

Northeast Coalition of States (NCS) Electronic Benefits Transfer RFP 2020-01 Questions and Answers

NCS EBT Procurement Final Questions and Answers				
Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
1	2.5	Pre-Bid Offerors' Conference	<p>Could you please help me with the following questions:</p> <p>1. Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada)</p> <p>2. Whether we need to come over there for meetings?</p> <p>3. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (like, from India or Canada)</p> <p>4. Can we submit the proposals via email?</p>	<p>1. Yes, companies from outside the USA can apply.</p> <p>2. Yes, Offerors will be required to come to the USA for meetings.</p> <p>3. Services must be performed solely from locations physically situated within the Continental United States (CONUS), see Amendment 1, paragraph 4.</p> <p><i>This is a change to the RFP</i></p> <p>4. No. See RFP Section 14.</p>
2	2.5	Pre-Bid Offerors' Conference	<p>Will OTDA kindly share the pre-proposal attendee list so that MWBE firms can more easily identify and network with prime vendors for possible partnerships on this opportunity?</p>	<p>The Pre-Bid Offerors' Conference attendee list is available on OTDA's website at: https://otda.ny.gov/contracts/2020/NCSEBT/20-NCSEBT-Offerors-Conference-Attendees.xlsx</p>
3	2.4	Timetable	<p>Will New York and the coalition consider an extension in the time allotted for offerors to prepare responses. The RFP is extensive and comprehensive with a lot for bidders to address. We will appreciate any additional time that the coalition can provide. Thank you for the consideration.</p>	<p>See Amendment 4 with revised RFP Section 2.4 Timetable. No additional changes will be made at this time.</p> <p><i>This is a change to the RFP</i></p>
4	2.4	Timetable	<p>Would the NCS consider extending the submission date due to the scope and complexity of the RFP, the complexity required of the submissions, and the impact of COVID-19 on the process as a result of all staff working remotely?</p>	<p>See Amendment 4 with revised RFP Section 2.4 Timetable. No additional changes will be made at this time.</p> <p><i>This is a change to the RFP</i></p>
5	2.4 2.6	Timetable Questions Regarding This Procurement	<p>Would the NCS consider posting answers as they become available rather than holding all to be released at once? With only a few weeks to update our technical writing and pricing between the posting of answers and when production activities need to begin, we may run out of time to make sure we're addressing your needs exactly as you've clarified.</p>	<p>In order to be equitable to all potential Offerors, and following the RFP calendar, responses will be posted at one time.</p>
6	Appendix Z	Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) participation requirements for all NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Contracts	<p>Please clarify what a "MWBE serving as a broker" means in the context of this EBT contract. Please provide an example.</p>	<p>A broker is a third-party intermediary between consumers of items and manufacturers, suppliers, or other entities that sell items from a regular inventory. Brokers do not make the same capital investments as suppliers. Brokers – are counted at 25% utilization credit. Any firms that are listed as brokers or manufacturers' representatives will be coded as such in the New York State Directory of certified MWBEs (NAICS code 425120). MWBE utilization is only reported in proportion to the commercially useful function ("CUF") performed by MWBEs on the NCS EBT procurement. MWBE Unit staff will engage in proper vetting of proposed MWBEs during utilization plan review, and monitoring during the life of the procurement. CUF analysis is always taken into account whether the services an MWBE is identified as performing pursuant to a utilization plan are consistent with the commodity code classifications assigned to the MWBE by Empire State Development in addition to whether payments to the MWBE are proportionate to the actual services or goods provided by the MWBE on the state contract, and the CUF criteria set forth in 5 NYCRR § 140.1(f). For Example: If Company A is a MWBE coded as broker providing \$100k in computer equipment, only \$25k will be counted towards the MWBE participation goal.</p>
7	Appendix M	Historical Data	<p>Given that 2018 data is outdated, could you provide more recent data; preferably most recent 12 months of data?</p>	<p>See RFP, Section 1.7 Disclaimer: "All statistical and fiscal information contained in this RFP, including any addenda or attachments, reflect data and records available to the NCS at the time the documents were prepared."</p>

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8	2.4	Pre-Bid Offerors' Conference	<p>Last week on 10-10-20 we found out about the NCS RFP. After reviewing much of the RFP we saw a sentence in Section 2.5 highlighted below: "2.5 Pre-Bid Offerors' Conference Offerors' Conference: OTDA will convene an Offeror's Conference at 40 North Pearl Street, Albany, New York 12243, or via teleconference at the time and date specified in Section 2.4 (Timetable). Failure of an Offeror to attend will result in disqualification. Although not mandatory, the attendance of Subcontractors, MBE, WBE and SDVOB is encouraged. In order to attend the Offerors' Conference parties must submit their request to attend by email to procurements@otda.ny.gov. Please submit request to attend no later than 5:00 pm ET at least three calendar days prior to the date of the Offeror's Conference as specified in Section 2.4 (Timetable). The email should include the following information:"</p> <p>We missed the Offeror's Conference but feel we are a qualified bidder.</p> <p>Can you give me some guidance on the acceptance of a bid from our coalition after missing the Offeror's Conference?</p>	<p>As stated in the RFP Section 2.5 Pre-Bid Offerors' Conference: "Failure of an Offeror to attend will result in disqualification." This requirement cannot be waived. However, Section 2.5 in the RFP continues with the statement, "Although not mandatory, the attendance of Subcontractors, MBE, WBE and SDVOB is encouraged."</p> <p>As there is no requirement that sub-contractors attend the pre-bid conference, the opportunity remains for any potential subcontractor to partner with potential prime contractors.</p> <p>The following is the link for the listing of attendees at the Pre-Bid Offerors' Conference which is posted on the OTDA website at: https://otda.ny.gov/contracts/2020/NCSEBT/20-NCSEBT-Offerors-Conference-Attendees.xlsx</p> <p>Also, the New York State Contract Reporter Ad for the NCS EBT RFP can be found at the following link wherein it notes it is Required to Attend Pre-Bid Offerors' Conference: http://www.nyscr.ny.gov/adsOpen.cfm?ID=D092103D-AD42-4AB6-836F-0CFACA2CCB9B</p>
9	Appendix Z	Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) participation requirements for all NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Contracts	<p>We are a certified Minority-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE) by the Chicago Minority Supplier Development Council (CMSDC) via the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC). And, we are a certified Woman-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) via the Chicago office of the Women's Business Development Center (WBDC). Both designations are nationally recognized certifications by corporate entities.</p> <p>We are set up to conduct business and have providing staffing consultants in the State of New York. According to the Prebid call on 10/8, all parties involved in this bid must be certified as an MBE or WBE.</p> <p>Does your office recognize the agencies above?</p>	<p>No, New York State (NYS) will only recognize NYS certified Minority - Owned Business Enterprises (MBE) and Woman Owned Enterprises (WBE).</p>
10	1.2	Purpose	<p>The NCS prefers that one contractor be chosen to contract with to implement the EBT Services throughout the entire Contract Term.</p> <p>The above statement uses the word "prefers" which leads one to question if there are other allowable options for contracting opportunities.</p> <p>1. Would the NCS allow a joint bid from two EBT contractors where one contractor bids the SNAP/TANF EBT services and the other bids the WIC EBT services and they would not be subcontractors to each other?</p> <p>2. If this type of arrangement is agreeable, would NCS be open to receiving a SNAP/TANF specific response from one contractor and a separate WIC specific response from the other contractor where both responses address required sections for each specific service?</p> <p>3. If not what type of response organization would be accepted?</p>	<p>No, there will be an award made to one (1) Contractor resulting from this RFP. See RFP, Section 2.2 Issuing Agency: "The NCS intends to select a single prime Contractor to implement the EBT Services for the NCS."</p>
11		Timetable	<p>In order for the CSAs to receive the best possible proposals from bidders, will the NCS extend the due date at least 30 days?</p>	<p>See Amendment 4 with revised RFP Section 2.4 Timetable. No additional changes will be made at this time. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i></p>

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12	2.4	Timetable	If NCS agrees to extend the due date, will a 2 nd round of Q&A be considered? Often States' initial answers raise more questions or follow-up questions from the bidders. With the goal of entering into a 7 to 9-year contracts, it is important, and in the best interests of the Contracting State Agencies (CSAs), for all bidders to fully understand each CSA's requirements and intentions to provide the best possible solution and pricing.	See Amendment 4 with revised RFP Section 2.4 Timetable. No additional changes will be made at this time. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
13	2.4	Timetable	Would the NCS consider posting answers sooner than Nov. 19th or consider posting answers as they become available rather than holding all to be released at once? Only having a few weeks between posting of all answers and the due date when Offerors need to update technical writing, pricing and produce/ship the required copies risks Offerors running out of time to make sure they are addressing the CSAs' needs exactly as have been clarified.	In order to be equitable to all potential Offerors, and following the RFP calendar, responses will be posted at one time.
14	3.2.1.C	Contractor Organization and Management	The CSAs are requiring a Letter of Credit and or Performance Bond. It would be helpful for each CSA to share the required verbiage needed for these financial instruments as this will help expedite the submission and acceptance of the documents between the Offeror and each CSA.	Specific language will be provided to the awarded bidder once determined.
15	3.2.1.C	Contractor Organization and Management	This section states that the Contractor is to maintain offices and workspaces physically located in each Contracting State Agency. Does this mean each CSA will set-aside office space in their locations for the Offeror's NCS Project Director and other key staff to be used periodically as needed through the transition phase?	RFP Section 3.2.1 Contractor Organization and Management, paragraph C is hereby deleted. <i>This is a change to RFP</i>
16	3.2.1.C	Contractor Organization and Management	In the event the State doesn't provide the office space to an Offeror, can the Offeror maintain an office in one location within driving distance of all CSA locations?	RFP Section 3.2.1 Contractor Organization and Management, paragraph C is hereby deleted. <i>This is a change to RFP</i>
17	3.2.4	State Transition/ Conversion	Given the likely COVID challenges still ahead, will the CSAs consider relaxing this requirement in the interest of optimizing virtual meetings and reducing the risk of travel-related exposure of in-person meetings?	It is unclear what this question relates to as RFP Section 3.2.4 does not contain meeting requirements.
18	3.2.4	State Transition/ Conversion	Please share the start and end dates of all the NCS State conversions from J.P. Morgan to the current incumbent vendor, Conduent, following the 2013 contract award.	New York (NY): Contract start 11/1/2013, conversion 9/21/2014 Rhode Island (RI): Contract start 11/1/2014; conversion 10/1/2015 Connecticut (CT): Contract start 3/24/2014, conversion 11/14/2014 Not applicable for Massachusetts (MA) and Maine (ME). Vermont (VT) 09/01/2014 JPM - Conduent 10/01/2014 New Hampshire (NH) Contract start 8/6/14, conversion 12/1/2014
19	3.2.6	State Project Managers	Would it be acceptable to the NCS for an Offeror to name the same resource as the its NCS Project Director and its State Project Manager for New York?	It would be acceptable for NCS's Project Director to become NY's Project Manager provided they are no longer the NCS' Project Director.
20	4	Detailed Technical Requirements	If an Offeror believes a particular optional service or function is most efficiently handled outside of the EBT contract, such as tasks related to enrollment, how should an Offeror respond to such a section given the requirement to attest to comply with all RFP Sections 3 through 11?	Offerors must be prepared to provide all optional items and must provide pricing for all items in Appendix P. It is expected that Offerors will need to use subcontractors in order to provide some services and comply with all RFP Sections 3 through 11.
21	4.1.7	Quest Operating Rules	The RFP states: "The Operating Rules (OR) and the Technical Implementation Guide (TIG) are technical resources for states to apply in their EBT implementation projects for consistency in WIC EBT online purchase messages and file handling processes utilized by both smart card/offline and magstripe/online WIC EBT systems (https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-electronic-benefits-transfer-ebt-guidance). Offerors must ensure they can achieve compliance with these policies and procedures." Does this mean that the offeror must support smart card/offline and Magstripe/online EBT as part of this procurement?	The last paragraph of RFP Section 4.1.7 Quest Operating Rules is hereby deleted and replaced with, "The Operating Rules (OR) and the Technical Implementation Guide (TIG) are technical resources for states to apply in their EBT implementation projects for consistency in WIC EBT online purchase messages and file handling processes utilized by magstripe/online WIC EBT systems (https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-electronic-benefits-transfer-ebt-guidance). Offerors must ensure they can achieve compliance with these policies and procedures." <i>This is a change to RFP</i>

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22	4.2.1.2.1	Batch and Online	Which CSAs intend to implement host-to-host transmission functionality under the new contract?	NY, ME and MA intend to implement host-to-host transmission functionality under the new contract. Host-to-host transmission functionality is already implemented in RI. CT and NH do not have plans to implement host-to-host at this time. VT is interested in having host-to-host transmission as an option, depending on the selected vendors disaster planning capabilities.
23	4.2.1.3.7.2	Stand in Processing	This section states stand-in processing may be used if a SNAP retailer cannot process POS SNAP transactions during an extended period where high call volumes or other related voice communication delays prevent the merchant from processing a Manual Voucher for voice authorization. Will the NCS please provide the criteria for "high call volume" as referenced in this section?	Criteria would be call volume that prevents the merchant from processing a manual voucher.
24	4.2.1.3.8 c	ATM Transaction Sets	Please describe the process for, and provide an example of, the ATM transaction type of "Adjustment". Is this requirement related to the requirement in Appendix B section 4.2.2.7 that references a request for a provision prepayment (credit)?	The process for adjustments is described under Section 4.2.1.3.9.3 of the RFP. Appendix B Section 4.2.2.7 is specific to MA.
25	4.2.2.1	Contractor Managed Adjustment Process	What is the current average monthly volume for the following for each CSA that plans on implementing this service: 1. CSR calls related to adjustment requests 2. Notices to cardholders for retailer-initiated requests to debit cardholder accounts 3. Notices to cardholders for any cardholder-initiated claims that are denied?	NY: The average monthly volume for CSR calls related to adjustment requests are unknown however, the monthly average number of adjustment requests is 619. 2. For NY, the number of notices to cardholders for retailer-initiated requests to debit cardholder accounts is not known. The average monthly volume of cardholder-initiated claim denial notices is 70. CT: On average there are 104 requests for adjustments. CT generates its own adjustment notices to cardholders. MA: The average monthly volume for CSR calls related to adjustment requests are unknown however, the monthly average number of adjustment requests for the period 11/2019 - 10/2020 is 78. Cardholder notices are managed and issued by the CSA. NH: Over the past 2 years NH's average CSR calls related to adjustments is 5. NH sends out our own retailer-initiated notices, which was 1 in the last 2 years. The monthly average over the past two years of notices to cardholders for any cardholder-initiated claims that were denied is 1.6. ME: The average monthly volume for CSR calls related to adjustment requests is approximately 25. The average monthly volume of notices to cardholders for retailer-initiated requests to debit cardholder accounts is 0. The average monthly volume of notices to cardholders for any cardholder-initiated claims that are denied is approximately 10. VT: 1) 80 CSR calls related to adjustment - 54 Client Initiated / 26 Retailer Initiated. (2) 2 denied claims that were retailer initiated and thus received notices. (3) 17 denied claims that were client initiated and thus received notices. RI - Over the past two years there have been 167 adjustment requests (the average number calls are unknown) 95 were approved 72 were denied.
26	4.2.2.4	ATM Usage Transaction Fees	Is the following true for all NCS States: "The current Cardholder ATM usage fee for an ATM Cash withdrawal transaction after the allowed number of usage Transaction Fee free transactions is forty-five cents (\$.45). Cardholder Transaction Fees may not exceed fifty cents (\$.50)."	This is true for NY, RI, VT, NH and CT. For MA, the current Cardholder ATM usage fee is \$.75 for the 4th and subsequent ATM Cash withdrawal transactions in a calendar month. ME's current fee is \$.65.
27	4.2.2.4	ATM Usage Transaction Fees	For each CSA, how many monthly ATM transactions are conducted and what is the charge per transaction?	The numbers of transactions are in Appendix M - Historical Data. Charges vary.

