site for pre-loaded presentation in each conference breakout room.

2.3.5 **Evaluation**

a) Following conference completion, Contractor and the planning committee will have a final debriefing meeting to confer strengths and weaknesses of the conference as stated in the evaluation.

b) Contractor will provide a concise summary report with recommendations for improvement no later than 30 days after the conclusion of the conference.

2.3.6 Bidders shall review **EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 06-26, Local Media Considerations in State Marketing and Advertising Purchasing** outlined in section 3.2 of this RFP and confirm whether their intended deliverables will include media planning and buying. If media buying is included, bidders must address the options and strategies for spending in local media outlets in compliance with EO 06-26, or document why using local media would not be feasible. If media planning and buying is not part of the project scope, bidders must clearly state that in their response.

3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

3.1. Prospective bidders must be registered as a supplier in Vermont's Procurement system, VTBuys https://vtbuysprocurement.vermont.gov/suppliers-bidders. Registration in this system is important for future steps related to the RFP such as contracting and invoicing.

3.2. **EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 06-26, Local Media Considerations in State Marketing and Advertising Purchasing**

For all marketing and communications projects that include media planning and buying (e.g. ad placements, paid search, etc.), bidders must comply with EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 06-26 (EO 06-26 - Local Media Considerations in

State Marketing and Advertising Purchasing.pdf), Local Media Considerations in State Marketing and Advertising Purchasing. In the context of RFP responses, bids for media buying are required to address options and strategies for spending in local media outlets. In scenarios where the bidder does not believe local media is feasible, based on intended audience, desired outcomes, timeline, budget, etc., bidders must document that reasoning in their bid. The selected bidder will be required—whenever feasible and consistent with the best interests of the State—to give preference to local media when placing ads or paid media.

3.3. **PRICING:** Bidders must price the terms of this solicitation at their best pricing. Any and all costs that Bidder wishes the State to consider must be submitted for consideration. If applicable, all equipment pricing is to include F.O.B. delivery to the ordering facility. No request for extra delivery cost will be honored. All equipment shall be delivered assembled, serviced, and ready for immediate use, unless otherwise requested by the State.

3.3.1. Prices and/or rates remain firm for the initial term of the contract. The pricing policy submitted by Bidder must (i) be clearly structured, accountable, and auditable and (ii) cover the full spectrum of materials and/or services required.

3.3.2. **Cooperative Agreements**. Bidders that have been awarded similar contracts through a competitive bidding process with another state and/or cooperative are welcome to submit the pricing in response to this solicitation.

3.4. **Other Provisions:**

3.4.1. **Language Access Services:**

3.4.1.1. Bidders should offer services that consider language access and communication needs.

3.4.1.2. Interpreting and translating services should be available by request and receive timely responses. Interpreting can be live or remote, or a combination thereof. Processes should include identifying language needs upon receipt of services.

3.4.1.3. All services and materials must meet ADA communication requirements and WCAG 2.1 AA Minimum Standard.

3.4.1.4. Bidders must include cost estimates and budget for language and communication services and supports in their pricing proposal.

3.5. **STATEMENT OF RIGHTS:** The State shall have the authority to evaluate Responses and select the Bidder(s) as may be determined to be in the best interest of the State and consistent with the goals and performance requirements outlined in this RFP. The State of Vermont reserves the right to obtain clarification or additional information necessary to properly evaluate a

proposal. Failure of bidder to respond to a request for additional information or clarification could result in rejection of that bidder's proposal. To secure a project that is deemed to be in the best interest of the State, the State reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids, in whole or in part, with or without cause, and to waive technicalities in submissions. The State also reserves the right to make purchases outside of the awarded contracts where it is deemed in the best interest of the State.

3.5.1. **Best and Final Offer (BAFO).** At any time after submission of Responses and prior to the final selection of Bidder(s) for Contract negotiation or execution, the State may invite Bidder(s) to provide a BAFO. The state reserves the right to request BAFOs from only those Bidders that meet the minimum qualification requirements and/or have not been eliminated from consideration during the evaluation process.

3.5.2. **Presentation.** An in-person or webinar presentation by the Bidder may be required by the State if it will help the State's evaluation process. The State will factor information presented during presentations into the evaluation. Bidders will be responsible for all costs associated with providing the presentation.

