THE BIDDER'S CONFERENCE HELD FOR

RFP 2009-06

PRISONER REENTRY INITIATIVE

HELD AT: NYS Department of Parole
97 Central Avenue
Albany, New York

June 16, 2009 at 1:00 p.m.

REPORTER: DURR COURT REPORTING
ANN MARIE NAPIERKOWSKI, Hearing Reporter
(315) 735-7429
MR. NESIC: I want to welcome everybody to the
New York State Division of Parole, Buffalo and Albany
locations.

The Bidders Conference for RFP is something that
we take very seriously. The intent is to make sure that
the providers understand what we are asking them to
provide, what we are asking them to outline, what the
requirements for the contract would be. It is not to
discuss necessarily why we ask X instead of Y, it is
rather we need to spend our time answering the questions
that you need addressed. Along the way we are going to
submit some horror stories with people that have left
out one small technical component and not able to accept
their proposal. We'll say it again and again check it
two times, three times, and that is not to no one's
advantage, certainly not to yours.

Let's go around the room and maybe, Pat, start
with the Parole Buffalo people.

MS. FITZMAURICE: We have Cino Rossi, he is the
Regional Director for Region 5, Elmira, Buffalo,
Rochester, and all these surrounding areas.

We have Alpina Taylor, she is down here in the
peach colored sweater. She is area supervisor for the
Elmira District.

We have Elizabeth Wilk, she is deputy for
Regional Reentry Services. She is responsible for the
Regional Services PRI grant, which you are here for
today, and grant is area specific responsible for the
Buffalo area office and that is the area that this
particular contract is going to be with.

We have Angelo Ervelino, Parole Reentry Services
and he is responsible for the region Elmira and
Binghamton area.

We have Pedro Hernandez, Parole Officer, who is
responsible for those particular areas in this area
office as well as Elmira.

Lori Dibblo is to my right, she is runs
Region 5, she is administrative assistant who will work
be closely with you and make sure that the services are
provided in appropriate manner.

I think we'll start with the folks that are
here, if that is okay.

MR. NESICH: Do you want me to go ahead?

MS. FITZMAURICE: Do your group.

MR. NESICH: I want to thank you, Pat and Lori,
in this year of budget cuts. Since Lori is running the
Area 5, I don't see a need for Gino. No, no. Notice I
didn't state anyone runs administration.

I am Jeff Nesich, I am the chief financial
officer of parole.
To my left is the distinguished Robert Smith looking very presidential. He is one the reentry
director for Downstate. He is primarily in charge of
ACCESS and referring to drug treatment programs in the
city of New York, as well as various other management
positions that we put him in.

Mike Buckman, Director of Policy Analysis and is
involved in all the research, particularly the data
provisions of this RFP and what we are looking for, why,
and its purpose.

Rick Knuth is with operations, he is operation
representative here. He is involved in RFP procurement
electronic monitoring, as well as working with Mike's
office, management of the information and various data
bases and reports and things.

We have in the corner Roger McMillan who works
in the budget unit.

We have Amber Steinhilber, she is one of our
touch associate budget analyst.

We have next to her Mike Oesterman in charge of
the audit unit. We met this morning, of course, in
preparation of working with this project.

Next here we have Melissa Perrotty, she is the
Director of Budget and Audit.

Next we have Lucretia Bailey, she is in the
Contract Unit Management.

Next to her we have Mary Ann Blazejewski, she is behind me to the right, she is in the Budget Unit.

Next to her we have our newest employee,

Ann Marie Napierkowski, who is our reporter.

To my right and your left Barbara Farley,

Director of Contract Management Unit.

Next to her off to the right is Marla Henriques,

works in the Contract Management Unit.

Last but not least is Kathy Kiley, associate counsel representing counsel's office today.

You can do the providers.

MS. FITZMAURICE: I think that is great.

MS. HEBELER: Hi, my name is Alysa Hebeler, I work for Spectrum Human Services, vocational services program that we are developing as well as our peer services program.