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28	4.2.2.4	ATM Usage Transaction Fees	For Cash programs for each CSA, please provide the average monthly dollar amounts that are spent via POS purchase vs. amounts that are withdrawn from ATMs and the total number of transactions.	NY average 441,236 ATM withdrawals for \$44,544,803 and 784,055 POS transactions for \$18,492,093. CT average 28,910 ATM withdrawals for \$4,852,798 and 58,288 POS transactions for \$1,704,409. RI Monthly POS average is: 18,585 transactions and Dollar average is: \$48,773. RI Monthly ATM average is: 8,488 transactions and Dollar average is: \$9,806. MA average 111,526 ATM withdrawals for \$16,837,818 and 178,100 Cash POS purchases for \$4,210,449. VT Data not available. NH average 12,748 ATM withdrawals for \$2,434,790 and 33,404 POS transactions for \$729,566. ME average ATM withdrawals 14,484 for \$1,913,334 and 50,187 POS transactions for \$1,063,659.
29	4.4.1.8 D	Cardholder Selection and Assignment of PINS	Would the NCS please describe situations in which a PIN would be issued or selected prior to a card being issued to a recipient?	The PIN would be issued or selected prior to a card being issued to a recipient if the PIN mailer was sent out first. Also, if a client reports a card lost, and wants to change the PIN prior to new card receipt.
30	4.5.2	Conversion of New EBT Card Stock	In which specific line item in the Optional Services pricing is the mass reissuance of EBT cards to be included for each CSA?	Pricing will be based on the per card bid rate.
31	4.5.2	Conversion of New EBT Card Stock	What is the volume of active cards per CSA that would need to be replaced?	NY, RI, CT and ME SNAP do not expect to convert to new cards. In MA there are approximately 550,000. In VT there are 17,165 cards YTD. However, the contractor will not print cards for VT. In NH there are 88,493 as of 10/31/2020.
32	4.5.2	Conversion of New EBT Card Stock	1. Are the CSAs requiring any special notification to Cardholders for this replacement? 2. If yes, how many notifications?	This is not applicable for NY, RI and CT. Maine currently has no replacement planned. At this time it is unknown if the states will need to replace all cards, therefore it is unknown if notifications will be needed. No replacement is currently planned at this time.
33	4.5.2	Conversion of New EBT Card Stock	Please provide a place in the pricing table for this item or confirm if Offerors should assume the price it proposes in Appendix P Optional Pricing Table for Section 9.4, Mass Mailing, covers this cost?	Pricing will be based on the per card bid rate for the replacement cards. Appendix P Optional Table for Section 9.4 Mass Mailing covers the cost of notification to card holders if necessary.
34	4.5.4.1	Location of Card Production	1. Is the preferred card production facility within 450 miles of Concord, NH, a preference for only NH or all the CSA's? 2. How is this "preference" considered in each Offeror's evaluation? 3. Is this scored?	1.This is a preference for all the CSA's. 2. & 3.The preference will be included within the technical scoring.
35	4.5.4.1	Location of Card Production	1. How is this "preference" for a card production facility within 450 miles of Concord, NH, going to be considered in each Offeror's evaluation? 2. Is this scored?	1. & 2. This is a preference for all the CSA. The preference will be included within the technical scoring.
36	4.5.5	Blank Card Stock Production	What is the average monthly volume of blank card stock needed by each CSA?	Quantities and frequency of orders vary across CSA, based on need. That is why the RFP requests tiered pricing.
37	4.5.7	Overnight Bulk Delivery of Cardholder Customized Card Stock	1. What is the average quantity of cards in a bulk order by CSA? 2. To how many different locations are cards shipped within each CSA?	1.Quantities and frequency of orders vary across CSA, based on need. That is why the RFP requests tiered pricing. 2. RI, CT, NY, ME and MA do not currently order overnight delivery of Customized card stock. VT and NH are currently one location.
38	4.5.7	Overnight Bulk Delivery of Cardholder Customized Card Stock	What are the card features included in "card customization" for each CSA?	CT and ME do not currently use any of the customization options. NY and MA have 4-color printing. VT only uses Contractor for 4-color printing for customization. VT does own embossing. NH card customization includes a unique EBT card number and the Cardholder's name embossed on the card, as well as a CAV. RI cards are embossed with customer name; card number; picture of Bridge.
39	4.5.7	Overnight Bulk Delivery of Cardholder Customized Card Stock	Is the card insert a single 8.5X11 standard sheet of white paper? Please provide a sample of the card insert from each CSA?	Not applicable for NY, RI, CT, ME and MA. VT inserts an 8.5 x 11, 4- fold, colored brochure. VT currently does its own card printing. NH inserts an 8.5 x11 sheet of paper trifolded into a business size envelope.
40	4.5.8	Over the Counter (OTC) Cards	Which CSA's are currently using this process and which CSA's plan on including it under the new contract?	NY, VT, NH, MA, ME and CT do not utilize through the current EBT contract. However, as this is an Optional service, any CSA can add the service at any time. RI uses at this time and may use with the new contract.

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41	4.5.8	Over the Counter (OTC) Cards	How many Contractor staff are required within each CSA for OTC card issuance? Can each CSA share how many they use today for this task?	Not applicable for NY, RI, VT, NH, ME and CT at this time. Not applicable for MA. In the past, state agency staff issued all OTC cards. Approximately six state agency staff are currently printing and mailing cards. NY does not use the current EBT Contractor for OTC cards; however, the current card vendor has four staff.
42	4.5.8	Over the Counter (OTC) Cards	Please provide a description of the Contractor Staffing roles and responsibilities and if they are required for the full term of the contract or for a specified period of time?	If a CSA decides to utilize this option staffing will be negotiated at that time.
43	4.5.8	Over the Counter (OTC) Cards	In the event the Contractor's staff is required to issue EBT cards in an OTC environment, where in the Appendix P Pricing Section should the associated pricing be included?	If a CSA decides to utilize this option pricing will be negotiated at that time.
44	4.5.8	Over the Counter (OTC) Cards	1. How many embossers and card printers are used by each CSA? 2. On average, how many embossers or printers are in each OTC location?	Not applicable for NY, VT, NH, ME and CT under the EBT contracts. RI is a flat print with 7 offices and 1 printer in each location. Not applicable for MA. In the past, one to two card printers per office have been in use however they are provided by the state agency, not the EBT vendor.
45	4.5.8	Over the Counter (OTC) Cards	Do the CSAs have a preference of flat print vs. embossing or both?	RI, NY and MA are a flat print. Not applicable for VT, NH, ME and CT at OTC sites.
46	4.5.9	Replacement Card Issuance	Please provide the number of replacement cards by CSA that are issued via mail and those issued OTC.	CSA's do not track the number of replacement cards versus new cards that are issued via mail. None of the CSA's currently use the OTC's under the EBT contract. Refer to Appendix M Historical Data for the number of cards mailed each month.
47	4.5.9	Replacement Card Issuance	How many cards issued OTC are printed on site versus preprinted by CSA?	RI prints all their own cards. NY prints all OTC cards on site. MA no longer prints OTC cards. Not applicable for VT, NH, ME and CT at OTC sites.
48	4.5.10	Cards Returned Undeliverable	Please explain the reason, frequency and volume of returned cards that could be required to be retained for a "brief period". Please define "brief period".	The last sentence of RFP Section 4.5.10 is hereby deleted and replaced with, "Therefore, occasional requests from the State may require retention of returned cards for audit periods." <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
49	4.5.10	Cards Returned Undeliverable	Please provide the number of returned cards each month by CSA and what percentage are returned of the total number of issued cards.	NY doesn't currently use the EBT Contract for Card Production. Under NY's current card contract an average 5,578 cards (3.74 % of mailed cards) per month are returned undeliverable to the card contractor's card destruction facility. RI is unable to report this at this time For MA, approximately 135 cards are returned undeliverable monthly, less than 1% For CT an average of 591 cards returned per month, which is approximately 6% of the total cards mailed. For VT, in 11 months there were 364 returns. Avg of 33 per month. Est of 9% returns per month. NH has 57 cards returned per month, which is an average of 2.8% of the total cards mailed. For ME, an average of 200 cards are returned per month. Approximately 6% of total cards issued.
50	4.5.10	Cards Returned Undeliverable	Please confirm that New York and Connecticut will require the Contractor to receive and manage all cards returned undeliverable according to requirements or if they will rely on other service vendors.	NY and CT do not currently require this, but may during the life of the contract.
51	4.5.12	Card Types: Vault Cards	How many vault cards will be required by each CSA on a monthly basis?	Numbers vary for vault cards. Offerors are required to provide pricing for various quantity tiers.
52	4.5.12	Card Types: Vault Cards	Will each CSA inventory all of their vault cards, and if not, which CSA's will require the vendor to inventory the vault card stock on their behalf?	NY, ME and CT do not currently use the EBT vendor for card production; however, if NY, ME or CT were to utilize this option, the vendor would be responsible for the inventory of vault cards. MA, VT and RI will inventory vault cards. NH will inventory half of the "disaster" vault cards and will request the other half to be inventoried by the vendor.

