Guidelines for Lead Fiscal Agent (LFA) Evaluation Using Consensus Scoring

The following document provides guidelines for the Evaluation process for a Lead Fiscal Agent (LFA) to contract with DHHS/Maine CDC on behalf of the Public Health District. These guidelines are based upon best practices, but do not represent State statute, law or policy. The goals of the Evaluation process are to 1) ensure fairness and objectivity in review of the proposals and 2) ensure the contract is awarded to the “best value” bidder whose proposal best satisfies the established Evaluation criteria.

Evaluation Team Formation: The members should have some knowledge of the subject matter. However, this is an Evaluation team, so every member does not need to be knowledgeable in every aspect. It is suggested that Evaluation teams be made up of at least three people with no conflicts of interest. DCC steering/executive committee in consultation with DL should appoint at least three current members with no obvious apparent conflicts of interest (i.e., employed, volunteer position, or receiving funding from any applicant). In the event there is a conflict, steering committee members may vote to approve or seek other team members.

The District Liaison will facilitate the process but will not be considered a member of the Evaluation team.

Pass/Fail Items: These items are not scored and represent requirements bidders must demonstrate to be considered in the Evaluation process. These criteria are listed on the “Lead Fiscal Agent Evaluation Criteria” document. Proposals which fail to meet any of the pass/fail criteria are not to be considered. Documentation supporting this decision is to be placed on the Bidder’s Team Consensus Evaluation Notes form in the “Pass/Fail Criteria” section.

Preparation for Evaluation Team Meetings: After proposals have been received, and prior to the first meeting of the Evaluation team, team members should be given one copy of each proposal to be reviewed. The Evaluation team members must read and review each proposal and take Individual Evaluation Notes. These notes will assist team members in remembering items for the purpose of consensus discussion and for transparency purposes. Be sure to 1) save the notes 2) type or write legibly and 3) use only appropriate wording (for example, no slang or unclear abbreviations/acronyms).

Individual notes should have applicants name, date reviewed and the evaluator’s name at the top of each page. The individual notes should highlight significant points in the proposals (for example, strengths/weaknesses) and note any questions they would like to discuss in the Evaluation team meeting(s). The evaluators are not to score the proposals in their individual notes, as the scoring is done in the consensus/group setting.

One method of individual note taking that has been successfully utilized is using the P/M/Q/I method. Using this method, evaluators mark their individual comments with one of the four letters. The letters represent:
- **P** (Positive): Indicates what the evaluator sees as strength.
- **M** (Minus): Indicates what the evaluator sees as a weakness.
- **Q** (Question): Indicates the evaluator is uncertain about the information presented.
- **I** (Interesting): Indicates the evaluator finds the information interesting (i.e. when proposal provides an innovative approach or solution – “outside the box”).

Consensus Approach: The use of a consensus approach is to be used to evaluate the proposals and assign points. This means that Evaluation team members will not assign any scores during their individual reviews of the proposals. Instead, the entire Evaluation team will arrive at a consensus of points on each Evaluation criterion of each proposal during the Evaluation team meeting(s). The DL may assist the team in developing consensus but should not exercise decision-making in the determination of the assignment of points to proposals.
**Order of Review:** There is no preferred order of review. Evaluation teams may decide to review proposals by alphabetical order, random Evaluation or another method. The Evaluation team will review and assign points to only one proposal at a time. After completing the review and assigning points to an entire proposal, the team then moves on to the next proposal, and so forth.

**Measure Proposals against the Evaluation criteria, not other proposals:** Proposals must be evaluated against the established Evaluation criteria. Do not evaluate or compare proposals to each other except when evaluating for cost.

**Only One Score Sheet for each Proposal (Team Consensus Evaluation Notes):** The DL will keep the only document for recording the team consensus comments and assigned points for each proposal.

**Awarding points:** In determining how well a proposal scored, the approach for Evaluation teams is to determine how many points for the section being evaluated did the proposal "earn". All proposals start off with zero points and are awarded points based on how well they responded to the established Evaluation criteria.

**Cost Scoring:** Scoring of the cost proposal information should be in accordance with the established Evaluation criteria. (See LFA Evaluation Criteria and Scoring- FINAL 2016 Document)

DL’s will forward final Evaluation to Division Director to verify with Division of Contract Management the vendor is in good standing. The Division Director will notify DL.

**Tips/Considerations:**

Evaluation Team Formation:
This should be a closed process with only the DL as facilitator and Evaluation team members present. DL’s should consult by-laws with steering/executive committee during Evaluation process for additional conflicts of interest. Each team member must sign a disclosure form.

DL’s should use the forms as described. These should be saved to become part of DCC record retention. Following process as outlined helps assure transparency and consistency.

**Criteria 1:**
Pass/Fail only
Remember – benefit of selecting 501 c3 entities allows the vendor to apply and accept other funding on behalf of the DCC. DCC would need to select additional LFA to explore opportunities. These will be reviewed prior to providing copies to Evaluation team members. If a proposal “fail” this is to be documented but no copy should be issued for review.

**Criteria 2:**
Pass/Fail only. Did the applicant submit photocopied verification? If not, do not consider. Proofs of insurance resemble typical insurance riders. These will be verified by Division of Contract Management. These will be reviewed prior to providing copies to Evaluation team members. If a proposal “fail” this is to be documented but no copy should be issued for review.

**Criteria 3:**
Where is the applicant’s office? Are there multiple offices?
It is not required the applicant be from the district, however, a local presence enables DCC to engage with vendor on other District issues.

**Criteria 4:**
Did the applicant submit SOP/protocols for review? Do these establish financial controls? Are they current or have evidence of a recent review?
Criteria 5:

Criteria 6:

Criteria 7:
Reminder, Maine CDC will “approve” the selected vendor after confirmation from the Division of Contract Management that the vendor is in "good standing" i.e. no audit findings or other contract issues.