MR. NESICH: Welcome.

MR. WILLIAMS: I am Tim Williams, the Director of the Center for Employment Opportunities.

MR. NESICH: Traveled a long way, welcome.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes.


MS. JEMMOTT: Barbara Jemmott, I am supervisor
of the Group Ministries.

MR. NESICH: Good afternoon.

MS. BOYD: I am Andrea Boyd, Program Evaluator from Group Ministries.

MR. NESICH: I am sorry, could you say that again, please?

MS. BOYD: Andrea Boyd, from Group Ministries and I am program evaluator.

MR. NESICH: Maybe the bidders can move closer. Group Ministries, make sure you get closer so you can hear what is going on and we can hear you as well.

MS. HAYES: My name is Louise Hayes from the Buffalo Urban League. I am from the accounting office.

MR. NESICH: All right. What we are going to do, I am going to hit on a few important components of the Division’s RFP process and where in the RFP some of these highlights are. I am going to ask, then ask Pat or Elizabeth to give you four or five minutes of summation of what we are looking for here.

After our discussion with the federal government, they were here this morning talking about their plans and how we should use their funds, being the Division of Parole, takes the procurement very, very, very seriously. We look to define what we are looking for in a very clear informationable way and then we hold
these bidder’s conferences to make sure that if someone is not completely clear we can explain to them our goal, to give you enough time and enough information that you can submit a very good proposal for our consideration.

Once the proposals are submitted we have an independent committee that reviews these proposals and scores them completely, that is the account management committee, in conjunction with working with counsel’s office. The proposals come in and are examined that this includes all the required information necessary for them to be passed along to the scoring level two review process.

That process consists of a number of Division managers who independently will review the proposals based upon the managed criteria and score them and award is made to the proposal that is considered to be, by the Committee to be in the best interest of the Division of Parole in terms of the best program for the least amount of cost.

The cost is fixed, the federal grant is a specific sum of money. Normally someone will ask at a bidder’s conference what price are we looking for and I am always able to say to them a dollar and it is like a good joke, except it is not a good joke for them. We want all the proposals to come in at the exact dollar
amount, we want to is $533,000 over the two-year period.
Couple things that are really important in terms
of the mechanics of submitting your proposal. First
thing is it has to be here on time and it has to be in
our hands on time. We have had stories of cars breaking
down, UPS guaranteeing delivery and Fed Ex and not
going here. We cannot accept it if it is a minute
late, if it is a second late. We can't make an
extension for the RFP due date unless we publish that
extension and give everybody that extension. I suggest
get it here before the due date, the day before. If you
get it done that morning and you have to rely on someone
to drive it, you better make sure that you rely on
someone that is dependable.

Secondly, make sure that you read the
instructions and I suggest independently have someone
look at the check list, look at all the documents. We
have had to throw out proposals because it was not
signed by an authorized signature. We have had to throw
out proposals because information that was required was
not there, such as a certificate of occupancy, those
kinds of things. We cannot consider your proposal if
the mandatory information provision is not met. In
doubt, call and ask. And questions from you, you can
submit questions in writing. If you are curious do you
submit background information and all those questions, they can be submitted on the website so the playing field is level.

Today we are going to answer all the questions that you have, that is what we are looking to do here, and make sure that you understand our thinking so you are not in a disadvantage in any way.

Before I turn it over to Pat to talk about the program, some of the specifics of the program, let me address something that came up in this morning's meeting with the federal authorities. We hope that when you look at this RFP we have done our job. If you have looked at this RFP and said, whoa, this is a little different, this is a better tool, this gives us a shot to do something a little different. The notion of using the subsidies for incentives as employment as a new concept is, it is a new concept for us and feds said financially a new concept for them.

The thinking here is that by providing an employer, preferable a business that is out in the community, providing an incentive to hire that parolee, that they will work with that parolee and if that parolee is late for work two days in the first week, but works hard, little longer lunch in the first week, but because they were subsidized they will want those
bonuses along the way. A week, three weeks, five weeks
that parolee is in sink with that business, that
business says that parolee has been a good thing. Jeff
has been a good worker, I like Jeff, and when that
subsidy goes away, he is late a few times but he has
been already trained, knows that machine. I am going to
keep that guy.