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53	4.5.14	Local District, Group Home or Congregate Care PIN Selection via Hardware Device	How many PIN selection devices are required per CSA?	NY currently has approximately 156 PIN selection devices, NH has 11, and ME has 20. Zero at this time for RI, VT or CT. However, as this is an Optional service, any CSA can add this service at any time. For MA, all group living arrangement retailer types in need of a PIN select device must have one. As of November, 2020 there are 171 PIN select devices in use by group living arrangements.
54	4.5.15	EBT Mailed PIN	Please provide the current average monthly volume of PIN mailers by CSA.	For NY, an average of 701 monthly. For MA, an average of 181 monthly. CT, ME, RI, VT and NH do not currently use PIN mailers.
55	4.6	Non-Financial Cards	Do the non-financial plastic cards require personalization, such as name and account number, printed on the card?	NY, NH, VT, MA, CT and RI do not currently use non-financial plastic cards. ME requires the client name, date of birth, and Client ID to be printed on the card.
56	5.1.3 U and 5.1.3 FF	Functionality	1. Would the NCS please provide an explanation of (U) Adjustment Rule Functionality and (FF) Generate Affidavit Functionality as administrative transactions? 2. What users have access to these functions and for what are they used?	1. Adjustment Rule is the ability to make adjustments to an account to correct an auditable, out-of-balance settlement condition that occurs during the redemption process as a result of a system error. See 7 CFR §274.2(g). The (FF) Generate Affidavit Functionality relates to Administrative Terminal (AT) users having the ability to generate an affidavit from a client transaction history in the AT. 2. Adjustment Rule (U) is a high level functionality. Limited users have access to this function. Generate Affidavit (FF) would be available to any user that can see transaction history.
57	5.1.7	Card Replacement Fee	1. What are the current card replacement fee business rules by CSA (i.e., 1 free replacement per year, etc.)? 2. How many card replacements result in a replacement fee being assessed each month by CSA?	RI, CT, VT, NH, ME and NY do not currently have a replacement fee. For MA: 1. Clients are automatically charged a \$5.00 fee for any replacement EBT card unless they have a non-countable reason. • If the household receives cash-only, the fee is automatically deducted from the cash benefits. • If the household receives both cash and SNAP and there are sufficient cash funds, the \$5.00 fee is automatically deducted from the cash funds. • If there are insufficient funds in the cash account to collect the fee, it is deducted from the SNAP benefits. • There is no partial deduction or fee splitting between cash and SNAP. • If the funds are insufficient, the EPPIC system checks the account daily for 90 consecutive days and automatically deduct the card fee when adequate cash benefits or SNAP benefits become available. • If both cash and SNAP benefits become available on the same day, the fee is automatically deducted from the cash account. • If sufficient funds are not available within 90 days of incurring the charge, the outstanding card fee is waived. 2. An average of 7,821 card replacement fees monthly.
58	5.2.1	Direct Deposit Services	What is the average monthly volume of direct deposits by CSA for the last 12 months?	See Appendix M - Historical Data for available information.
59	5.2.2.	Direct Deposit Enrollment Management Services	1. What is the enrollment process today? Please provide: • The current average monthly volume of enrollments • Details on what staff currently supports the process (i.e., the CSAs' local staff or the incumbent contractor's staff) 2. Whether or not this process is tied to Section 4.5.8 and required staffing of OTC sites?	1. This service is currently only available in ME. EBT local staff receive paperwork for Direct Deposit enrollment and enter the information into the EBT system. 20/avg per month. 2. ME does not have OTC sites, and would not expect the Contractor to provide an OTC site. If ME chose to do OTC in the future they would set up in regional offices throughout the state, and staffed by those employees.
60	5.2.18.4	Current Balance Inquiry	Is there a current cardholder ATM usage fee for Balance Inquiries as there is for an ATM cash withdrawal of \$0.45?	There is not currently a cardholder ATM usage fee for Balance Inquiries as there is for an ATM cash withdrawal.
61	5.2.18.4	Current Balance Inquiry	How many fee-free ATM Balance Inquiry transactions can be conducted by a cardholder on a monthly basis today ?	CSA's do not have a limit for fee-free Balance Inquiries today.
62	5.2.25.1	Eletronic Funds Transfer Standards	How are Offerors to handle costs resulting from rejections/reversals caused by inaccuracies in a file received by the Offeror from a CSA?	No other fees will be paid for this service. For example, any account management fees, rejected payment fees or any other fees beyond the initial transfer fee for each successful transaction are to be included in the CPCM.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
63	5.3 J	Data Warehouse Functionality	For the data warehouse, how many power users and how many standard users will require access by CSA or in total?	NY currently has 7 power and standard users, but would want the ability to add more if needed. RI has a large staff that uses data warehouse, reports, etc. MA has 50 power users and no standard users. CT has about 7 power users and 40 standard users, may require more. VT has 2-3 power users and 120 standard users. NH currently has 10 power users. ME has 3 power users and 10 standard users.
64	6.1.2	Reconciliation	The requirements of the first paragraph of this section (which begins with "Identify and describe all the components, either proprietary or subcontracted, that make up the EBT System") seem as though the CSA's are requesting an entire system overview in the middle of the settlement and reconciliation requirements. Is this what the coalition intends for the Offeror to provide in response to these requirements? If not, please clarify what specific information related to reconciliation activities the NCS is requiring to be provided in response to this requirement.	The first paragraph of RFP, Section 6.1.2 is deleted and replaced with, "The Offeror must identify and describe all the components, either proprietary or subcontracted, that make up their EBT system, including EBT functionality developed, operated, and maintained by the contractor, their host databases, and the transaction processors and switches, regardless of whether the switches are subcontractors, that allow the EBT processor to receive transactions from POS terminals that are either state-owned or those owned and operated by other Third Party Processors." <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
65	6.2.1	System Security Policy-Core Requirements	There is a mention to plan and provide resources for access by Third Party applications and accessing the system via API. Will the CSAs: 1. Clarify what specific access will be required for Third Parties? 2. Provide a list of the Third Parties requiring such access? 3. Provide the volume anticipated? 4. Indicate where pricing is to be included for the support of this additional traffic/volume?	1. This is access to client transaction, balance and demographics. 2. Such access must be provided to New York City (NYC) Human Resources Administration (HRA) in NY. Other Third Parties may require access throughout the life of the contract. 3. New York is 3 million per month. 4. This is a Core Requirement, pricing is included in the CPCM.
66	6.2.2	System Security Plan	This section references sections "6.2.2.1 through 6.2.2.8 below" however, there is no section 6.2.2.8. Would the NCS please provide the missing requirement?	The first sentence in RFP, Section 6.2.2 System Security Plan is hereby deleted and replaced with, "Submit documentation of a comprehensive System Security Plan which addresses those systems, controls and programs discussed in Section 6.2.2.1 through 6.2.2.7 below." <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
67	6.2.2.5 and 7.1.1	System Data Security and Business Continuation and Recovery Plan	Would the NCS confirm that, due to the sensitivity of content in these documents and the probability of release of proposals through Freedom of Information Act requests, the System Security Plan and the Business Continuation and Recovery Plan are to be provided only by the Contractor during the implementation phase and not by each Offeror with their proposals?	The System Security Plan and the Business Continuation and Recovery Plan are to be provided by each Offeror with their proposals. For New York, consistent with Article 6 of the New York State Public Officers Law (POL), particularly POL Section 89(5), Offerors may, at the time of submission of their Proposals, request that OTDA except certain information from disclosure. It is noted that POL Section 89(5)(a)(2) states that "[t]he request for an exception shall be in writing and state the reasons why the information should be excepted from disclosure." OTDA's determination as to whether such requests for exceptions should be granted or denied will be made in accordance with the POL. See Section 2.7.2 of the RFP. Other CSAs have similar processes.
68	7.1.2	Disaster Services Plan	This section is specific to how the Contractor will support disaster services (such as the DSNAP program), however the third and fourth paragraphs of this section refer to contingency planning for resources and operations of the Contractor. Are these paragraphs to align to RFP Section 7.1.1.1, Contractor Systems?	These paragraphs are to align to RFP Section 7.1.1.1 if relevant to the Contractor's Disaster Services Plan.
69	7.1.2	Disaster Services Plan	Disaster services plans are crafted after considerable collaboration with a State and its various stakeholders to understand and analyze the comprehensive needs of State users, retailers and cardholders in the event of a catastrophic outage or natural disaster. State needs and expectations for disaster services can vary widely from one State to the next. Given only the incumbent would know this level of detail for the NCS, would submission of a sample disaster service plan used in another project be acceptable for submission with the proposal?	Yes it can be a generic plan.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
70	7.1.3.4	On-Line Cardholder Account Set-up and Benefit Issuance	How have State staff been accessing the EBT administrative system during COVID office closures and other recent disasters?	NY, RI, CT, ME and MA have been accessing the EBT administrative system through VPN or with remote access. Office access has been used as needed. VT staff access the EBT administrative system with regular internet access, no special VPN or portal is required. In NH, no VPN is required to access the EBT Admin Terminal.
71	7.1.3.4 and 7.2.5	On-Line Cardholder Account Set-up and Benefit Issuance and Backup Remote Access	Based on all EBT administrative systems being web-based and accessible by any PC via a wireless VPN connection, will the CSAs reconsider removing the requirement for the Contractor to provide desktop personal computers or laptops?	RFP, Section 7.2.5 Backup Remote Access is hereby deleted. RFP, Section 13.7.1 Pricing for NCS EBT – Optional Services, Pricing for NCS EBT – Optional Services (13.7.1) Table, Row 16, Cost per desktop, personal computer & Row 17, Cost per laptop 7.2.5 – Backup Remote Access is hereby deleted. Appendix P - Pricing Schedule has been revised. See attached Revised Appendix P - Pricing Schedule. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
72	7.1.5.2	Eligibility System and Interface Support	Do any of the CSAs currently have Buddy State functionality implemented? If so, which CSAs and which are their Buddy States?	None of the CSAs currently have Buddy State functionality implemented. VT and NH used to have a Buddy State Agreement, but it was dissolved several years ago. This concept may be revisited in the future.
73	7.2.4	Duplicate Participation Check Function/Reporting	The optional service for duplicate participation check and reporting does not have a corresponding pricing line item in Appendix P's Optional Pricing table. Please clarify where the cost of this optional feature is to be included in the pricing table.	This pricing will be covered under a change order as negotiated at rates bid by Offeror.
74	8	WIC EBT Requirements	What is the current CPCM for WIC for each CSA?	Pricing information from current NCS WIC EBT contracts must be requested through FOIL.
75	8	WIC EBT Requirements	Please provide the version of the incumbent's EBT system and WUMEI used by each WIC State Agency.	The WUMEI Version used by NY, VT, CT and RI is the 2012 version. NH uses the 2012 version, with the 2015 version for benefit void. ME uses the 2015 version. MA uses the 2012 version of the WUMEI.
76	8..2	WIC Program Overview	Does the NCS anticipate any ITOs being part of this engagement?	The NCS does not at this time anticipate ITO's being part of this engagement, however, this may change.
77	8.3	WIC EBT Program Qualifications and Experience	RFP states: "Although not required, experience implementing online EBT solutions for WIC programs is preferred." 1. Does this requirement refer to initial implementations (coupon to card) or subsequent database conversions between online EBT solutions? 2. These are very different types of projects requiring different expertise. Please clarify.	Bidders are instructed to share any WIC EBT project experience relevant to this solicitation.
78	8.4.1	Project Manager	The RFP requires a dedicated WIC Project Manager be provided to a CSA for the implementation. Does this mean one Project Manager for each CSA or may a single Project Manager support more than one CSA if the conversions will be on different timelines and the work will not conflict?	Please see RFP Section 8.4.1. "The Contractor shall provide the CSA with a dedicated WIC Project Manager (Contractor Project Manager) for the implementation". The dedicated project manager may serve on other WIC EBT projects as long as they are not concurrent and will not be in conflict with the WIC EBT implementation in question.
79	8.8 A	WIC Card Production and Management	Is the replacement of eWIC cards an option for each CSA or is it the NCS' intent that all eWIC cards will be replaced?	Please see RFP Section 8.8. "The WIC EBT card shall be required to meet the EBT card requirements specified in this RFP, including the continued use of existing cards by participants throughout the Conversion process, and at the discretion of the CSA, the replacement of existing cards". Replacement of existing cards is anticipated, however, it will be at the option of the CSA.
80	8.8 A	WIC Card Production and Management	Is the card replacement to be done through mail issuance or OTC?	RFP Section 8.8.1.1, paragraph H is hereby deleted and replaced with, "The EBT Contractor must support Over the Counter (OTC) as described in Section 4.5.8 (Over-the-Counter Cards) of this RFP, and/or the issuance of new and/or replacement WIC-EBT cards by mail, provided the mailing process is consistent with WIC program rules. Card replacement in bulk may be done via mail but other replacements are OTC/mail depending on state requirements." <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
81	8.8.O	WIC Card Production and Management	Which CSAs use 6-digit IINs and which CSAs use 8-digit IINs?	ME, CT, and NY use 6-digit IINs. NH, RI, MA and VT use 8-digit IINs.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
82	8.1	Interfaces to the States' WIC Management Information System	RFP states: "For States that already have a configured MIS-EBT interface, Offeror will need to conform to State's interpretation of the Universal Interface standards to minimize disruption during transition, unless agreed to otherwise by the CSA." Please provide ICD documentation that documents each States' interpretation of the WUMEI.	CSAs cannot provide this detail. Please see WUMEI version details as provided.
83	8.23.I	Disaster Support	Plases provide the number of WIC Participants for all CSAs who have registered through the EBT Contractor portal and authorized text messaging.	Please refer to Appendix M – NCS and WIC Historical Data for participant numbers.
84	8.23.I	Disaster Support	On a yearly average, how many text messages have been sent to participants in response to disasters?	WIC CSAs have not implemented this specific capability as of yet. Where text messaging is employed by CSAs, it is deployed as a separate service and supports a variety of messages, beyond outage notifications.
85	9.1.1.5.1. A	EBT-Only Equipment Support Services	Will the NCS remove this requirement given this is outdated since most EBT-Only retailers now use a commercial TPP?	No, the NCS will not be removing this requirement.
86	9.1.1.5.1.B	EBT Only Equipment Support Services	Will the NCS modify this requirement to require access to the EBT System within two weeks of the Contractor's receipt of the retailer's signed contract? Access cannot be provided without a signed contract.	Delete and replace RFP § 9.1.1.5.1.B with: "Newly authorized EBT Only Retailers shall have access to the EBT System within two weeks after receipt of the FNS authorization notice as per 7 CFR 274.3. Contractor shall also enter into an agreement with each authorized EBT only retailer as per 7 CFR 274.3." <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
87	9.1.1.7.D	Farmers' Markets/Roadside Stands	How many Contractor-provided wireless terminals are needed per CSA?	This number is unknown at this time and will be determined at a later date.
88	9.1.2.1	Adinistrative Equipment	How many card readers and handheld wireless POS terminals are needed per CSA?	This number is unknown at this time and will be determined at a later date.
89	9.1.2.2.1	Funds Transfer Support	What is the average number of fund transfers conducted on a monthly basis?	NY: On average, there are 28 fund transfers conducted on a monthly basis. RI does not do this. VT, NH, MA and CTdo not use fund transfers. ME - Does not use Fund Transfers. These facilities have FNS codes and machines to swipe cards at the facility like a retailer.
90	9.2	Cardholder and Retailer Customer Service – Core Requirements	As Puerto Rico is a U.S. Territory, please confirm that Puerto Rico is an acceptable location for customer support for the servicing of Cardholders and Retailers.	No, see Amendment 1, paragraph 4. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
91	9.2.1	Customer Service Staffing Capacity Plan	Please provide monthly customer service statistics for each CSA for the last 12 months.	This question is too vague for the NCS to answer, please see Appendix M - Historical Data for available information.
92	9.2.7	Cardholder Customer Service – Core Requirements	What are the "hourly contractual service standards" referenced in this section?	See RFP Section 12. 4 Performance Standards.
93	9.2.7.10	Local/State Staff Help Desk Support	What is the monthly volume of CSA staff calls to the cardholder help desk for support?	This number is minimal and volumes are not tracked.
94	9.2.7.10	Local/State Staff Help Desk Support	Are the CSAs open to a more efficient alternative to the caseworker passcode functionality on the cardholder line?	Offerors must submit proposals to meet the requirements of the RFP.
95	9.3.1	Cardholder and Retailer Customer Service Interpreter Options	What is the average monthly volume by CSA by language of the calls that have required interpreter options in the most recent 12 months?	This information is not tracked. Historical data contains the number of IVR calls by language. It also contains calls transferred to a CSR, but not by language.
96	9.3.2	IVR/ARU Card Replacement	What CSA's have this functionality in place today?	NY, VT, ME, and RI currently have this functionality in place today. CT, NH and MA do not have this functionality in place today.
97	9.3.3	NCS and Cardholder Training	Please confirm if the video requirement is one generic video for use by all CSAs or if a unique video by CSA by program (SNAP vs. WIC) required?	The video requirement can be generic or vary depending on need. A single generic video for WIC agencies is sufficient, assuming certain content can be branded and customized (e.g., introductory and closing screens) for each state.
98	9.3.3.1	Cardholder Printed Materials	What is the volume of brochures and wallet cards per CSA to be provided?	This is an Optional Service with no guaranteed quantities. Any CSA can add the service at any time.
99	9.3.3.1	Cardholder Printed Materials	Is providing a print-read version of the training material to each CSA acceptable with each CSA responsible for the printing?	No, Offerors must be able to provide all services in the RFP, including printing of training materials.
100	9.3.3.1	Cardholder Printed Materials	Many cardholders are very familiar with the EBT program and its processes. Given that, will the CSAs agree that printed training materials will only be included if the card is an initial issuance card?	No. Offerors will be required to provide materials as determined by CSA.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
101	9.3.3.1	Cardholder Printed Materials	What is the average monthly volume by CSA and by language of cardholder materials that have been distributed in the most recent 12 months?	MA averages 27,000. Of these approximately 20% are Spanish, the remainder are English. CT and NY are zero. RI does not have this information. VT uses an average of 1,605 English brochures per month. NH uses an average of 416 English brochures per month and an average of 83 Spanish brochures per month. Maine only uses this in English. Average 4000/month.
102	9.3.3.2.1	Cardholder Printed Materials	What is the average monthly volume by CSA and by language of information inserts that have been printed in the most recent 12 months?	NY, CT, VT, RI, NH and MA do not currently have non-financial card inserts. Maine only uses this in English. Average 4000/month
103	9.3.3.3	State/Local District Training Materials – Optional Requirements	What is the average monthly volume by CSA of state/local district training materials distributed in the most recent 12 months broken out by how many hard copies and how many CDs?	Average volume for NY, CT, MA, VT, ME, and RI in the last twelve months is zero. NH -only need these training materials at the beginning of the contract. This would not be a monthly service. One hard copy and one electronic version would be sufficient.
104	9.4	Mass Mailings	In order to appropriately understand the cost involved in supporting the mass mailing requirements, Offerors need to understand the types and size of materials (letters, pamphlets, postcards, etc.) that will be processed. Please provide examples of each type of correspondence that will be required to be printed and mailed along with the frequency (weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually) and the volume of each processed in the past 12 months.	Typically Mass Mailings are single sheet 8.5 x 11, quantities will vary depending on need. This is why pricing is to be provided per page. Past historical volumes are not necessarily representative of future needs. CT did not request any mass mailings in the past 12 months. One mailing was sent to approximately 2,800 retailers in 2018. NY, MA, NH, VT and ME have not used Mass Mailings in the past twelve months. RI - 5,000 approximately - this is currently completed by the State.
105	11.3.1.	Functional Design Document	A functional design document is usually drafted after completing requirements review sessions with the State and its assigned project team. At the point of the proposal, only the incumbent would be able to provide a useful design document for the project. In addition, such documents submitted with the proposal would be subject to Freedom of Information Act requests which risks Offerors' work being disclosed to competitors. Would the NCS modify this requirement to require only the winning Offeror to provide a Functional Design Document following joint requirements review?	No. All Offerors must provide a Functional Design Document per RFP requirements. The Design Document can be generic and not state specific. Responses to the RFP should be an overview of the system. For New York, consistent with Article 6 of the New York State Public Officers Law (POL), particularly POL § 89(5), Offerors may, at the time of submission of their Proposals, request that OTDA except certain information from disclosure. It is noted that POL § 89(5)(a)(2) states that "[t]he request for an exception shall be in writing and state the reasons why the information should be excepted from disclosure." OTDA's determination as to whether such requests for exceptions should be granted or denied will be made in accordance with the POL. See § 2.7.2 of the RFP. Other CSAs have similar processes.
106	11.3.2	Detailed System Design Document	For the same reasons stated in the question above, would the NCS remove the requirement for a draft Detailed System Design Document to be submitted with each technical proposal? In addition, this appears to conflict with Section 6.2.2.4 which requires the Detailed Design Document to be provided following award.	No. All Offerors must provide a Detailed System Design Document per RFP requirements. The Detailed System Design Document can be generic and not state specific. Responses to the RFP should be an overview of the system. This does not conflict with Section 6.2.2.4 as this is a requirement for a final version. For New York, consistent with Article 6 of the New York State Public Officers Law (POL), particularly POL § 89(5), Offerors may, at the time of submission of their Proposals, request that OTDA except certain information from disclosure. It is noted that POL § 89(5)(a)(2) states that "[t]he request for an exception shall be in writing and state the reasons why the information should be excepted from disclosure." OTDA's determination as to whether such requests for exceptions should be granted or denied will be made in accordance with the POL. See § 2.7.2 of the RFP. Other CSAs have similar processes.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
107	11.5.1	Transition/Conversion Plan	Items A through CC of this requirement request descriptions of processes, methodologies, escalation processes, etc. that will be exactly the same for each state. Over years of converting EBT contracts, the process has become very streamlined and predictable. Therefore, the Transition/Conversion plan from one state to the next will be contain much of the same content. Will the State accept one Transition/Conversion plan that would apply for each of the NCS States plus a schedule showing the anticipated milestone dates for each CSA?	Yes. The NCS will accept one Transition/Conversion plan that would apply for each of the NCS States plus a schedule showing the anticipated milestone dates for each CSA.
108	11.5.1.4	Appendix A - Connecticut State Appendix Appendix D - New Hampshire State Appendix Appendix E - New York State Appendix	EBT RFP Section 11.5.1.4 says the State Appendices will outline the number of days of on-line history that must be converted. The following States' Appendices did not specify the number of days that must be converted. Would the NCS please specify the exact amount of online transaction history that is required to be converted for these States? 1. Appendix A (Connecticut) Section 11.5.1.4 requires the contractor to convert the "existing on-line history currently supported". 2. Appendix D (New Hampshire) does not contain section 11.5.1.4. 3. Appendix E (New York) Section 11.5.1.4 requires the contractor to convert the "existing on-line history currently supported".	1. CT requires transactions since conversion, 11/14/2014. 2. NH would need at least one year of online transaction history to be converted into a new system. 3. NY requires transactions since conversion, 9/21/2014.
109	13.1.3.1.L	CPCM Definition	What is the definition or services related to "Associated Fees?"	Associated fee are those fees associated with providing the services covered for the Cost Per Case-Month.
110	13.2.1	Public Payphone Charge	This section states that the Contractor must support any NCS option for not accepting payphone calls. What are the NCS options for not accepting payphone calls that must be supported by the Contractor?	States must have the option to not accept payphone calls to the 1-800 Toll Free Customer Service number.
111	13.2.1	Public Payphone Charge	How many payphone calls were completed in total for each CSA in the last 12 months?	NY does not accept payphone calls. RI - 47 CT - 1,052 MA - 4,300 VT - 78 NH - 97 ME - 240
112	13.4.E	Pricing for NCS EBT Core Cost Per Case Month - Cash	1. As the Cost Per Case-Month pricing will apply to any future Case added to EBT Cash as a result of additional programs, can the NCS confirm that the additional programs will have the same functional and reporting requirements as EBT Cash as specified in this EBT RFP? 2. The concern is if there is a change in requirements that impacts an Offeror's process and cost. If there is potential for a change in requirements, will the CSAs agree that any new program requirements will be addressed through the change order process, providing the vendor an opportunity to estimate the effort and submit a Cost Per Case-Month for the additional program?	1. No, NCS cannot confirm. The CSAs would process a change order to add any new functionalities. 2. The one-time cost required to make changes in the system can be covered by a change order. However, change orders cannot be used to change the Cost Per Case-Month.
113	13.6	Annual Adjustment for Pricing for NCS	Is the Offeror to declare in our proposals our decision to adjust pricing based on CPI adjustments or will the Offeror communicate this decision each year of the contract?	Price adjustments based on CPI will be communicated on an annual basis.
114	13.6	Annual Adjustment for Pricing for NCS	If the Offerors are to declare their intent regarding the annual CPI adjustment, how will that be evaluated? Will it impact the Technical or Financial evaluate/score?	For purposes of financial evaluation, it is assumed that all Offerors will adjust pricing based on CPI.
115	13.6	Annual Adjustment for Pricing for NCS	Are the annual CPI increase adjustments for SNAP, Cash and WIC CPCM at the election of the CSA or is it mandatory that each CSA approve the CPI increase and make effective at the appropriate invoice period?	All members of the CSA are subject to the CPI increases for the items identified in Appendix P.
116	13.6	Annual Adjustment for Pricing for NCS	The language in Section 13.6 references that a CPI decrease is at the election of the CSA. Is this true for an increase as well?	No, all members of the CSA are subject to the CPI increases. Decreases are at the discretion of the CSA.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
117	14	Proposal Submission	Due to the current pandemic, a number of procurements have changed from requiring hard copies to requiring only electronic (flash drive) or online submissions. Would the NCS consider forgoing the hard copy requirements and only require the copies on electronic media?	No, hard copies are required.
118	14.1	For the Administrative Proposal	Due to the current pandemic and our entire staff working remotely, would it be acceptable for signed forms and certifications to be submitted with electronic signatures or scanned signatures rather than wet signatures?	Electronic signatures will not be accepted. Signed forms and certifications must be signed with wet signatures and notarized, as required. However, scans, photocopies or reproductions of the signed forms and certifications are acceptable.
119	15.2.1	ContractualAgreement Statement	Are Offerors required to submit contract exceptions and requests for modifications as part of the RFP response or will the apparent winner have the opportunity to discuss such items with each CSA during contract negotiations?	No, Offerors are not encouraged to submit RFP modifications as part of their RFP response. NY can consider non-material changes to the RFP after contract award and during contract negotiations. However, material changes cannot be accepted.
120	15.2.1	ContractualAgreement Statement	If contract exceptions are to be included in the proposal, please provide the specific RFP section which instructs Offerors how to address these items, and specifically confirm the required format (i.e., is a list of sections/clauses which the Offeror wishes to negotiate sufficient or should actual redlines to each CSA contract be provided)?	Offerors are not encouraged to submit RFP modifications as part of their RFP response. NY can consider non-material changes to the RFP after contract award and during contract negotiations. However, material changes cannot be accepted.
121	16	Technical Proposal Evaluation Methodology	Will the NCS Evaluation Committee factor in any portion of the projected cost for the two optional years in the cost evaluation for the seven-year contract term when evaluating a bidders Financial Proposal?	Projected costs for the two optional years will be consistent with the costs of the first five years of the contract as the costs will remain consistent throughout the contract. The only expected increases will be for the CPI increases for the items identified in Appendix P.
122	16	Technical Proposal Evaluation Methodology	How many Evaluation Committee Members will be represented from each State?	Information regarding the Evaluation process will not be shared with Offerors.
123	16.1	Technical Proposal Evaluation Methodology	How will each CSA's scoring be weighed against other CSA's scoring in order to determine a final score for a given Offeror?	Information regarding the Evaluation process will not be shared with Offerors.
124	16.1	Technical Proposal Evaluation Methodology	If each CSA will have a different weighting in terms of the evaluation, please clarify the weighting for each CSA. (For example, will larger states such as New York and Massachusetts have a higher weighted score than CSAs with smaller case counts?)	Information regarding the Evaluation process will not be shared with Offerors.
125	16.1	Technical Proposal Evaluation Methodology	If a CSA is not intending to implement a particular technical feature/service, what value will be used for the score to eliminate impacting the Offeror's final total score?	Information regarding the Evaluation process will not be shared with Offerors.
126	16.1.1.E	Format and Content Evaluation	Is the 10% Diversity Practices score specifically based on the Offeror's ability to meet the M/WBE and SDVOB goals? Or is this score based on an Offeror's overall approach to diversity practices within their organization?	No. The Diversity Practices score will be based upon the Offeror's response to Appendix N-2: Diversity Practices Questionnaire. The MWBE Utilization Plan is one of the eight components of Appendix N-2 Diversity Practices which is evaluated and scored. The SDVOB Utilization Plan is not scored.
127	16.1.1.E	Technical Proposal Score	What is the impact to an Offeror's score if they are unable to meet the goal?	The MWBE Utilization Plan is one of the eight components of Appendix N-2 Diversity Practices which is evaluated and scored. The Diversity Practices score will constitute 10% of the total Technical score.
128	16.1.2	Technical Proposal Score	This section states that the Offeror scoring the highest points will be assigned a final technical score of 75 points. What is the initial amount of points available for each of the 6 criterion which will be allocated to the Offerors in order to determine which receives the highest score of 75 points?	The percentages of scores across the 6 criterion is provided in RFP Section 16.1.1. Additional information regarding the Evaluation process will not be shared with Offerors.
129	Appendix A 4.2.2.2. (CT)	Transaction Processing	Within the main NCS RFP, the section titled Transaction Processing is numbered 4.2.1.3. This is the section where spend priority is discussed. Can the State of Connecticut please correct the numbering of the current section 4.2.2.2 to 4.2.1.3 to align with the subject matter of this section in the main RFP and other state appendices?	Appendix A - Connecticut State Appendix Section 4.2.2.2 Transaction Processing is hereby renumbered Section 4.2.1.3 Transaction Processing. <i>This is a change to Appendix A - Connecticut State Appendix</i>