3.6. **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:**

3.6.1. **Organizational Conflict of Interest (OCOI):** An OCOI arises when a bidder as a business entity has interests (for example, customers, partners, contracts) that could undermine, or reasonably be perceived to undermine, its faithful and unbiased performance of a contract with the State that may result from this solicitation.

3.6.2. **Personal Conflict of Interest (PCOI):** A PCOI arises when an interest held by an individual, agent or employee of a bidder could undermine, or reasonably be perceived to undermine, its faithful and unbiased performance of a contract with the State that may result from this solicitation.

3.6.3. **Requirements**: The State does not seek to contract with any individual or business entity having a conflict of interest which cannot be mitigated to the State's satisfaction. To ensure the State's awareness of actual, potential, or reasonably perceived PCOIs and OCOIs, bidders shall:

a. Prior to submitting a proposal, conduct an internal review of its current affiliations and activities and identify actual, potential, or reasonably perceived PCOIs or OCOIs relative to a contract with the State that may result from this solicitation.

b. Disclose in your proposal any actual or potential PCOI or OCOI or the existence of any facts that may cause a reasonably prudent person to perceive a PCOI or OCOI with respect to a contract with the State that may result from this solicitation. Disclose, also, any actions proposed to mitigate the PCOI or OCOI.

3.6.4. The State shall have sole discretion to determine whether a PCOI or OCOI can be mitigated to the State's satisfaction and may discuss the conflict with the bidder if and to the extent the State deems discussion necessary to its determination. The State reserves the right to (a) reject from further consideration any proposal having a PCOI or OCOI that cannot be mitigated to the State's full satisfaction and (b) terminate a contract upon discovery that a contractor failed to disclose facts pertaining to a PCOI or OCOI in its proposal, or otherwise misrepresented relevant information to the State.

3.7. **WORKER CLASSIFICATION COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS:** In accordance with Section 32 of The Vermont Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Act No. 54), Bidders must comply with the following provisions and requirements.

3.7.1. **Self Reporting:** For bid amounts exceeding $250,000.00, Bidder shall complete the appropriate section in the attached Certificate of Compliance for purposes of self-reporting information relating to past violations, convictions, suspensions, and any other information related to past performance relative to coding and classification of workers. The State is requiring information on any violations that occurred in the previous 12 months.

3.7.2. **Subcontractor Reporting:** For bid amounts exceeding $250,000.00, Bidders are hereby notified that upon award of contract, and prior to contract execution, the State shall be provided with a list of all proposed subcontractors and subcontractors' subcontractors, together with the identity of those subcontractors' workers compensation insurance providers, and additional required or requested information, as applicable, in accordance with Section 32 of The Vermont Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Act No. 54). This requirement does not apply to subcontractors providing supplies only and no labor to the overall contract or project. This list MUST be updated and provided to the State as additional subcontractors are hired. A sample form is available online at http://bgs.vermont.gov/purchasing-contracting/forms. **The subcontractor reporting form is not required to be submitted with the bid response.**

3.8. **EXECUTIVE ORDER 05-16: CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS IN STATE PROCUREMENTS:**

For bid amounts exceeding $25,000.00 Bidders are requested to complete the Climate Change Considerations in State Procurements Certification, which is included in the Certificate of Compliance for this RFP.

After consideration of all relevant factors, a bidder that demonstrates business practices that promote clean energy and address climate change as identified in the Certification, shall be given favorable consideration in the

competitive bidding process. Such favorable consideration shall be consistent with and not supersede any preference given to resident bidders of the State and/or products raised or manufactured in the State, as explained in the Method of Award section. But, such favorable consideration shall not be employed if prohibited by law or other relevant authority or agreement.

3.9. **METHOD OF AWARD:** Awards will be made in the best interest of the State. The State may award one or more contracts and reserves the right to make additional awards to other compliant bidders at any time if such award is deemed to be in the best interest of the State. All other considerations being equal, preference will be given first to resident bidders of the state and/or to products raised or manufactured in the state, and then to bidders who have practices that promote clean energy and address climate change, as identified in the applicable Certificate of Compliance.

3.9.1. **Evaluation Criteria:** Consideration shall be given to the Bidder's project approach and methodology, qualifications and experience, ability to provide the services within the defined timeline, cost, and success in completing similar projects. Each proposal will be evaluated using a weighted scoring system. The VTBuys Questionnaire is divided into the sections outlined in section 4.5 of this RFP that reflect key evaluation criteria, with each section assigned a specific weight based on its relative importance. Reviewers will rate each section on a scale from 0 to 5, where 0 indicates the response does not meet expectations and 5 indicating that the response far exceeds expectations. Weighted scores for each section will be combined to determine the total score, which will guide funding decisions. Weights for key evaluation criteria are set forth below.