If a month after every parolee has been fired by
those employers, then the program failed. I am not
saying it is your fault, we just missed something some
how. We want to test the concept of giving employers a
bonus concept to hire the parolees and give incentives
to this. That is what it is about.

I am going to ask Pat to talk to you about that
just for a few minutes, we want to leave as much time as
possible for you guys to ask questions. Also, I have to
have a little time so Barbara, the Contract Management
Unit Director, she will tell me that I forgot to mention
something.

MS. FITZMAURICE: Elizabeth will jump in as we
go through here. Everybody in this room is probably
aware of it, one of the key factors of that incentive is
ability to maintain themselves employment, transitional
employment and permanent employment at the same time.

We in parole, we have an opportunity to look at
some fairly sobering employment statistics, particularly
when it comes to our population, where in the last
year's period in the Upstate area, which is everything
outside of New York City, the amount of full-time
employment folks on parole have gone from fifteen
percent down to eight, that is a sobering, sobering
statistic. We are looking for an opportunity here as we
have been provided, as Jeff said, through a federal
grant that has been made available with the assistance
of ACJS and ourselves to put together a substantial
program to benefit people in the area, this area.
Everybody that lives here certainly is aware that the
western part of the State, employment is a massive issue
right now.

In this proposal, obviously you have all read
this, we are trying to do something different from what
we have done in the past. We are trying to look to
subsidize employers, we are looking for an enhancement
at the end of that, we are interested in your ability to
inform the advisory group, looking for people to give a
amount of incentive as a part of this program and to
make things happen.

In addition, as you read in the proposal itself,
we are looking for a minimum of two-hundred folks to be
assessed prerelease to be worked with inside the
facility, post-release supervision as well as employment. We are looking for you to look to both male and females from the Orleans Correctional and also females in the Albion Correctional. Orleans is forty minutes from here, forty-five minutes, and Albion is right next to it. We are looking for you to go to those facilities and work with the staff there and parolees coming out of there and working with the correction staff as well.

MS. WILK: Many of the features that are in this are dictated to us by the federal government and I want to stress that there has to be a minimum of two-hundred individuals who we provide services to prerelease and that is a minimum and that is something that is non-negotiable. When we come into the community, of course we know that there is going to be a certain degree of drop off, but two-hundred prerelease is minimum.

Again you read the RFP, I am just telling you what you already read, but to drive home that the services we want to have is a particular curriculum that is provided in the facility, so there is going to be a lot of work in the facility before they enter parole. The people would be identified by parole so you are not going to be out there by yourself kind of trying to
figure out who to contact or who you can contact and we also want to work with community at large. There is an expectation whoever receives the bid, whoever receives the proposal or the contract will have to work with the community and provide some outreach to the community, educate them on all the benefits to go along with this, with hiring a parolee, federal bonding and tax breaks and such.

MS. FITZMAURICE: The other comment that I would like to make, obviously you will be going in or your staff will be going in both these facilities, Albion and Orleans Correctional, you will have to go through the Department of Corrections Volunteer Assessment Program, they will be looking at the backgrounds of folks. Clearly you have to have somebody that can go into the correctional facility. I think that is it for us for now.

MR. NESICH: Okay. I think we are ready to go to questions and certainly we'll answer all the questions that you have. We have as much time as you have and if you could please identify yourself when you ask your question.

MS. FITZMAURICE: We have one.

MS. HAYES: Louise Hayes from Buffalo Urban League. Just to clarify that the current certificate of
occupancy is equivalent to, what do you expect from
that?

MR. NESICH: We need to see documentation that
the building that you are going to run the program out
of meets code and is acceptable to the local government
as an acceptable building to have parolees. In that
regard as people, twenty, thirty, forty people coming in
doing a session. Obviously if somebody was going to try
to run this program out of their basement, they wouldn't
be approved probably by the local government, they
wouldn't be zoned that way to do that.