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
130	Appendix A 4.3 (CT)	Account Setup, Account Maintenance and Benefit Authorization - Core	What is Connecticut's benefit availability schedule?	Distribution is broken down by the cardholder's last name, and is the same for SNAP and Cash benefits. Last names beginning with the letters A - F are available on the 1st Last names beginning with the letters G - N are available on the 2nd Last names beginning with the letter O - Z are available on the 3rd.
131	Appendix B 4.2.1.3.3.3. (MA)	Community Supported Agriculture SNAP Purchases	Is the CSA SNAP benefit an automatic monthly reoccurring payment for the same amount or does the Cardholder initiate the payment when desired on a monthly basis?	The State initiates the recurring, monthly payments by batch file. The CSA payment file is sent in the early morning of the client's monthly SNAP availability date.
132	Appendix B 4.4.1.3 (MA)	Multiple Cards Per Individual Account	Are SNAP and Cash benefits issued by separate agencies?	No, SNAP and cash assistance are both issued by the MA Department of Transitional Assistance.
133	Appendix B 9.2.4.1.g (MA)	DTA Connect Mobile App	This section states that the web services must support real time access to various EBT data including the ability to verify the current PIN number. Given the inherent security risks in verifying a PIN number in this way, please explain why verification of the PIN number is needed and an example of a situation where verification of the PIN would be used by through an API.	The ability to verify PIN through web services is an optional requirement. Clients had requested that it would be very helpful if they can validate the PIN prior to shopping. If PIN is invalid or expired, they would call the EBT help desk and get the PIN changed before shopping.
134	Appendix B 9.3.1 (MA)	Cardholder & Retailer Customer Service Interpreter Options	Would the NCS confirm that CSR support for the additional languages beyond English and Spanish can be supported via interpreter services?	Yes, CSR support for the additional languages beyond English and Spanish can be supported via interpreter services.
135	Appendix B 9.3.3.1 (MA)	Cardholder Printed Materials	Please provide the number of cardholder printed materials required to be provided by language by month.	Quantities and frequency of orders vary based on need. There are no guaranteed quantities. Please see some Historical Data below. 27,000 EBT brochures (approximately 20% Spanish - remainder English) MA regularly submits bulk orders for 50,000 English brochures and/or 50,000 Spanish brochures two to four times per year.
136	Appendix C (ME)	General	What is Maine's current CPCM for both SNAP and Cash?	ME \$0.85 for SNAP and \$0 for cash.
137	Appendix C 4.2.2.2 (ME)	Transaction Processing	Within the main NCS RFP, the section titled Transaction Processing is numbered 4.2.1.3. This is the section where spend priority is discussed. Can the State of Maine please correct the numbering of the current section 4.2.2.2 to 4.2.1.3 to align with the subject matter of this section in the main RFP and other state appendices?	Appendix C - Maine State Appendix Section 4.2.2.2 Transaction Processing is hereby renumbered Section 4.2.1.3 Transaction Processing. <i>This is a change to Appendix C - Maine State Appendix</i>
138	Appendix C 4.2.2.2.7.3 (ME)	Voucher Clear	Within the main NCS RFP, the section titled Voucher Clear is numbered 4.2.1.3.7.3. Can the State of Maine please correct the numbering of the current section 4.2.2.2.7.3 to 4.2.1.3.7.3 to align with the subject matter of this section in the main RFP and other state appendices?	Appendix C - Maine State Appendix Section 4.2.2.2.7.3 Voucher Clear is hereby renumbered Section 4.2.1.3.7.3 Voucher Clear. <i>This is a change to Appendix C - Maine State Appendix</i>
139	Appendix C 4.3.1.2 (NH)	Use Existing File Formats	Regarding the Mass Card Account Maintenance File, this section states that cards that were issued during a two-year period in a previous contract contain bad information and this file sees that these cards are replaced. 1. How many cards with "bad information" from a previous contract still exist? 2. Does the Offeror need to plan for replacing these cards and, if so, where should the pricing be included?	There are approximately 1,100 of these cards left, ME is working to resolve this issue internally.
140	Appendix D 4.2.2.1 (NH)	Contractor Managed Adjustment Process	Please provide the monthly volume for the last 12 months of the notifications to retailers regarding client-initiated adjustments.	From 11/1/19-10/31/2020, 63 notices were sent to retailers regarding client-initiated adjustments.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
141	Appendix D 4.3.1.5 (NH)	Real-Time	Can the State describe capabilities/requirements for client-to-host link? There is no separate line item to price this item in Optional pricing table. How would the state want the Offeror to price this item?	The requirements for a client-to-host link would be defined and priced through a change request process.
142	Appendix E Section 5, Requirement 4.3.1.8 (NY)	Benefit Availability	Please provide New York's staggered issuance benefit raciality schedule as referenced in this section.	See: https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/new-york-issuance.pdf NYC is updated bi-annually: See: https://otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/ebt/nyc-issuance-schedule.pdf
143	Appendix E Section 5, Requirement 4.4.1.A (NY)	Cards Background	Is the State of New York interested in the offeror proposing all services provided under the current Gemalto Cogent, Inc. contract? If so, what is the current expiration date of the contract? And, can the State provide a copy of the Statement of Work to allow offerors to review the full set of services being provided today?	NY is interested in offerors proposing all services detailed in the current RFP. The current contract with Gemalto Cogent, Inc. is irrelevant.
144	Appendix E Section 5, Requirement 4.4.1.D. d (NY)	Individual Card Data	1. What is the detailed process for how, when and by whom a temporary card is issued; 2. how long the temporary card is valid; and 3. how, when and by whom the permanent card is issued?	1. Vault cards are issued via States Card Issuance System, and occasionally via the states EBT Administrative Terminal, by Local Department of Social Services (DSS) and State staff. 2. Vault cards are valid for 90 days, until first use of permanent card, or until a subsequent vault card issued (which ever comes first). 3. Permanent cards are issued via the States Card Issuance System System or states EBT Administrative Terminal by Local Department of Social Services (DSS) or States staff, or by clients over the client portal or helpline by vendor customer service representatives.
145	Requirement 4.4.1.D.f (NY)		Please explain in detail how an applicant record is created and provided to the EBT Contractor. What is the entire process for the applicant record?	See Appendix E, Section 4.3.1 paragraph 3.
146	Appendix E Section 5, Requirement 6.1.B (NY)		Within this Section, the State describes the Emergency Reimbursement Plan procedures. Can the State please provide statistics on how often this process has been enacted on a monthly or annual basis?	This process had been enacted an average of zero times per year for the past few years.
147	Appendix E Section 6 (NY) MWBE Participation Requirements	Businesss Participation Opportunities for MWBEs	Is good faith effort documentation required even if the Offeror fully meets the 15% MBE, 15% WBE and 6% SDVOB participation goals?	No, if a bidder submits SDVOB and MWBE Utilization Plans meeting the established participation goals, additional Good Faith Effort documentation is not required.
148	Appendix E Section 6 (NY) MWBE Participation Requirements	Businesss Participation Opportunities for MWBEs	What was the current Contractor's MWBE and SDVOB participation percentage in 2019?	The current contract is exceeding the established MWBE goals. For Fiscal Year 19-20 (April 1, 2019 through March 31, 2020) the contractor achieved 22.7% in MWBE participation. The SDVOB program was enacted in 2014 which is after the date the current contract was awarded and therefore there are no SDVOB goals.
149	Appendix E Section 6 (NY) MWBE Participation Requirements	Businesss Participation Opportunities for MWBEs	Is an MBE or WBE required to be have a physical business location in New York in addition to being certified in New York as a M/WBE in order for their participation to count toward the goal?	MWBE participation will be counted for all New York State Certified MWBEs. Information regarding MWBE eligibility requirements can be viewed here: (https://esd.ny.gov/doing-business-ny/mwbe/mwbe-certification-eligibility-requirements#-qualifications-for-nys-mwbe-certification)
150	Appendix E Section 6 (NY) MWBE Participation Requirements	Businesss Participation Opportunities for MWBEs	Does a MBE, WBE or SDVOB need to have their headquarters in New York State in order for their participation to be counted toward the M/WBE goal?	MWBE participation will be counted for all New York State Certified MWBEs. For MWBE Certification please see above answer to question 149. SDVOB participation will be counted for all New York State Certified SDVOBs. For more information regarding SDVOB eligibility requirements please see: (https://ogs.ny.gov/veterans/service-disabled-veteran-owned-business-certification)
151	Appendix E Section 6 (NY) MWBE Participation Requirements	Businesss Participation Opportunities for MWBEs	Are the percentages for MWBE and SDVOB participation goals based on the base contract term or both the base and option terms New York?	MWBE and SDVOB Participation Goals are established for the life of the contract including any subsequent amendments or extensions to the base contract.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
152	Appendix E Section 6 (NY) MWBE Participation Requirements	Businesss Participation Opportunities for MWBEs	Are the percentages to be spent at any point in the contract term or must some portion of the participation be done in each year of the contract? For example, can 20% of the contract value go to M/WBE subcontractors in the first 2 years and the remainder in the 3rd year so that the full participation goal is met, as a percentage of the contract value, by the 3rd year of the contract?	Payments to vendors in support of MWBE/SDVOB goal attainment can be issued at any point during the life of the contract. The expectation is that MWBEs and SDVOBs will be utilized to perform the Commercially Useful Function detailed in the description of work provided on the Utilization Plan submitted with the proposal.
153	Appendix E Section 6 (NY)MWBE Participation Requirements	Businesss Participation Opportunities for MWBEs	Based on the overall goal of 30% for MWBE participation, 15% for New York State-certified Minority-owned Business Enterprise ("MBE") participation and 15% for New York State-certified Women-owned Business Enterprise ("WBE") participation, is it acceptable to achieve the 30% in an alternate percentage approach ?. For example: achieving 20% for MBE and 10% for MWBE, a total of 30%, rather than 15% in MBE and 15% in MWBE.	In the example given, a MWBE Waiver must be sought. If the overall MWBE goal is met but either the "M" or the "W" component of the MWBE goal is not met in part or in full the bidder must submit a MWBE Waiver Request (OTDA-4969) for the shortfall in the appropriate category even though the overall 30% goal was met.
154	Appendix E Section 6 (NY)MWBE Participation Requirements		Given that various options in the contract may or may not be implemented by New York, what calculation should Offerors use to determine the value of the required 36% participation?	The MWBE and SDVOB participation goals are based on the estimated contract value and should be reflected as such on the bidders SDVOB and MWBE Utilization Plans. MWBE and SDVOB Participation Goals are established for the life of the contract including any subsequent amendments or extensions to the base contract. NY expects the majority of this contract costs to come from CPCM. New York is not planning on using the optional card production therefore it is expected that optional items will represent a small percentage of the contract value.
155	Appendix E Section 6 (NY)MWBE Participation Requirements	Businesss Participation Opportunities for MWBEs	This section states that the MWBE participation was determined based on the availability of MWBE subcontractors in New York. However, from the perspective of the services required in this RFP (which are largely the same as the last procurement where the required percentage was 20%) and considering the maturity of the EBT industry, changes in the Farm Bill, and Offerors' increasingly centralized, streamlined and automated processes necessary to meet ever-tightening performance standards, Offerors have fewer and fewer de-centralized services to subcontract that won't put the State's program at risk. Would New York consider lowering the participation percentage of MWBE and SDVOB subcontractors to something more attainable, and no more than the 20% required in New York's last procurement?	No, based off the scope of work and a survey of the availability of New York State Certified MWBEs and SDVOBs; the MWBE goal has been established at 30% and the SDVOB has been established at 6% for the NCS EBT RFP. Bidders are required to make a Good Faith Effort to meet goals. If after making a Good Faith Effort a bidder is unable to meet MWBE or SDVOB participation goals, the process to request a reduction in the goals is outlined in Appendix Z and Appendix Y.
156	Appendix E Section 6 (NY) MWBE Participation Requirements	Businesss Participation Opportunities for MWBEs	RFP Section 1.1 states that New York intends to enter into separate agreements for SNAP and WIC. For reasons stated in the previous question, in addition to lowering the participation percentage to something more closely aligned with the limited services that could be outsourced to a MWBE or SDVOB firm, would New York consider allowing the Contractor to meet the MWBE and SDVOB goals across the two contracts that will result from this single procurement? One Contractor will be selected for both programs and that Contractor will utilize some shared resources to support both programs in order to increase efficiencies. While this approach allows Offerors to propose more competitive pricing to the State, it also challenges Offerors to identify opportunities for subcontracting.	No, NY will not consider allowing the Contractor to meet the MWBE and SDVOB goals across the two contracts. Since there will be two separate contracts, each must meet its own goals. Offerors can use the same MWBE/SDVOB subcontractors for both NYS contracts, however the Offerors must be able to apportion and allocate the subcontracted services from the MWBE/SDVOB subcontractors to meet each contract's goals.
157	Appendix E Section 6 (NY) MWBE Participation Requirements	Businesss Participation Opportunities for MWBEs	Do M/WBE and SDVOB subcontractors need to be certified in NY at the time of submission, or can they be in the process of obtaining the certification at time of submission?	At the time of bid submission only currently Certified New York State Minority Owned Business Enterprises (MBE), Woman Owned Enterprises (WBE) and New York State Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses will count toward the established participation goals.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
158	Appendix E Section 6 (NY)	Businesss Participation Opportunities for MWBEs	Please clarify what a "MWBE serving as a broker" means in the context of this EBT contract. Please provide an example.	A broker is a third-party intermediary between consumers of items and manufacturers, suppliers, or other entities that sell items from a regular inventory. Brokers do not make the same capital investments as suppliers. Brokers – are counted at 25% utilization credit. Any firms that are listed as brokers or manufacturers' representatives will be coded as such in the New York State Directory of certified MWBEs (NAICS code 425120). MWBE utilization is only reported in proportion to the commercially useful function ("CUF") performed by MWBEs on the NCS EBT procurement . MWBE Unit staff will engage in proper vetting of proposed MWBEs during utilization plan review, and monitoring during the life of the procurement. CUF analysis is always taken into account whether the services an MWBE is identified as performing pursuant to a utilization plan are consistent with the commodity code classifications assigned to the MWBE by Empire State Development in addition to whether payments to the MWBE are proportionate to the actual services or goods provided by the MWBE on the state contract, and the CUF criteria set forth in 5 NYCRR § 140.1(f). For Example: If Company A is a MWBE coded as broker providing \$100k in computer equipment, only \$25k will be counted towards the MWBE participation goal.
159	Appendix E Section 6 (NY) MWBE Participation Requirements	Equal Employment Opportunity and Workforce Utilization reporting Requirements	This section states that the Contractor and each of its subcontractors are required to submit a Workforce Utilization Report quarterly. Will the NCS clarify that this applies only to the Contractor and any M/WBE subcontractors and not non-M/WBE subcontractors?	No, pursuant to Executive Order 162 – Ensuring Pay Equity By State Contractors, OTDA is required to collect Workforce Utilization Reports for the contractor's workforce supporting the contract on a quarterly basis. For information regarding EO 162 implementation please visit: https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/EO_162_Frequently_Asked_Questions_and_Response_s.pdf
160	Appendix E Section 6 (NY) MWBE Participation Requirements	Equal Employment Opportunity and Workforce Utilization reporting Requirements	Please provide copies of the current Contractor's MWBE Utilization Plan and MWBE Participation Requirements Quarterly Compliance Reports for last 1 year.	The information for the current Contractor's approved MWBE Utilization Plan for fiscal year 2018-19 can be found here: https://otda.ny.gov/contracts/mwbe/OTDA-Utilization-Plan-Table.pdf The current Contractor's MWBE Participation goal is 20%. The current Quarterly Compliance Reports must be requested via a FOIL request.
161	Appendix E-3	NYS DOH Appendix	Of the 269,173 initial cards issued and 26,505 replacement cards issued, how many were issued OTC and how many were mailed?	All cards were issued OTC.
162	Appendix F 4.4.1.8 (RI)	ARU PIN Selection And 4.5.15 PIN Selection	Will the State clarify if their intent in these two sections is to convey that the current process of mailing PINs is going to be replaced with the ability for cardholders to select their PIN via the IVR and the cardholder portal under the new contract? If not, please clarify the apparent contradiction wherein Section 4.4.1.8 states Rhode Island does not allow the ARU for PIN selection, and Section 4.5.15 which states PINs will be selected for all cards through the IVR and internet.	RI does not currently mail PINs. The current PIN selection process is that the cardholders select their PIN via the IVR and the cardholder portal.
163	Appendix F (RI) WIC EBT Requirements	Cardholder Customer Service	Please provide WIC Cardholder Customer Service call counts for both IVR and CSR by language by month.	Approximately 12,000 calls per month. 4,500 spanish, 8,300 english.
164	Appendix G 9.1.1.5.1.H (VT)		This section references "a centralized billing system to the state or another entity for Farmers Market EBT service". Could the CSA provide a description of this "centralized billing system" process? Provide an example of when this would be necessary.	A centralized billing system is when either the State or other entity that is not the contractor provides administrative oversight to the purchasing/distribution of wireless equipment. This could occur if/when the State received federal funding to provide wireless devices/subscriptions to FMs/DMFs. In some cases federal requirements and reporting would be the reason for the administrative oversight.
165	Appendix L Proposed Key Personnel Experience Form		Would the NCS confirm that even if the Offeror is naming more than 1 resource as a State Transition and Conversion Manager, due to the requirement that CSAs have separate transition managers if their conversion is simultaneous, that Offerors need only provide this form for a single resource named to this position?	Yes, per Appendix L, State Transition and Conversion Manager, "Submit an Appendix L form for one (1) individual proposed for this position. (Note: two or more individuals may simultaneously serve in this position when multiple CSA Transition/Conversions are occurring at the same time. The qualifications of the one individual submitted herein shall serve as the minimum qualifications for any other individual(s) serving in such position".
166	Appendix L Proposed Key Personnel Experience Form		Would the NCS confirm that, although 4 resources are required to be named as a State Project Manager, Offerors need only provide this form for a single resource named to this position?	Yes, per Appendix L, "State Project Manager: Submit an Appendix L form for one (1) individual proposed for this position (Note: although there will be multiple State Project Managers, the qualifications of the one individual submitted herein shall serve as the minimum qualifications for any other individual serving in such position)".