3.9.2. **Technical Proposal:**

- Company Overview/Organizational Capacity: 20%
- Scope of Work and Expected Activities: 30%
- Proposed timeline: 15%
- References and Reporting Requirements: 10%

Cost Proposal:

- Pricing Schedule: 25%

3.10. **CONTRACT NEGOTIATION:** Upon completion of the evaluation process, the State may select one or more bidders with which to negotiate a contract, based on the evaluation findings and other criteria deemed relevant for ensuring that the decision made is in the best interest of the State. In the event State is not successful in negotiating a contract with a selected bidder, the State reserves the option of negotiating with another bidder, or to end the proposal process entirely.

3.11. **COST OF PREPARATION:** Bidder shall be solely responsible for all expenses incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP and shall be responsible for all expenses associated with any presentations or

demonstrations associated with this request and/or any proposals made.

3.12. **CONTRACT TERMS:** The selected bidder(s) will be expected to sign a contract with the State, including the Standard Contract Form, Attachment C and any other Attachments included in section 7 of this RFP for reference. If IT Attachment D is included in this RFP, terms may be modified based upon the solution proposed by the Bidder, subject to approval by the Agency of Digital Services.

3.12.1. **Business Registration.** To be awarded a contract by the State of Vermont a bidder (except an individual doing business in his/her own name) must be:

- Registered with the Vermont Secretary of State's office Business Filings | Secretary of State and must obtain a Contractor's Business Account Number issued by the Vermont Department of Taxes Home | Department of Taxes

- Registered as a supplier in Vermont's Procurement system, VtBuys https://vtbuysprocurement.vermont.gov/suppliers-bidders

3.12.2. The contract will obligate the bidder to provide the services and/or products identified in its bid, at the prices listed.

3.12.3. **Payment Terms.** Percentage discounts may be offered for prompt payments of invoices; however, such discounts must be in effect for a period of 30 days or more in order to be considered in making awards.

3.12.4. **Retainage.** In the discretion of the State, a contract resulting from this RFP may provide that the State withhold a percentage of the total amount payable for some or all deliverables, such retainage to be payable upon satisfactory completion and State acceptance in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract.

3.12.5. **Quality.** If applicable, all products provided under a contract with the State will be new and unused, unless otherwise stated. Factory seconds or remanufactured products will not be accepted unless specifically requested by the purchasing agency. All products provided by the contractor must meet all federal, state, and local standards for quality and safety requirements. Products not meeting these standards will be deemed unacceptable and returned to the contractor for credit at no charge to the State.

4. CONTENT AND FORMAT OF RESPONSES: The content and format requirements listed below are the minimum requirements for State evaluation. These requirements are not intended to limit the content of a Bidder's proposal. Bidders may include additional information or offer alternative solutions for the State's consideration. However, the State discourages overly lengthy and costly proposals, and Bidders are advised to include only such information in their response as may be relevant to the requirements of this solicitation.

4.1. **Unsolicited Bidder-Confidential Information Prohibited.** Bidders are hereby expressly directed **not** to include any confidential information in their proposal submissions. By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, bidders acknowledge and agree to abide by the terms and conditions outlined in this document, including the prohibition on submitting confidential information. This prohibition reduces the burden on the State while preventing bidder-confidential information from entering the public record.

4.2. **Disclosure under Public Records Act.** All information received by the State in response to this solicitation will become part of the contract file and subject to public disclosure in accordance with the State's Public Records Act, 1 V.S.A. § 315 et seq. The State may also choose to publicly post responses to this solicitation and the resulting agreement(s), following conclusion of this procurement process.

4.3. **Unsolicited Confidential Materials.** This RFP does not solicit bidder confidential information and bidders are expressly prohibited from providing confidential information in response to this RFP. All materials furnished by bidders in response to this RFP, including those marked as confidential by bidders, are subject to disclosure if requested under the Public Records Act, or public posting.

4.4. **State Not Responsible for Disclosure of Unmarked Bidder-Confidential Information.** It is the sole responsibility of the bidder to ensure that no information that should not be publicly disclosed is included in their proposal materials, including any 1) trade secrets or intellectual property, 2) proprietary financial or business information, 3) personal information, or 4) any other information that should not be disclosed to the public. For example, bidders should avoid including specific details of their proprietary technologies or methodologies that they consider confidential, and any references to previous client engagements should be presented in a manner that does not disclose the client's confidential information.