We want to make sure that the proposed site
where you are going to run the program is federally
licensed and approved by the local government and meets
code, which is what it has to do. It is not a fire
hazard and insurances that we have to get if the
building is approved and certificate of occupancy to
work as a public meeting or local.

MS. HAYES: Thank you. And also some of these
forms that we have to fill out are PDF and I have been
trying to get them off the Word. Do you have these in
Word, where to bring them down and fill them out, the
forms that are required?

MS. PARLEY: They are not actually accessible in
Word. However, I am going to post, they are not
specifically parole forms, Department of Labor forms, Tax and Finance, there are a whole bunch of different websites that you can go to and they may have the actual form to fill out.

MS. HAYES: I did get some when I wrote to, I am not sure of the lady.

MS. FARLEY: To me, Barbara Farley.

MS. HAYES: They were all PDF, I still can't fill them in or can't fill them in and saved them so I am recreating the ones that I can.

MS. FARLEY: Even if you actually write on those with pen, that is acceptable, as long as they are signed and notarized, you don't have to specifically type them in there.

MS. HAYES: Thank you.

MR. NESICH: Write very neatly.

MR. WILLIAMS: Related to -- Tim Williams, from the Center of Employment Opportunities. Related to the certificate of occupancy, what if for example the agency or proposal is not the lease holder or not the owner, would an agreement stating the relationship between the lease holder and the agency and their certificate of occupancy be sufficient?

MR. NESICH: Yes. That is the key, their certificate of occupancy, yes.
MR. WILLIAMS: And one other -- actually I have two other questions. Tim Williams. In the document on Page 5 states, the service states that only two categories of offenses are not eligible for the program, sex offenses and juvenile offenses. The PRI, federal PRI funds employ people who have never been convicted of a violent offense or sex offense. Is the Division of Parole indicating that violent offenses will be accepted into this program?

MR. NESICH: Yes, absolutely. Otherwise we would have nowhere near the numbers.

MR. WILLIAMS: Again on Page 5 it states, under programs it states the contractor will use an employability assessment instrument approved by the Division of Parole, is there something that you are thinking for this and something that you would expect to develop for us?

MR. NESICH: We would expect you to develop it on your own or provide us with something.

MR. WILLIAMS: And just one last question. On the scope of services, the statement the provider will run the four-day orientation facility at Orleans or Albion, is it possible for this provider to offer these in the community after release?

MR. NESICH: No, it is required that it happens
prerelease.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

MR. NESICH: You are welcome.

MS. WILK: Any other questions?

MS. FITZMAURICE: Does Barbara want to discuss about her unit, her contract management unit?

MS. FARLEY: You pretty much hit everything.

MR. NESICH: Anybody else have a question about the proposal which is laid out there? No? This is done, this is independent evaluation based upon subjective analysis based upon the criteria that is laid out in the document.

MS. FITZMAURICE: Does anybody have any questions about when this is due and the time frame? I think Jeff is clearly clear about it, when it says specific due date by 5:00 on the particular date, it doesn't mean 5:05.

MR. NESICH: The officer at the front desk will write the date and time that it comes in. He is not going to reject it, he is going to write the day and time on it and Barbara working with it will look at the determination and if it is late we have to return it. Also the October 1st start date is extremely firm, we have to make sure that this program is it up and running on the 1st. We can answer other questions that you
have, put them in writing, send them to us, we'll answer those and Barbara will make sure those are all available on the website. There is a cut-off date and we can't answer questions after the cut-off date. One of the things that bothers us is when you ask one or two days after the cut-off date, you ask a simple question and we can't answer it. Not that I don't want to but we have to following these rules very being strictly.

MS. FITZMAURICE: Jeff. How many copies are we asking folks to supply?

MS. FARLEY: Twelve plus an original.