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
167	Appendix M NCS and WIC Historical Data		Given that 2018 data is outdated, please provide more recent data; preferably most recent 12 months of data.	See RFP, Section 1.7 Disclaimer All statistical and fiscal information contained in this RFP, including any addenda or attachments, reflect data and records available to the NCS at the time the documents were prepared.
168	Appendix M NCS and WIC Historical Data		Please provide the Retailer and Device statistics for Maine as provided for all other States.	WIC -ME has 90 card readers (mag stripe reader devices) deployed to clinics issuing benefits. All ME WIC retailers are using integrated cash register systems. There are 243 authorized retailers. Please also see Appendix C-1- Maine WIC Appendix.
169	Appendix M NCS and WIC Historical Data	Row 55, PIN Selection Terminals	Of the total 221 PIN Selection Terminals how many are digital and how many are analog?	All PIN Selection Terminals are analog for NY, NH, and MA. CT, VT, ME and RI do not currently have PIN Selection Terminals.
170	Appendix P - Pricing Schedule	Instructions Tab #7	In the event the Offeror has a different unit of measure (i.e., per call, per card, monthly, etc.) for pricing for an optional service than the current pricing sheet format, is it acceptable to insert a price with a noted comment to explain the pricing approach?	No, pricing must be provided in the format requested. Per RFP Section 13, "Pricing shall be submitted in the format specified herein. Financial Proposals not submitted in the required format may be rejected at the option of the State/NCS."
171	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Instructions Tab #7	Would an Offeror be allowed to submit a secondary pricing proposal for an alternate approach?	No, an Offeror would not be allowed to submit a secondary pricing proposal for an alternate approach.
172	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	All Worksheets/ Tabs	When entering a zero, "0", all worksheets are formatted to display a dash, "-.". Can the Offeror modify the format to accommodate a \$0.00 price?	Offerors cannot modify Appendix P - Pricing Schedule. See attached Revised Appendix P - Pricing Schedule which NCS has modified to correct this issue. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
173	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Start-up Pricing	Please explain how the Conversion/Start-up costs are evaluated? 1. Are they included in the Financial evaluation of 25%? 2. If so, what percentage of the 25% are aligned to the Conversion/Startup Pricing Table 13.3?	1. All costs are included in the Financial evaluation of 25%. 2. The percentage of the total given to the Conversion/Startup Pricing will depend upon the amount bid for those items.
174	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Cash Benefits Tab, 13.4.1 and SNAP Benefits Tab, 13.5.1	An Offeror's Profit Markup is confidential and proprietary to their company; hence, the Profit Markup is not provided outside of the company, or even outside of those with a specific need to know, let alone shared within a financial proposal. We understand this can be redacted, however, can the NCS Evaluation Committee explain the value of this information to NCS, how this information will be used in the evaluation and scoring of a bidder's financial proposal, and how the NCS can ensure its confidentiality?	Appendix P - Pricing Schedule, Cash Benefits Tab, chart 13.4.1 is hereby removed. Appendix P - Pricing Schedule, SNAP Benefits Tab, chart 13.5.1 is hereby removed. RFP Section 13.4.1 Cash Cost Per Case-Month Breakdown is hereby removed. RFP Section 13.5.1 SNAP CPCM Breakdown is hereby removed. RFP Section 13.11 WIC CPCM Breakdown is hereby removed. Appendix P - Pricing Schedule, WIC Pricing Tab, chart WIC CPCM Breakdown (13.11) is hereby removed. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
175	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Cash Benefits Tab, 13.4.1 and SNAP Benefits Tab, 13.5.1	Please describe the fees the NCS is including in the "Transaction Fees" category in both of these tables?	Appendix P - Pricing Schedule, Cash Benefits Tab, chart 13.4.1 is hereby removed. Appendix P - Pricing Schedule, SNAP Benefits Tab, chart 13.5.1 is hereby removed. RFP Section 13.4.1 Cash Cost Per Case-Month Breakdown is hereby removed. RFP Section 13.5.1 SNAP CPCM Breakdown is hereby removed. RFP Section 13.11 WIC CPCM Breakdown is hereby removed. Appendix P - Pricing Schedule, WIC Pricing Tab, chart WIC CPCM Breakdown (13.11) is hereby removed. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
176	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Cash Benefits Tab, 13.4.1 and SNAP Benefits Tab, 13.5.1	In any industry, a company's breakdown of its pricing per service component is a critical part of its pricing strategy. This is amplified in the EBT industry due to the extremely small pool of qualified bidders. In addition, each Offeror's underlying corporate resources and infrastructure can vary widely leaving an apples-to-apples comparison impossible. Due to the proprietary nature of cost breakdown information and the risk of disclosing this information to competitors, will the NCS remove this table from the Financial Proposal?	Appendix P - Pricing Schedule, Cash Benefits Tab, chart 13.4.1 is hereby removed. Appendix P - Pricing Schedule, SNAP Benefits Tab, chart 13.5.1 is hereby removed. RFP Section 13.4.1 Cash Cost Per Case-Month Breakdown is hereby removed. RFP Section 13.5.1 SNAP CPCM Breakdown is hereby removed. RFP Section 13.11 WIC CPCM Breakdown is hereby removed. Appendix P - Pricing Schedule, WIC Pricing Tab, chart WIC CPCM Breakdown (13.11) is hereby removed. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
177	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab	Will the Optional Services included in the table in Section 13.7.1 be factored into the Offeror's Financial Proposal score?	Yes. All pricing tables will be factored into the Offeror's Financial Proposal score.
178	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab	If yes, how many points out of the 25% will be applied to the Optional Services overall?	All costs are included in the Financial evaluation of 25%. The percentage of the total given to each of the Optional Service items will depend upon the amount bid for those items.
179	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab	If not, what evaluation method will be applied to score the Optional Services?	All costs are included in the Financial evaluation of 25%. The percentage of the total given to each of the Optional Service items will depend upon the amount bid for those items.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
180	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab	If an Offeror believes there is a more efficient way to address an optional services or function outside of the EBT contract and therefore does not include support for the optional service or function in its Technical Proposal, may the Offeror insert "N/A" or something similar into the price table for the item? If not, how should the Offeror handle such an item?	Offerors must be prepared to provide all optional items and must provide pricing for all items in Appendix P. It is expected that Offerors will need to use subcontractors in order to provide some services. Per the RFP, Section 13, "Pricing shall be submitted in the format specified herein. Financial Proposals not submitted in the required format may be rejected at the option of the State/NCS."
181	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab, Item 4.2.2.1 - SNAP	How many SNAP adjustments were processed for each CSA by month over the past two years?	NH monthly data for SNAP is not available. Combined cash and SNAP adjustments were 118 (11/1/2018 - 10/31/2020). See attached Question 181 Response spreadsheet for other CSAs.
182	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab, Item 4.2.2.1 - Cash	How many Cash adjustments were processed for each CSA by month over the past two years?	NH monthly data for cash is not available. Combined cash and SNAP adjustments were 118 (11/1/2018 - 10/31/2020). See attached Question 182 Response spreadsheet for other CSAs.
183	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab, Item 4.2.3.2	Does the "One time charge per State" to implement e Card Authentication Value (CAV) include the mass reissuance of cards?	No, implementing CAV would not require the mass reissuance of cards.
184	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab, Item 4.2.3.2	If the "One time charge per State" to turn on CAV includes mass card replacement, is this for all existing active cards or only those active cards that do not have a valid CAV?	No, implementing CAV would not require the mass reissuance of cards.
185	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab, Item 4.2.3.2	Please confirm that Massachusetts is the only CSA that is currently actively using CAV and all other States may elect to turn this on under the new contract?	NY, RI, ME and CT are not currently actively using CAV but may elect to turn this on under the new contract. MA is no longer using CAV. VT is using CAV. NH switched on CAV in February of 2020.
186	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab, Item 9.1.2.1	Please confirm if the monthly price per device is to include the monthly data cell service charge?	Yes the monthly price per device is to include the monthly data cell service charge.
187	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab, Item 9.1.2.1	Please confirm the quantify of card reading wedge devices that are being used by each CSA's SNAP program and each CSA's WIC program.	Zero for RI, NH, NY, ME, CT, VT and MA SNAP. WIC Data is as follows: NY has 1,882 card readers in use by Local Agencies. VT has 110 card readers. NH has 6 stand beside devices (at retailer locations) and approximately 80 card readers among NH WIC clinics. ME has 90 card readers (mag stripe reader devices) deployed to clinics issuing benefits. All ME WIC retailers are using integrated cash register systems. RI has approximately 100 mag stripe readers deployed to clinics. RI retailers currently have 55 stand beside devices. CT has 200 card readers in use by local agencies.
188	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab, Item 9.3.3	Is the requirement for a voice translation or a caption-based translation?	The requirement is for voice translation.
189	Appendix P - Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab, Item 9.4, Row 38 & 39	What household count should be used to base the cost of the mass mailing?	Typically Mass Mailings are single sheet 8.5 x 11, quantities will vary depending on need. This is why pricing is to be provided per page. Past historical volumes are not necessarily representative of future needs.
190	Appendix P - Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab, Item 9.4, Row 38 & 39	Is the "additional page" considered the 2nd page of a two-page mailer?	For Optional Services Tab, Item 9.4, Rows 38 to 41, a page is both sides of a sheet of paper.
191	Appendix P - Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab, Item 9.4, Rows 38 through 41	What is the difference between the requirements in rows 38 and 40 for single page mass mailings and the difference between requirements in rows 39 and 41 for additional pages of mass mailings?	Rows 38 and 40 include printing which rows 39 and 41 do not. Rows 38 and 40 are for all activities associated with the printing of notices, mailings, folding materials, stuffing envelopes, addressing envelopes, ZIP pre-sort offerings etc. Rows 39 and 41 are for all activities associated with the mailing of notices, folding materials, stuffing envelopes, addressing envelopes, ZIP pre-sort offerings etc.
192	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Optional Services Tab	Vendors may have additional optional services to propose to the States that are not reflected in the RFP. These are unique services that an Offeror may have for the CSAs' consideration. Will the States allow vendors to add these items to Appendix P - Optional Services worksheet following the Optional Services 13.7.1 table?	Offerors may provide additional information within the Financial proposal package/box. This information should be provided as a separate document with separate hard and electronic copies and not incorporated within Appendix P. Additional information will not be included within the evaluation process.
193	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Card Production Pricing Tab, Table 13.7.2	Based on the variety of card issuance requirements by CSA, please confirm the core card issuance requirements, in addition to the items in row 10, to be included in the pricing of Table 13.7.2. For example, one-page, two-sided card carrier; number of inserts; card sleeve; etc..	The core card issuance requirements are a one page, two-sided card carrier and a card sleeve.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
194	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Card Production Pricing Tab, Table 13.7.2, Notes – B.	Do the Monthly NCS Card Volume Tiers in the Card Production Pricing for NCS EBT Card Issuance 13.7.2 table include volumes for New York and Connecticut?	The tiers provided include all volumes, covering all potential situations.
195	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Card Production Pricing Tab, Table 13.7.3	Please confirm if the CSAs require embossing on only the front of the card or front and back of the card.	Not currently applicable for ME, and CT. NY, RI and MA do not emboss cards. NH and VT only emboss on the front of the card.
196	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Card Production Pricing Tab	Do the NCS Card Volume Tiers in the following tables include volumes for New York and Connecticut: Blank Card Stock (4.5.5), Overnight Bulk Delivery (4.5.7), Card Types – Vault Card (4.5.12), Card Sleeves (4.5.13), Mailed PIN (4.5.15), and Non-Financial Card Production (4.6)?	The tiers provided include all volumes, covering all potential situations.
197	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Card Production Pricing Tab	In the event New York elects to procure these card services outside of the NCS contract, the volumes will be significantly impacted as New York is well over 60% of the total volume. Will the NCS consider adding a separate pricing table to represent volumes without New York?	Appendix P uses tier pricing in order to account for any combination of NCS state usage of the service. For example, if multiple NCS states use the service the pricing tier would be higher than if one NCS uses the service.
198	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Card Production Pricing Tab	With offices remaining closed based on COVID-19, is there a value to having preprinted vault cards vs. in-office printing of cards?	Pricing is required for all services as requested.
199	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	Card Production Pricing Tab, 4.6	The requirement references a wide variety of security features that may be required for the card on an individual State basis. The price of a card is dependent upon the features selected, for example, black white vs 4-color printing, holographic overlay, etc. Please validate which of the security features should be used for each CSA in order for Offerors to calculate pricing. Can each CSA utilizing the non-financial card also confirm the features they prefer for these cards?	Appendix P asks for the incremental cost increase for each of the selected feature. Each of those features may be chosen by the states at any time during the contract period.
200	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	OTC Card Production Equipment	Would the CSA's be open to other card issuance methods, like preprinted OTC? If so, where should this price be referenced? (Pre-printed has only a card number, no personalization)	No, please provide pricing as requested.
201	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	NY State Specific Pricing, 9.1.2.2	Please provide the number of Direct Deposit Residential Treatment Center locations?	There are currently 26 Direct Deposit Residential Treatment Center locations.
202	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	NY State Specific Pricing, 9.5.1	On average, how many messages are communicated on a monthly basis?	On average, there are 306,094 messages communicated on a monthly basis.
203	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	MA State Specific Pricing	The cost of an ad hoc report or a customized query can vary based on the amount of data requested. For example, a month of data versus 10 years of data would result in a different fee to the State. How are Offers to accommodate for the difference in the pricing?	Appendix P - Pricing Schedule Massachusetts State Specific Pricing Tab, Custom Ad Hoc Report and Customized Query Request are hereby removed. See attached Revised Appendix P - Pricing Schedule. RFP, Section 13.9.2 Massachusetts State Specific Pricing Table, Row 1 Custom ad hoc report (not included in Section 5.3 Data Warehouse (Functionality) and Row 2 Customized query request (not included in Section 5.3 Data Warehouse Functionality) are hereby removed. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
204	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	MA State Specific Pricing	Is the one-time charge for the Community Support Agriculture SNAP Purchase intended to be a one-time charge for the development, testing and implementation of the functionality, or it is intended to be a one-time charge per recipient for each month a CSA SNAP benefit is processed?	This is a one-time charge for the development, testing and implementation of the functionality.
205	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	MA State Specific Pricing	Please confirm the correct requirement number references on this tab. For example, the table refers to “4.2.3.5 Restrictive Interchange Transaction Processing” but this is Section 4.2.2.5 in Appendix B, and the table refers to “4.2.3.7 Merchant Validation for Cash Transactions” but in Appendix B, this is 4.2.2.8.	See attached Revised Appendix P - Pricing Schedule. RFP, Section 13.9.2 Massachusetts State Specific Pricing, Row 5 4.2.3.5 Restrictive Interchange Transaction Processing was changed to 4.2.2.5 Restrictive Interchange Transaction Processing. RFP, Section 13.9.2 Massachusetts State Specific Pricing, Table 4.2.3.7 Merchant Validation for Cash Transactions was changed to 4.2.2.8 Merchant Validation for Cash Transactions. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
206	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	MA State Specific Pricing, 4.2.3.5	1. Is this requirement the same as Core Requirement 4.2.2.5? 2. If so, should it be removed as it would be already included in the CPCM pricing worksheet for Cash benefits?	4.2.2.5 Restrictive Interchange Transaction applies to ATM and POS terminal blocking functionality through the Administrative Terminal (AT) for use by authorized Commonwealth staff to block Federal and Commonwealth EBT cash restricted locations. It is a more specific requirement than Core Requirement 4.2.2.5.
207	Appendix P - WIC Pricing Schedule	WIC Pricing Tab	The State of Maine WIC has several unique service requirements not required by other States. Can NCS consider breaking out the unique services required by only one CSA as an optional item? Otherwise, one CSA's requirements will burden the overall CPCM for all CSAs.	The NCS does not believe ME WIC has any significant unique service requirements. Please note, as of the writing of this RFP, the State of Maine is working on an electronic CVB redemption app to support Farmers' Markets. The electronic app allows the farmer to use their mobile device to register for an account, create farmer admin and cashier accounts, and redeem CVB benefits based on current transaction processing rules and validation using the mobile device. The device is not provided by the State, the Farmer will need to bring their own to the program. Support of FMNP is at the discretion of the CSA, and as such, is priced separately from CPCM in section 13.14.
208	Appendix P - WIC Pricing Schedule	WIC Pricing Tab	When entering some values into Table 13.13 the "\$" disappears, and when "0" is entered a dash is displayed. May Offerors modify the format to present the correct format of the entry?	Appendix P-Pricing Schedule has been revised. See attached Revised Appendix P - Pricing Schedule. Do not make modifications to Appendix P - Pricing Schedule. <i>This is a change to Appendix P - Pricing Schedule</i>
209	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	WIC Pricing Tab	1. In the event a CSA elects not to execute a contract for WIC Services in this procurement as they have a contract with another service provider in play, and following expiration of their current contract they decide to contract using the NCS procurement, how will this CSA's unique WIC requirements be managed from a pricing perspective? 2. The vendors will not have taken those unique items into consideration, therefore, is there an opportunity to re-price the services as CSAs elect to utilizing the NCS procurement in the future?	1. Bidders' pricing should include ANY AND ALL one-time and recurring fees for the entire duration of the Contract with the exception of otherwise explicitly defined costs. See attached Revised Appendix P - Pricing Schedule, WIC Pricing tab for CPCM and per unit pricing that shall be inclusive of all fees and cover any CSA electing to execute a contract with the succeeding bidder. <i>This is a change to Appendix P - Pricing Schedule</i> 2. No. Offerors will not be able to re-price after the submission of bids.
210	Appendix P – Pricing Schedule	WIC Pricing Tab	The NCS WIC Optional Pricing, Table 13.14 in Appendix P is missing items "8.15.3 - Automated text messaging" and "8.15.3 - Ad hoc text messaging" which are both included in RFP Section 13.14, pg. 322. Please provide guidance on where offerors should place pricing for these items.	See attached Revised Appendix P - Pricing Schedule. <i>This is a change to Appendix P - Pricing Schedule</i>
211	5.1.4 Proposal Submission Checklist, Para 1	Offeror's should provide Appendix R – Offeror's Checklist with the Proposal.	Please confirm that the Checklist should follow the Transmittal letter and that it should be included in all volumes. If not, in which volume should it be included?	Yes, the Checklist (Appendix R - Offeror's Checklist) should follow the Transmittal letter and be included in each of the Sections, Administrative, Technical and Financial.
212	14.1 Proposal Submission, Para 1	NOTE: Submit TWO originals and TWO paper copies of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Specific Administrative Forms which should be separately bound and clearly labeled.	Please confirm how many CDs and USB's should be submitted for the Massachusetts Administrative volume.	There should be two (2) USB's and one (1) CD submitted for the Massachusetts State Specific Administrative Forms.
213	4. Detailed Technical Requirements, Para 1	The Reporting Requirements are listed in the EBT Reporting Requirements, Appendix Q, of this RFP.	Please confirm that Appendix Q does not require a response.	Appendix Q - EBT Reporting Requirements does not require a response.
214	5.2.26. 6.1.5, 13.1.1	General	Please confirm that requirements 5.2.26, 6.15 and 13.11 are omitted in error and there is not missing requirements.	It is confirmed that 5.2.26, 6.15 and 13.11 are omitted in error and there are no missing requirements.
215	14 Proposal Submission, Para 14.1, 14.2, 14.3	Submit FIVE original and TWENTY paper copies;	Given the risk of exposure to COVID, in regard to hardcopies and the continued inconsistency of delivery across all major shipping carriers (USPS, UPS, and FedEx), will the State please allow an all-electronic submission?	No, an all-electronic submission is not allowed.
216	Appendix B - 15.2.2 Required Administrative Forms, Para 1, bullet 5	Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment (EFT)	The link to this form did not work. Please provide the form.	updated link: https://www.mass.gov/doc/authorization-for-electronic-funds-transfer-efit/download <i>This is a change to Appendix B - Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Appendix</i>