4.5. The bid will be completed in VT Buys and will include a Company overview, Technical response (Scope of work listed in section 2.3 of this RFP), a Pricing schedule, Reporting Requirements, and References. This is referred to as the VTBuys Questionnaire.

4.6. **COMPANY OVERVIEW**

4.6.1. Provide details concerning your form of business organization, company size and resources.

4.6.2. Describe your capabilities and particular experience relevant to the RFP requirements.

4.6.3. If you have experience working with the State of Vermont, identify all current or past State projects. Provide the name of the Vermont department or agency and the project title or a brief description of the

work. Do not include references or statements from State of Vermont agencies or employees.

4.6.4. Identify the names of all subcontractors you intend to use, the portions of the work the subcontractors will perform, and address the background and experience of the subcontractor(s), in response to the questions described above in this section.

4.6.5. Exceptions to Contract Terms and Conditions. If a bidder wishes to propose an exception to any terms and conditions set forth in the Standard Contract Form and its attachments, such exceptions must be included in the Company overview section of the RFP response. Failure to note exceptions when responding to the RFP will be deemed to be acceptance of the State contract terms and conditions. If exceptions are not noted in the response to this RFP but raised during contract negotiations, the State reserves the right to cancel the negotiation if deemed to be in the best interests of the State. Note that exceptions to contract terms may cause rejection of the proposal, and that the State's non-rejection of a proposal on this basis does not indicate acceptance of the exceptions.

4.7. **Scope of Work & Expected Activities**

Respondents will address each of the items identified in section 2.3 of this RFP.

4.8. **PRICE SCHEDULE**

Bidders shall complete and submit the Budget Submission Template (included in the VTBuys questionnaire) as their detailed cost proposal and pricing breakdown, including any planned annual rate adjustments if proposing pricing for subsequent years. The initial 2027 budget is required; Pricing for 2028–2031 is encouraged but optional.

4.9. **Proposed Timeline:**

Bidders must provide a proposed project timeline outlining key planning activities, milestones, deliverables, and anticipated completion dates leading up to the conference.

The timeline should demonstrate the bidder's approach to managing the planning process and ensuring timely execution of all event requirements.

4.10. **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:** Provide a sample of any reporting documentation that may be applicable to the Detailed Requirements of this RFP and complete the following:

4.10.1. **Certificate of compliance and Byrd Anti-lobbying Certification:** This form must be completed and submitted as part of the response for the

proposal to be considered valid. This form is included for download in the Questionnaire.

4.10.2. **References:** Provide the names, addresses, and phone numbers of three companies with whom you have transacted similar business recently. You must include contact names who can talk knowledgeably about performance. Do not list a State of Vermont agency or employee as a reference

5. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

5.1. **CLOSING DATE:** Bids must be received by the State through VT Buys by the due date specified on the front page of this RFP. Late bids will not be considered.

5.1.1. The State may, for cause, issue an addendum to change the date and/or time when bids are due. If a change is made, the State will inform all bidders by posting at the webpage indicated on the front page of this RFP.

5.1.2. There will not be a public bid opening. However, the State will record the name, city and state for any and all bids received by the due date.

5.2. **ELECTRONIC BIDS ONLY:** All bids under this RFP must be submitted electronically in accordance with the submission requirements herein. Electronic bids will only be accepted via VT Buys.

Bidders must register in the system to submit their bids. Additional registration information can be found online: Suppliers & Bidders | VT Buys Procurement.

6. BID SUBMISSION CHECKLIST:

- ✓ All required sections of the VTBuys Questionnaire complete
- ✓ Signed Certificate of Compliance uploaded in the VTBuys Questionnaire
- ✓ Budget Submission Template

7. ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS:

7.1. Standard State Contract with its associated attachments, including but not limited to:

7.1.1. Standard Contract for Services (2-13-2026 Revised)

7.1.2. Certificate of Compliance (3-1-2025 Revised)

7.1.3. Attachment C - Standard State Contract and Grant Provisions (2-13-2026 Revised)

7.1.4. Attachment F – Agency of Human Services' Customary Contract - Grant Provisions (09-02-2025)

7.1.5. Attachment G – State of Vermont – Federal Terms Supplement - Non-Construction (December 30, 2024)