MR. NESICH: That is the key. We also had horror stories of eleven plus original, get somebody in your organization and have them triple check every page and every copy, the original is signed, does it contain all the forms.

MS. FITZMAURICE: We also asked for double space, right?

MS. FARLEY: Yes.

MS. FITZMAURICE: Only ten pages, which is a lot of information to cram in.

MR. NESICH: You can go short on the production, stick to the facts. We have a lot of, in the past you get a proposal where we run a great program that does fantastic as opposed to our program does this, our
program has this success rate. Try to use your words to
get the information across that you want us to read
because the actual characterization of how good the
program is going to be reviewed by the evaluation
committee.

MS. HEBELER: Excuse me, this is Alysa Hебeler,
Spectrum Human Services. Will they be working with
reentry care programer as well or we kind of take that
role as care coordinator?

MS. FARLEY: I see them being part of that team.
So there is a lot of information that is exchanged
prerelease, a lot of activity that occurs prerelease.
It is targeted -- not solely targeted but focusing
heavily on that unit incorporating this piece into the
whole process.

MS. FITZMAURICE: That being said, Elizabeth,
person coming out of Orleans may not have any substance
abuse issue at all.

MS. HEBELER: Will they need assistance with
housing at all or will we be able to help them with
that?

MS. WILK: There is many services wrapped around
the chair coordinator. I see their project can help
with employment and mainly that is really the primary
focus.
MR. NESICH: And you raised an excellent question and let me use that question to make a very important point. If we have two proposals that are identical, one is a little better than the other one based upon employment of the RFP, but the other proposal is going to get free housing to everybody, we can't consider the free housing, it is irrelevant to the evaluation process because we didn't ask for housing, that would be unfair. If you looking for a Chevy Impala, we can't buy the Mercedes even if it comes in at the same cost. Put your resources in the employment area.

Another thing is Elizabeth is point person for the program and Pat and Elizabeth will be working at voucher review and she is the first place that you go and Elizabeth reaches out to the budget people, or Barbara, whoever it will be, but you will have individuals to be your point person who will approve who you hire and work with you in developing a program. Our goal is work with you to make this a success.

MS. WILK: Can I add one thing, this is federal requirement, we are subsidiary to those requirements. It has to be a faith based or community based organization. There is a provision in here where you are allowed to partner with someone but the applicant
has to fall under that category. If you are profit
organization or some other type of format, whatever that
may be, you might not be eligible.

MR. NESICH: Essentially if you are
not-for-profit organization, we were looking basically
to reimburse not-for-profit organizations for working
with us and not in effect to use the federal money in
effect to pay a profit to an organization. Particularly
when you are dealing with parolees/inmates and dealing
with wage subsidies, we are not going in effect make a
profit to be made off of reduced wage for aparolee.

So, I think everyone here is not-for-profit
organization. If you are not sure, I think your
incorporation certificate, charity registration number,
there is some things that clearly indicates your tax
status, which is what we are really saying.

MS. FITZMAURICE: Anybody else have any other
questions, concerns? Okay, Jeff, I think we are good
here. Anything else that also you folks would like to
bring up?

MR. NESICH: No. Anything critical I left out?
No? I want to thank you all very much. We very much
hope that you all submit a proposal, we look forward to
going as many different ideas from different proposals
based on the specs here. Please make sure you get it
here on time and please make sure what is required on
that check list is provided.

Questions can be put in writing per the RFP,
we’ll try to answer those questions very quickly. It
will come to Barbara’s unit and she’ll reach out to
counsel and reach out to Mike or Rick and get that
answer, whatever you need and get it to you very
quickly. Thank you very much.

(Whereupon the proceeding concluded.)
CERTIFICATION

I, ANN MARIE NAPIERKOWSKI, Court Reporter and Notary
Public in and for the State of New York, do hereby
certify that the foregoing record taken by me at the
place and date noted in the heading hereof is a true and
accurate transcript of same to the best of my ability
and belief.

Ann Marie Napierkowski

DATED: ___________________________