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
217	15. Proposal Requirements, Para 3	Offerors are cautioned not to include any Financial Proposal information in the Administrative or Technical Proposal documents. An Offeror's inclusion of Financial Proposal information in the Administrative or Technical Proposal documents may result in disqualification.	Some of the forms required in the Administrative volume, like Form ST 220-TD, Contractor Certification, Sales and Compensating Use Tax Certification and Form SDVOB – 100 – SDVOB Utilization Plan for example, include price information. Per requirement 15, paragraph 3, Offerors are not to include financial information. Should these forms be sealed separately?	As these forms are part of the Administrative Section, they do not have to be sealed separately within the Administrative Proposal.
218	Appendix F - Rhode Island Appendix, Section M0660 – SNAP Benefit Cash Out, Para 1	The SNAP benefit Cash Out transaction converts SNAP benefit authorizations to cash benefit authorizations. This function is currently handled through the EBT system via the transaction sent to it from RIBridges.”	The Rhode Island Appendix defines a “SNAP Benefit Cash Out” as: “The SNAP benefit Cash Out transaction converts SNAP benefit authorizations to cash benefit authorizations. This function is currently handled through the EBT system via the transaction sent to it from RIBridges.” Can the State please provide an example of how this functionality is used?	This is used if a client goes to another country and they do not accept SNAP benefits.
219	Appendix G - 8.25 WIC Standards – Para 3	Vermont Statewide and AHS Security policies https://ratesetting.vermont.gov/policy-legislation/policies/05-information-technology-and-electronic-communications-policies	This link does not work. Please provide the correct link.	The correct link is: https://humanservices.vermont.gov/rules-policies <i>This is a change to Appendix G - Vermont State Appendix</i>
220	3.1 Contractor/Subcontractor Qualifications – Para 1	An Offeror's experience, combined with that of any Subcontractors (defined in 3.1.2 below), should demonstrate its capability to successfully meet the specifications and requirements in this RFP.	Please confirm that the 3.1.2 reference is supposed to be 3.1.1.	The first sentence in section 3.1 is hereby deleted and replaced with, "An Offeror's experience, combined with that of any Subcontractors (defined in 3.1.1 below), should demonstrate its capability to successfully meet the specifications and requirements in this RFP." <i>This is a change to the RFP.</i>
221	15.2.2 Required Administrative Forms, Para 4.C & Para 3.A	M/WBE UTILIZATION PLAN Form 4937 & SDVOB UTILIZATION PLAN Form SDVOB – 100	Please clarify how percentage of utilization will be evaluated to ensure consistent evaluation across all bidders.	Information regarding the Evaluation will not be shared with Offerors.
222	Appendix B - 15.2.2 Required Administrative Forms, Appendix B, Para 1 bullet 4	Supplier Diversity Program Plan Form (SDP)	Please clarify the SDP utilization percentage goal for Massachusetts for this RFP?	There are no separately specified utilization percentage goals for MA. However, MA will not be able to contract with an entity that doesn't show a strong financial commitment to working with certified Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs), Women Business Enterprises (WBEs), Minority and Women Nonprofit Organizations (M/WNPOs), Veteran Business Enterprises (VBEs), Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprises (SDVOBEs), Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (DOBEs), and/or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Business Enterprises (LGBTBEs).
223	Appendix B - 15.2.2 Required Administrative Forms, Appendix B, Para 1 bullet 4	Supplier Diversity Program Plan Form (SDP)	Please clarify how percentage of utilization will be evaluated for Massachusetts SDP to ensure consistent evaluation across all bidders.	Information regarding the Evaluation will not be shared with Offerors.
224	4.2.1.1 EBT Host Processing, Para 5	Transaction processing occurs within 24-hour business and Settlement processing cycles as described in Section 6.1.1.5 of this RFP.	There is no section 6.1.1.5, please clarify to which section this statement is referring.	The reference in 4.2.1.1 EBT Host Processing, Paragraph 5, to Section 6.1.1.5 is hereby replaced with reference to Section 6.1 Settlement and Reconciliation - Core Requirements. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
225	4.2.1.1 EBT Host Processing, Para 6	For WIC standards please see section 8.2.8.	There is no section 8.2.8, please clarify to which section this statement is referring.	Entry should read, "For WIC standards see Section 8.25 WIC Standards". <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
226	Appendix K & 11.8.1, Para 3	Appendix K says Change and Release Management Plan FINAL is due 90 Days after each state's successful conversion. RFP 11.8.1 The Contractor must submit an updated draft of the Change and Release Management Plan ... and a final 90 calendar days after each CSA's Contract start date.	Appendix K indicates the Final Change and Release Management Plan is due 90 days after each state's conversion. RFP 11.8.1 indicates the Final Plan is due 90 calendar days after each CSA's contract start date. Please clarify which is correct: 90 days after each CSA conversion or 90 days after each CSA start date.	The Final Change and Release Management Plan is due 90 days after conversion.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
227	15.2.2 Required Administrative Forms, Para 5.A	If selected for contract award, Offerors will be required to submit further information as set forth in Appendix E – NYS Attachment 6 – Post Award Forms. While the following information is not required until notification of selection of award, Offerors are encouraged to submit these forms with their Administrative Proposal to avoid delays. The below forms are contained in Appendix E – NYS Attachment 6 – Post Award Forms: A. Confidentiality/Non-Disclosure Agreement.	Please confirm that the Confidentiality/Non-Disclosure Agreement that NCS encourages we submit with proposal submission is for the Offeror as a whole and not for each proposed employee at this time.	There are two different NDA requirements. The Confidentiality/Non-Disclosure Agreement required under §15.2.2 of the RFP is to be submitted before contract execution and is to be signed by the Offeror as a whole and not for each of its proposed employees. However, note that after contract execution and before work starts, pursuant to Appendix N-1, Confidentiality Agreements, Contractor will be required to have its employees with access to OTDA's data sign the confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement provided by the CSA in relation to access to Protected Information. And, the Contractor must keep all those signed NDAs on file and provide to NCS upon request.
228	NYS Appendix E, Table	State Fraud and Abuse Reporting System file layout	Please confirm the field record counts as the total record length is different between the Header, detail and trailer.	See attached Revisions to Appendix E - New York State Appendix. <i>This is a change to Appendix E - New York State Appendix</i>
229	NYS Appendix E, Table	State Law Enforcement Bureau (SLEB) Detail Record	The total Detail record length doesn't equal the header/trailer. Please confirm the field/file record counts.	See attached Revisions to Appendix E - New York State Appendix. <i>This is a change to Appendix E - New York State Appendix</i>
230	NYS Appendix E, Line 3	Case RID Required or Invalid	Please define RID	See attached Revisions to Appendix E - New York State Appendix. <i>This is a change to Appendix E - New York State Appendix</i>
231	NYS Appendix E, Table	B05-Case Balance Request	Can the State please clarify if this record has a balance field as it appears to be missing in the record?	See attached Revisions to Appendix E - New York State Appendix. <i>This is a change to Appendix E - New York State Appendix</i>
232	5.2 Direct Deposit/Electronic Payment Card – Optional Requirements, Para 5.2.1	The States desire the option to implement a program whereby cardholders who have a bank account can have cash received from the State directly deposited into their bank accounts. Describe the system for handling direct deposits of cash payments.	Will the NCS confirm that direct deposit for the cash benefits will only be offered if the electronic payment card optional services are selected as requested in 5.2.1 and 5.2.2?	No, direct deposit for the cash benefits will not only be offered if the electronic payment card optional services are selected.
233	7.2.2 Drop Ship Delivery for States Utilizing Contractor Issued Cards, Para 2	The States must have the option of requiring the Contractor to drop ship active cards and PIN mailers via overnight express mail (required to be separately priced) to a specific local or state office(s).	During a disaster, overnight express mail services may suspend delivery to the impacted area. Would the NCS consider modifying this request to state that shipping will occur as soon as overnight express services have resumed operation?	No, the section will not be modified. See Appendix N - Terms and Conditions, Section 26 for Force Majeure which may apply to the example scenario provided in the question.
234	9.2 Cardholder and Retailer Customer Service – Core Requirements, Para 1	All Cardholder and Retailer Customer Services must be performed within the United States.	Please clarify if Customer Services must be performed in the continental United States or is the United States and its territories allowed.	No. See Amendment 1 paragraph 4. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
235	4.5.4.1 Location of Card Production, Para 1 Appendix B, 4.5.9 Replacement Card Issuance, Para 3	The NCS prefers that the card production facility used by the vendor is within 450 miles of Concord, New Hampshire. MA Appendix Requirement: The Commonwealth requires the contractor to provide card production services and mailing within the New England area.	RFP Section 4.5.4.1 and the Massachusetts Appendix B appear to have similar requirements. Will the NCS and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts please revise the requirements to align with one another, such as: The NCS prefers that the card production facility used by the vendor is within 450 miles of the New England area?	Appendix B - Massachusetts State Appendix Section 4.5.9 the following sentence is deleted, "The Commonwealth requires the contractor to provide card production services and mailing within the New England area." <i>This is a change to Appendix B - Massachusetts State Appendix</i>
236	3. Contractor Qualifications and Organizational Core Requirements, Para 3	This section of the RFP sets forth certain requirements relating to Offeror qualifications and its organization capability and references specific documentation to be submitted in its Bid Proposal.	There doesn't appear to be a reference requirement in the RFP. Please confirm that references are not required from the Prime Contractor.	Correct, references are not required.
237	Appendix E, Attachment 3, Letter of Intent and Utilization plan forms	HHAP M/WBE SUBCONTRACTORS	Please define the HHAP goal as it relates to the MWBE Program.	Disregard any references to the HHAP Program as it is not relevant to NCS EBT RFP Procurement. NYS inadvertently attached the wrong form please see Amendment 3 for the revised M/WBE Subcontractors and Suppliers Letter Of Intent to Participate form. <i>This is a change to Appendix E - New York State Attachment 3 - Administrative Forms and Checklist</i>

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
238	8.8.2 Personal Identification Number (PIN) Encryption, Para A	A. The EBT Contractor shall utilize, at a minimum, the Triple Data Encryption Standard (3DES) algorithm or better to encrypt the PIN during EBT transactions from the point of entry. In the event 3DES has been deprecated, the Contractor shall utilize the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) succeeding standard.	Considering NIST 800-20 is the only NIST reference to 3DES encryption and it has been withdrawn in its entirety, there is no associated NIST standard. Would the NCS remove this requirement?	RFP, Section 8.8.2 Personal Identification Number (PIN) Encryption, paragraph A is hereby deleted and replaced with: "The EBT Contractor shall utilize, at a minimum, the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) , or better, to encrypt the PIN during EBT transactions from the point of entry. In the event AES has been deprecated, the Contractor shall utilize the AES succeeding standard. Details are available in FIPS 197 and NIST SP 800-67 Revision 2." <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
239	8.11 Maintaining UPC/PLU Data, Para A	As noted, WIC approved UPC and PLU codes are not specific to each State.	Since each WIC agency defines their own specific approved UPC and PLU codes in their Approved Product List, approved UPC and PLU codes are specific to each State. Please revise the requirement to read 'specific' rather than 'not specific'.	Correct, entry should read, "As noted, WIC approved UPC and PLU codes are specific to each State".
240	8.15.3 Cardholder Portal, Para H	H. The cardholder portal shall provide access to customer service message center.	Please clarify requirement for message center including source of message.	The cardholder portal shall provide access to similar customer service capabilities, user options, and messages as those available through the Cardholder Help Desk and the IVR Customer Service System.
241	8.20 WIC Settlement and Reconciliation, Para B	B. The EBT Contractor shall provide the ability for CSAs to reduce future payments to WIC Vendors or debit WIC Vendor accounts for inventory claims, fines, penalties or other recoveries allowed by program regulations or under the WIC Vendor contract. This capability will allow CSA's to reduce future payments via their MIS rather than send refund checks to WIC Vendors.	Debits to individual vendor bank accounts generally requires additional permissions and integrated vendor accounts are not directly accessible for debit as payments are made to a TPP bank account. Please remove 'or debit WIC Vendor accounts' from the requirement.	RFP, Section 8.20 WIC Settlement and Reconciliation, Paragraph B has been deleted. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
242	8.23 Disaster Support, Para I	I. If elected by the CSA, the EBT Contractor shall provide outage notifications via text messages to WIC Participants who have registered through the EBT Contractor portal and authorized text messaging. Notification shall be sent within 15 minutes of the start time of an outage.	Since each State's requirements will be specific, can the NCS remove this requirement and allow CSAs, if they elect, to pursue notifications via a change request so that specific requirements can be documented, and the solution can be accurately sized and priced?	No, all bidders are expected to support this requirement. Please also refer to, 13.14 NCS WIC Optional Pricing, Text Message notification for outage or during disaster, as a Recurring monthly price per State.
243	8.30 Internet Shopping, Para 1	As of the writing of this RFP, New York State is currently participating in an FNS pilot to test and evaluate the acceptance of SNAP and Cash EBT benefits to pay for online food purchases. The remaining States in the WIC NCS currently do not participate in this pilot but wish to position themselves to take advantage of online shopping functionality and allow authorized online Retailers to accept WIC benefits. As part of the technical Proposal, the Contractor shall propose the functionality that would be made available to each State if they choose to exercise this option.	Please clarify that this is not an exercisable option for the CSA and simply informational for CSAs that may want to engage in a change.	Yes this section is informational, however, WIC CSAs request information on how vendors would support Internet Shopping if CSAs pursued this functionality either through a change request with the succeeding bidder and/or through other third party vendors.
244	Appendix G - 8.25 WIC Standards (Vermont Specific), Para 1 & 2	The proposed solution including products and services must be compliant with the State's technology standards specifically regarding security and regulatory compliance Requirements. The solution must be configured with: • Integration with external security services (Active Directory)	We've found that most state configurations do not support full Azure Active Directory configuration for integration with external services that are needed for this requirement. Please confirm that Vermont supports the required Azure Active Directory configuration to integrate with a cloud solution or remove the requirement. The solution must be configured with: • Integration with external security services (Active Directory)	The clause will remain in the RFP. VT is currently synchronizing their Active Directory with the Azure Commercial Cloud (GCC) and if the Vendor proposed solution will be hosted in a GCC cloud environment VT would be fine. VT is not currently synching to the Azure Gov Cloud but there are B2B connectors that enable VT to do this.
245	15.2.2 Required Administrative Forms, Para 3.B, 3.C and 4.E	B. Form SDVOB – 101 – Contractors Monthly SDVOB Compliance Report C. Form SDVOB – 200 – Application for Waiver of SDVOB Participation Goal E. Form 4976 (MWBE Goal Requirements Certification of Good Faith Efforts)	1. Please confirm that the SDVOB and MWBE Waiver and Good Faith Effort forms are only required if the goal is not met. 2. Please also confirm that the SDVOB 101 Compliance Report is not required to be submitted with the proposal.	1.Forms SDVOB – 200 – Application for Waiver of SDVOB Participation Goal and OTDA-4969 MWBE Request for Waiver are only required when bidder is unable to meet the established SDVOB/MWBE participation goals. Form OTDA-4976 - MWBE Goal Requirements Certification of Good Faith Efforts is required at the time of bid submission. 2.SDVOB 101 Compliance Report is not required at the time of bid submission.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
246	Appendix B - 15.2.2 Required Administrative Forms, Para 1 bullet 4	Supplier Diversity Program Plan Form	Please confirm that Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan Commitment SDP Plan Form #1 is the correct form to submit with the proposal.	Yes, Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan Commitment SDP Plan Form #1 is the correct form to submit with the proposal.
247	Security, Para 1 8.8.2, Personal Identification Number (PIN) Encryption, Para A. Appendix G, VT Appendix: 6.1, Security of State Information, Para 1 8.25, WIC Standards, Para Additional Standards, bullet 2. 9, Information Technology Systems, Para 1 bullet 2. 16, Destruction of State Data, Para 1 Appendix C, ME Appendix: 6.0, Para Footnote Appendix D, NH Appendix: 6.4.2.8, Para 1 A, Definitions, Para bullet.2, III.B, Para Bullet 1.	Multiple references to NIST throughout RFP and Appendices.	Recently, states have modified their internal Information Technology (IT) strategy to include policies that indicate hard requirements to be National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) certified. Unlike previous policy changes, these requirements carry significant associated costs, and they impact a card payment environment which is typically regulated by the USDA, Food and Nutrition Services EBT Standards. In these recent State procurements, not all Bidders have approached NIST requirements in the same way. While some bidders are compliant with the NIST requirements, others are submitting proposals that are not compliant and/or ignore the NIST requirements completely. These different approaches put bidders on unequal footing because some bidders have included NIST requirements in their pricing, while others have not. For the reasons stated above, can the NCS: 1). Please confirm that all seven NCS States require NIST compliant proposals. 2). Please confirm that bidders will be disqualified for not meeting the mandatory NIST requirements set forth in the RFP.	1. NIST is a specification/requirement in the RFP (for all seven states) and therefore as any other requirement in the RFP it can be deemed to be material. 2. It is not part of the mandatory requirements (per RFP Section 6.2.2.5 System Data Security), however it could be deemed to be a material requirement. NIST is guidance that provides a set of standards for recommended security controls for information systems. NIST standards are considered the baseline for the CUI data that is in scope. Achieving and maintaining these standards is required.
248	Sec 2.6 Questions Regarding the Procurement, Para all	All questions regarding this procurement, to be given consideration by the NCS, must be submitted in writing to the primary point of contact, as identified in Section 2.2.1 herein, and received by 5:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time on October 22, 2020 as set forth in Section 2.4. Any questions received after that date and time will be answered only if the NCS determines that the interests of the procurement will be served by responding to such questions, given the late date by which Offerors will be receiving a response before the closing date for receipt of Proposals. Each Offeror's question must reference the specific RFP sections and paragraph numbers to which it pertains. The NCS will post its official answers to the questions on OTDA's website at http://otda.ny.gov/contracts/procurement-bid.asp by the date described in Section 2.4.	Will a follow up round of questions be permitted, after the Official Written Answers, but prior to the Response deadline?	Yes, see Amendment 4 for the revised RFP Section 2.4 Timetable. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
249	Sec. 2.11 Letter of Credit or Performance Bond, Para 1	<p>Within 15 Business Days of the CSA's applicable approval of the Contract, the Contractor will provide the CSA with and will maintain in force and effect for the benefit of the CSA an irrevocable Letter of Credit or Performance Bond as described herein, or in State appendices, as applicable. The Letter of Credit or Performance Bond will be provided to each CSA at the sole expense of the Contractor. The institution that holds the Letter of Credit or Performance Bond may not have any financial affiliation with the Offeror</p> <p>Failure to provide proof of the required letter of credit or performance bond could result in termination for cause and OTDA, with the agreement of the other NCS members, reserves the right to award a new contract to another Offeror that responded to the EBT RFP.</p> <p>New York State requires an irrevocable Letter of Credit subject to approval by the OTDA in the amount of Twelve Million dollars (\$12,000,000.00) for the Term of the Agreement, including any extension periods. In the event of damages occurring as a result of non-performance, and/or in the event of breach of this Agreement, the OTDA may demand disbursement of all or any</p>	<p>1. Will NCS consider lowering the amount of each Performance Bond or Letter of Credit? 2. Will NY consider a performance bond instead of a letter of credit?</p>	<p>1. NCS will not consider lowering the amount of each Performance Bond or Letter of Credit. 2. No, NY will not consider a Performance Bond instead of a Letter of Credit. 3. The requested language can be discussed with each CSA during contract negotiation.</p>
250	Sec. 2.14 Contract, Para 1 & 2	<p>The successful Offeror will enter into an Agreement with each NCS subject to the terms and conditions in Appendix N, as modified in each NCS' contract. These terms and conditions, the content of the selected Offeror's Proposal, together with this RFP, its attachments, amendment(s) or addenda(s) thereto, and the formal questions and answers issued during the bidding process, will be made a part of the final Agreement, hereinafter referred to as the "Agreement" or "Contract."</p> <p>All provisions stated in the Agreement will become part of the contractual obligations under the Agreement entered into as a result of this RFP unless explicitly stated in the Agreement that such provision(s) is/(are) deemed excluded from the Agreement entered into as a result of this RFP.</p>	<p>3. Would NCS add the following to this clause, "Such performance and/or payment bonds may be issued on an annually renewable basis on annually renewable bond forms to be provided by Contractor's Surety Bond Broker."</p>	<p>1. Yes, each NCS refers to each state. "Each NCS" is hereby replaced throughout the RFP and its Appendices with "each CSA". Note, as in the case of NY, there may be two separate contracts within each state for EBT and WIC. 2. Yes, Offerors will have an opportunity to engage in good-faith negotiations with each State after contract award and during contract negotiations. NYS can only consider non-material changes to the RFP. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i></p>
251	Sec. 12 Performance Standards		<p>Is a response to section 12 Performance Standards required with proposal?</p>	<p>No response to Section 12 Performance Standards is required with the proposal. However, the selected contractor will be subject to the performance standards.</p>
252	12.4 Performance Standards/Benchmark Threshold Measurement/Liquidated Damages, Para: 5(a)	<p>Mailed Card Turn Around Time: Mailed EBT cards, electronic payment cards, and non-financial cards are produced and mailed within two Business Days...</p>	<p>Would the NCS change the requirement to three business days?</p>	<p>No, NCS will not change this requirement.</p>

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
253	12.4 Performance Standards/Benchmark Threshold Measurement/Liquidated Damages, Para: 5(i)	Cardholder – Card deactivation Card must be immediately deactivated upon request by the Cardholder to the CSR and/or when the Cardholder reports to the CSR that their card is lost or stolen but doesn't specifically request the card be deactivated.	Would NCS reduce the penalty to \$1,000?	No, NCS will not reduce the penalty. A CSA has the right to waive a liquidated damage amount.
254	12.4 Performance Standards/Benchmark Threshold Measurement/Liquidated Damages, Para: 10(c)	Cardholder or Retailer calls answered by live operator. • 100% answered by live operator within two minutes of transfer to live operator	The standard of 100% CSR calls answered within two minutes does not seem feasible. While all contractors strive to meet performance standards, the requirement permits one call to exceed the performance threshold. Will the NCS consider modifying the performance requirement to 99.8% of calls as per the industry standard?	RFP Section 12.4 Performance Standards, 10(c) Call Selection Wait Period, Benchmark/Threshold Measurement and Frequency is hereby modified to read, "99.8% answered by live operator within two minutes of transfer to live operator". <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
255	12.4 Performance Standards/Benchmark Threshold Measurement/Liquidated Damages, Para: 11(j)	Change Management: Unauthorized Implemented Changes: Implemented changes that were not authorized by the CSA relative to the total implemented changes. 0%	In the event of a system issue that results in a change that was not approved in advance, for example an overnight issue that requires an emergency change to resolve the situation immediately notification and approval of the change during overnight hours may not be possible. Would the NCS make an exception to this standard in the case of emergency change situations where inability secure approval could delay the correction of a system issue?	Yes. RFP Section 12.4 Performance Standards/Benchmark Threshold Measurement/Liquidated Damages, Para: 11(j) is hereby deleted and replaced with: 11(j) Change Management: Unauthorized Implemented Changes: Implemented changes that were not authorized by the CSA relative the total implemented changes. When as a result of an emergency, the contractor unsuccessfully attempted to get CSA approval, but immediate system change(s) is/are needed in order to avoid critical deficiencies with the system operation, the CSA will consider the attempts made to get the CSA approval, the nature of the emergency and the reasonableness of the change in deciding whether to waive this liquidated damage. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
256	12.4 Performance Standards/Benchmark Threshold Measurement/Liquidated Damages, Para: 11(k)	Change Management: Changes that Cause Incidents: Implemented changes that have caused incidents relative the total implemented changes. 0%	Would NCS modify the performance standard so that only backed-out changes that cause additional downtime are subject to this standard?	No NCS will not modify the RFP, Section 12.4 Performance Standards/Benchmark Threshold Measurement/Liquidated Damages, paragraph 11(K).
257	RFP Section 9.2 Cardholder and Retailer Customer Service – Core Requirements, Para 1 Appendix B, MA Appendix, 9.2 Cardholder and Retailer Customer Service – Core Requirements, Para 1	Languages required throughout sections.	The Massachusetts Appendix B, Section 9.2 and its subsections require additional languages that the main RFP does not. For instance, the main RFP for Section 9.2.2, Interactive Voice Response (IVR) requires English and Spanish and the Massachusetts Appendix Section 9.2.2, Interactive Voice Response (IVR) requires the following languages: a. English, b. Spanish, c. Portuguese, d. Haitian Creole, e. Chinese, f. Vietnamese, g. Cape Verdean Creole, h. Russian, i. Arabic The Massachusetts Appendix also requires additional languages (outside of English and Spanish) for the following sections: 9.2.3, Cardholder and Retailer Web Portal Access requires the following languages: 9.2.4, Mobile Application Devices (Mobile Apps) requires the following languages: 9.2.7, Cardholder Customer Service 9.2.7.1, Speech Interactive Voice Response 9.3.1, Cardholder and Retailer Customer Service Interpreter Options For core requirements where there are substantial differences in State Appendices like the ones mentioned above, can the NCS please provide clarity on how bidders should price these differences in Appendix P, Pricing Schedules?	English and Spanish shall be included in the price quoted for Cost per Case Month. Any additional languages shall be priced under 9.3.1 in Revised Appendix P - Pricing Schedule, Optional Services Tab. Offerors are still required to meet all the RFP language requirements, including the State Specific requirements.
258	16.2 Financial Proposal Evaluation Methodology, Para 1	An Offeror's Financial Proposal shall constitute 25% of the total evaluation score.	We have two Questions regarding Financial Proposal Evaluation Methodology: 1. Can the NCS please clarify if Optional Pricing is part of the 25% pricing evaluation score? 2. If Optional Pricing is part of the 25%, can the NCS please clarify what percentage of that score is devoted to Optional Pricing and/or provide a breakdown of this scoring methodology?	1.Yes, all items in Appendix P are part of the 25% evaluation score. 2.The percentage will depend upon the amount bid for the optional services.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
259	1.1, Paragraph 2		Can the NCS provide examples of what types of disbursements would fall into the category of "State general assistance programs"?	An example is State funded cash assistance programs.
260	2.6	Questions Regarding This Procurement, Paragraph 1	All questions regarding this procurement, to be given consideration by the NCS, must be submitted in writing to the primary point of contact, as identified in Section 2.2.1 herein, and received by 5:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time on October 22,2020 as set forth in Section 2.4. Question: Will the State allow a second round of questions or follow up questions after answers released on 11/19/2020?	Yes, please see Amendment 4 for the revised RFP Section 2.4 Timetable. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
261	3.1	Contractor /Subcontractor Qualifications, Paragraph 1	1. Can a newly formed Joint Venture submit a proposal? 2. In the event a proposal is submitted by a newly formed joint venture, made up of two experienced EBT processors, can the prior experience of each of the experienced EBT processors count toward the prior experience evaluation?	1. OTDA will only award to one legal entity. 2. An offeror's experience will be assessed based on the experience of the offeror and proposed Subcontractors. For the prior experience of two experienced EBT processors to count toward the prior experience evaluation there must be a prime contractor and a Subcontractor.
262	3.2.1	Contractor Organization and Managements, Bullet C	Please clarify the requirement to maintain state specific offices and workspaces in each CSA during each CSA's system Transition/Conversion. Does this mean the processor needs to have an office in each state during the entire implementation period or only during the actual database conversion or some other time period?	Section 3.2.1 c of the RFP is hereby deleted and replaced with: "C. Maintain state-specific offices and workspaces physically located in each CSA, during each CSA's system Transition/Conversion, for the NCS Project Director and other Key Personnel or provide remote support during the conversion as long as access to support is guaranteed within a reasonable amount of time. If support is provided remotely during the conversion, within two (2) business hours of the Contractor receiving a request for support from a CSA, Contractor shall provide acknowledgement of receipt of the CSA's request and that the request is being worked on and an estimated time frame for resolution. The requirement applies to the Transition/Conversion phase described under RFP Section 11.5 Transition/Conversion. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
263	3.2.1	Contractor Organization and Managements, bullet C	Would NCS consider allowing conversions to occur from remote locations if previous success can be demonstrated?	See above answer for Question 262. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
264	4.2.1.2.3	Bandwidth, Paragraph 1	Bandwidth must be able to accommodate 5.7 million logins per month and architect for peak times concurrent with benefit issuance and business hours. Do 5.7 million logins include both cardholders and state users in the administrative terminal? Please provide logins by state for cardholder portal, mobile app and administrative terminal.	5.7 Million was the estimated amount of cardholders logins to the client portal for all the states. Updated estimates for both client portal and mobile app are below. Not all states mobile applications are functional and could not be included in the total state case load estimate for an increase in bandwidth. The Contractor will be expected to meet any demands that happen during the contract. VT - Oct 2020 69,090 cardholder portal logins (51,043 unduplicated). NH -In the month of 10/20, there were 87,329 cardholder portal logins. From 3/1/20-3/19/20 (which is the most current data I have) there were 16,156 mobile app logins. NH does not have data on admin terminal logins, but there are 177 users. ME - Data not available. RI – Oct 2020 – 302,900 card holder portal logins (197,464 unduplicated) CT- In the month of 10/2020, there were 653,244 logins to the client web portal. We do not currently have a mobile app. WE do not have data on AT logins, but have approximately 400 users. NY-On average there are 2,401,146 cardholder portal logins monthly. NY does not currently have a mobile app. NY does not have data on administrative terminal logins, but there are 1,219 users. MA: Administrative Terminal - 5,705 monthly average. Cardholder portal and Mobile app - 2,270,616 monthly average (see separate listing).

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
265	4.2.1.2.8	Communications Protocol, Bullet A	A. Standard batch file protocols such as SFTP or any other protocol as required by the NCS must be supported. Please provide types of communication protocols currently used by each NCS state.	NY uses TASFTP. CT and NH use FTP for file transfers. VT can support both SFTP (non-mainframe, or through globalscape) and FTPS (direct from mainframe). Our recommendation would be SFTP through GlobalScape. Maine sends batch files through MoveIT. We also receive batch files through the vendor's web based reports module as well as through SFTP. MA uses SFTP to send and receive EBT transactions and bulk data and Web Services (SOAP/REST) to process EBT transactions real-time. RI-Wire to wire transfer and batch files.
266	4.4.1.11	Card Sponsorship in the Network, paragraph 1	The Contractor must sponsor and hold liability for EBT cards in the Networks whether those cards are produced by the Contractor as an Optional Service, or produced by a third party under contract to the CSA. Question: 1. Please explain what is meant by "Network(s)." 2. Please explain what is meant by "sponsor and hold liability for EBT cards." 3. What does this liability include? 4. Please confirm it is the State's responsibility for reimbursement for card liability to networks.	RFP Section 4.4.1.11 Card Sponsorship in the Network is hereby deleted. <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>
267	4.5.5	Blank EBT Card Stock Production, Paragraph 1	Please provide a list of states currently using this option to get blank EBT card stock from the current EBT processor. Please also provide the volume per state.	NY, ME, NH and CT do not use this through the current EBT processor. Since January 2020, VT has used 17,870 blank card stock cards. An average of about 1,605 per month. We typically do an annual bulk order of 20K but have recently considered having 2 years worth of blank card stock on hand. MA orders blank card stock in lots of 100,000. For the 12 month period 11/2019 - 10/2020, 300,000 blank EBT cards were ordered. RI uses blank card stock and does the embossing mailing of all cards in house. RI issues approx 5,000 cards a month.
268	4.5.8	Over-The-Counter (OTC) Cards, Paragraph 3	At State option, the Contractor must supply EBT card embossing or printing equipment and/or equipment maintenance. This can be done in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, in-house or using an outside Contractor. 1. Do any of the states currently use EBT card embossing or printing equipment to issue OTC cards? If so, please provide the number of equipment and number of locations? 2. Does any of the states utilize current contractors to provide bulk vault card stocks (card number printed on the card) to issue OTC? Please provide how many cards per month per state issued OTC?	NY currently uses printing equipment to issue OTC cards at one location, however this is not done through the current EBT contract. There are four printers. The current EBT Contractor does not provide vault cards. CT, NH, VT and ME do not use OTC cards. MA -Through 3/13/20, MA printed and issued over the counter EBT cards in 22 local offices before the offices closed due to Covid-19. MA has no plans to resume OTC issuance after Covid-19. All EBT cards since 5/11/2020 and all future cards will be printed and mailed by MA state agency staff. EBT card printing equipment is provided by the state. The current EBT contractor filled an order for pre-numbered, vault cards to be issued OTC in 2014. The average monthly issuance volumes from 11/2019 to 10/2020 was 3. RI currently has 8 card printers in use for issuance of over the counter cards. RI does not receive card stock with a number printed on the card. Approx. 5,000 cards are issued monthly.
269	4.5.14	Local District, Group Home, OTCs or Congregate Facility PIN Selection via Hardware Device, Bullet D	D. Attach a PIN to a Recipient prior to card issuance. Retain the PIN and attach it to the Cardholder's card when a card is issued. Generally, recipients first swipe their card at the PIN select device to select a PIN. Does the state currently allow recipients to select a PIN prior to card issuance (or without a card number)?	The PIN would be issued or selected prior to a card being issued to a recipient if the PIN mailer was sent out first. Also, if a client reports a card lost, and wants to change the PIN prior to new card receipt.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
270	4.5.15	EBT Mailed PIN, Paragraph 1	The Contractor must offer an option through batch or on-line request, as defined in the State Appendices, to support the assignment and mailing of PINs to new and existing account holders and/or their Authorized Representative and/or those needing a replacement PIN. PIN mailers for Authorized Representatives must have both the client and Authorized Representative name printed on the PIN mailer. Question: Please provide a list of states that are mailing the PIN; and the volume for each state. If there are no states currently using PIN mailers, will the state consider removing this requirement from the RFP? Will the NCS states allow an alternative PIN selection to Mailing of PIN?	1. The following states mail PINs: NY (701 monthly); MA (181 monthly). The following states do not mail PINs: CT; RI; NH; VT and ME. 2. No, this requirement will not be removed. 3. No, the NCS will not allow an alternate PIN selection to Mailing of PIN.
271	5.1	Administrative Functionality - Core Requirements, Paragraph 1	Please provide detail on the CSA's existing hardware and network configurations.	For security reasons some states will not provide this information at this time. Information will be provided to the awarded Offeror. MA - See Appendix B - diagram of the Commonwealth's current telecommunication network. VT- The application must be able to run on all supported hardware and operating systems, and be backward compatible with older versions. Please note, some of our systems have security settings that comply with multiple standards, including NIST, IRS, SSA, and MARS-E. Any solution provided must be able to work on hardware adhering to these standards. NH - The network is supported by a centralized router. NH uses Cisco Any Connect VPN. ME - See Appendix C Section 4.2.1.2.1.
272	5.1.3	Functionality, FF	FF. Generate Affidavit Functionality. Please provide description about Generate Affidavit Functionality	The (FF) Generate Affidavit Functionality relates to AT users having the ability to generate an affidavit from a client transaction history in the AT.
273	5.1.3	Functionality, M	M. Client Status Change Please clarify if the case/client status is maintained similar to card status?	Yes, the case/client status is similar to card status.
274	5.1.3	Functionality, T	T:Retrieval of Archived Data Please clarify if this functionality is required in AT or via ad-hoc query?	Per the RFP 5.1, Administrative Functionality, "For administrative terminal solutions, the Offeror must provide EBT administrative terminal browser-based applications and communication protocols to State offices." Therefore the functionality is required in AT.
275	5.1.6	Five-Year On-Line History, paragraph 1	The NCS requires a consecutive five-year daily on-line history of benefits and transactions through the administrative system for each account. Please confirm if this requirement pertains to post implementation or on converted data?	This requirement pertains to converted data and then continues during the life of the contract. It is expected to be updated yearly to have the most current consecutive five-year daily on-line history.
276	5.2.2	Direct Deposit Enrollment Management Services, paragraph 3	Provide initial set up and change or error correction entry of Recipient enrollment information, including but not limited to bank routing number, account number, effective start date, and stop date Please confirm if the enrollment info is provided in a separate batch file?	VT would prefer enrollment be done via a separate file. Currently we exchange two types of files with FIS – one file contains card enrollment information, such as new card requests, information updates, or account removals. The other file contains benefit information – like adding benefits to an account. VT has a separate banking contract for direct deposit services. NH does not currently utilize this function, but if it does in the future, it would be a separate batch file. ME processes Direct Deposit Enrollment in house. CT, RI and NY not applicable. Direct Deposit is N/A for MA. MA has a separate banking contract for direct deposit services.
277	5.2.3.	Bullet F	Can NCS provide an explanation for wanting the number of subsequent PIN Changes?	The NCS wants the information for customer service purposes and fraud prevention.
278	5.2.4.	Bullet K	Would NCS be willing to consider updated methods for account/PIN security and cardholder education in lieu of the specification "Do Not Write PIN on Card"?	Offerors are required to respond to the RFP as written.
279	5.2.4.	Bullet P	There is a question at the end of this section. Is there a requirement or should the vendor respond to this question?	Yes, there is a requirement. Additionally, Offerors should respond to the question.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
280	5.2.4	Card Specifications, Bullet T	T. The Vendor shall describe its card activation sticker. The card activation sticker shall be in English and Spanish and shall indicate that receipt of the debit card does not guarantee that the cardholder meets State program eligibility criteria or that the cardholder will receive a benefit or payment. Question: Please provide a list of states that are utilizing card activation stickers. If the activation stickers are not currently in use by any states, will the NCS consider removing the usage of card activation stickers requirement from this RFP?	None of the CSAs currently use this. However, it is an Optional Service that a CSA may choose at any time.
281	5.2.4	Card Specifications, Bullet T	Due to the limited space on the card activation sticker, would NCS consider the requirement about 'guarantee of benefits' to be placed on the card carrier instead of on the card activation sticker.	If this Optional Service is selected, CSAs may consider removing this specification during Detail Design.
282	Section 5.2.17.1	Bullet E	How many cardholders by state reside outside the continental USA?	This data is not available.
283	Section 5.2.17.1.H		Could NCS provide more detail and background regarding this specification and explain why there is interest in limiting the cardholder access to certain ATMs?	Electronic payment cards access may be restricted at certain types of locations such as bars, casinos, liquor stores, and adult entertainment venues.
284	7.2.1	Disaster Vault Card and PIN inventory, Paragraph 1	Regarding Disaster Vault Card and PIN inventory, please provide the card stock required in the past 3 years for states with disaster vault card and PIN inventory option.	NY does not distinguish between Vault Cards and Disaster Vault Cards. NY keeps Vault Cards in stock at Local District Offices. MA has 100,000 disaster cards in stock. None have been used in the past 3 years. CT has not used this option, but may during the life of the contract.
285	7.2.3	On-Site Card Issuance, Paragraph 1	Emergency Vault Cards with pre-assigned PINs must be shipped via overnight express on the same day of the State's request to issuance sites if a disaster has been declared. The State will determine the number of cards required for same day shipment. Question: Please provide the numbers of cards required for same day shipment of Emergency Vault Cards in the past 3 years.	No CSA has had a need to utilize this Optional Service within the last 3 years. However, it must be available in case of future need.
286	10	Cash Access Services	How many POS does the current contractor have installed at POS or POB locations to meet cash access requirements in each of the States in NCS?	NY, RI and CT - This information is not currently available. MA - 4,834 locations NH - 47 VT - Currently there are 19 retailers in Vermont with FIS equipment. ME - Data not available.
287	10	Cash Access Services, Bullet E	Does the current contractor have a separate contract with the USPS to provide cash access in the NCS? If so for how many locations? If no contract is required how many USPS locations participate today?	It is the responsibility of the Offeror to determine the necessity of and enter into subcontracts to provide required services. There are 538 USPS locations in MA. 75 locations had EBT cash transactions in the last quarter. There are no USPS locations in NH that have cash access provided by the current contract. This information is unknown for other CSAs.
288	11.4.4.6	SIVR and IVR/ARU Tests, Paragraph 2	When the RFP states an activity must be 210 days (for example) after each State's contract start date, does that indicate no later than 210 days or no sooner than 210 days or EXACTLY 210 days?	The requirement is no later than 210 days.
289	11.5.1.1	EBT-Only Retailer Conversion, bullet C	Please elaborate on what is meant by the requirement that the EBT Only Retailer section of the Transition/Conversion Plan must describe ACH information and transaction history (bullet C.) It is not clear if you are asking for a description of how this information will be collected or if you are asking for ACH and transaction information to be included in the plan or something else entirely.	This asks the Offerors to describe how they will transition/convert the ACH information and transaction history.
290	11.5.1.4	Transaction History Conversion, Paragraph 1	The RFP indicates that on-line history conversion requirements are in the state appendices. In the CT appendix, it states the contractor is required to convert the online history currently supported. What is the online history currently supported?	The online history currently supported is transactions since conversion, 11/14/2014.
291	11.5.1.4	Transaction History Conversion, Paragraph 1	What is the transaction history requirement for NH as it does not appear to be in the NH appendix?	NH hereby requires a consecutive five-year daily on-line history of benefits and transactions be converted through the administrative system for each account. <i>This is a change to Appendix D - New Hampshire State Appendix</i>

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
292	11.5.1.4	Transaction History Conversion, Paragraph 1	In the NY appendix, it states the contractor is required to convert the online history currently supported. What is the online history currently supported?	The online history currently supported is transactions since conversion, 9/21/2014.
293	14.4	Electronic Copies of Bid Proposals, Paragraph 1 and 2	Submit TEN labeled copies of EACH of the Administrative Proposals: the Technical Proposals and the Financial Proposals on SEPARATE CDs. Submit TWENTY-FIVE labeled copies of EACH of the Administrative Proposals: The Technical Proposals and the Financial Proposals on SEPARATE USB's Question: How many total copies of electric copies of Administrative Proposals, technical proposals and financial proposals are required? Please confirm the electric version can be submitted on either compact disc or USB, or both formats are required.	1. As stated in RFP, Section 14.4 Electronic Copies of Bid Proposals: Submit TEN labeled copies of EACH of the Administrative Proposals; the Technical Proposals and the Financial Proposals on SEPARATE CDs. Submit TWENTY-FIVE labeled copies of EACH of the Administrative Proposals; the Technical Proposals and the Financial Proposals on SEPARATE USB's. 2. Both formats are required.
294	15.2.2	Required Administrative Forms, Bullet 4 B and Appendix E III ("EEO") C	There are contradictory statements regarding the submission of the staffing plan: In RFP 15.2.2 #4, it states as part of your Proposal, submit Form 4943 Offeror's EEO Staffing Plan of Anticipated Workforce as appropriate. In Appendix E NYS Attachment 8 C Form OTDA-4934 - Staffing Plan, C Form OTDA-4934 – Staffing, it states The Contractor shall complete the staffing plan form and submit it as part of their bid or proposal or within a reasonable time, as directed by OTDA. Question: Please confirm the contractor can submit the staffing form at a later date as directed by OTDA and not part of the bid submission.	A provisional Staffing Plan should be submitted as part of the proposal. Any revisions to the plan can be submitted at the time of contract execution.
295	16.1.1	Format and Content Evaluation, Bullet E	An assessment will be made of the Offeror's Diversity Practices using the responses provided by the Offeror to the MWBE Diversity Practices Questionnaire. Diversity Practices shall constitute 10% of the total Technical score. Question: Does the overall goal of 30% MWBE take into consideration the 10% score for MWBE Diversity Practices Questionnaire?	The 30% MWBE goal and the MWBE Diversity Practices Questionnaire are two separate elements. The 30% MWBE Goal is not evaluated in and of itself but is a requirement. If it cannot be met a waiver must be requested. The MWBE Diversity Practices Questionnaire is scored. The 10% Technical score percentage is based upon responses to Appendix N-2: Diversity Practices Questionnaire. The questionnaire was not a factor in establishing the 30% MWBE Participation Goal for this RFP.
296	Appendix E - NYS Attachment 8, Section II A		A. For purposes of this Contract, OTDA hereby establishes an overall goal of 30% for MWBE participation, 15% for New York State-certified minority-owned business enterprise ("MBE") participation and 15% for New York State-certified women-owned business enterprise ("WBE") participation (collectively, "MWBE Contract Goals") based on the current availability of MBEs and WBEs. Question: Is the overall goal of 30% of MWBE being scored as part of the technical or pricing score? Or is it a pass/fail test?	The 30% MWBE Goal is not evaluated in and of itself but is a requirement. The Offerors' ability to meet the goal of 30% is scored as part of Appendix N-2 Diversity Questionnaire which is scored as part of the Technical Evaluation. It is not a pass/fail test.
297	Appendix E - NYS Attachment 8, Section II A		A. For purposes of this Contract, OTDA hereby establishes an overall goal of 30% for MWBE participation, 15% for New York State-certified minority-owned business enterprise ("MBE") participation and 15% for New York State-certified women-owned business enterprise ("WBE") participation (collectively, "MWBE Contract Goals") based on the current availability of MBEs and WBEs. Question: If a business is registered as both MBE and WBE, can the percentage participation be counted as for both MBE and WBE? For example, if the participation for this business is 20%, will it be considered that we reached 20% of the goal and we just need another 10% from either an MBE or a WBE?	An enterprise owned by a minority group member who is also a woman may be counted towards either the MBE goal or WBE goal, but such participation may not be counted towards both goals and may not be divided between the MBE goal and the WBE goal. If the overall MWBE goal is met but either the "M" or the "W" component of the MWBE goal is not met in part or in full, OTDA Form 4969 MWBE Request for Waiver must be submitted for the shortfall in the appropriate category even though the overall 30% goal was met.
298	Appendix M		Historical statistical data provided in Appendix M are from 2018, will the state please provide more current data from 2019 and 2020.	See RFP, Section 1.7 Disclaimer All statistical and fiscal information contained in this RFP, including any addenda or attachments, reflect data and records available to the NCS at the time the documents were prepared.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
299	Appendix M		Do the number of EBT only terminals include the count for terminals in the HIP program? If not, how many are there deployed for the HIP program?	CT, NY, NH, VT and ME do not participate in the HIP program. RI - Yes MA - 1.No MA - 2. As of November, 2020, there are 67 EBT-only terminals with the HIP download.
300	Appendix M		How many individuals currently receive cash benefits in each of the coalition states? 12-month average is acceptable.	NY, CT and RI benefits are issued by household not individual. See Appendix M - Historical Data. MA 12-9-2020-12 month average for individuals: 93,650 VT Issued = \$2,490,515 / Monthly Avg Individuals= 16,356 / Monthly Avg Households = 15,207 NH also issues cash benefits to the household, however on average 17,000 individuals receive cash assistance. ME- average 40,000.
301	Appendix M		How many times per month (on average) does an individual receive a cash benefit payment? Please breakdown by individual state.	Payments in NY, RI, MA, NH and ME are made twice per month. Payments in CT and VT are made once per month.
302	Appendix M		a. What percentage of cash benefit payments are currently sent via direct deposit? Please breakdown by individual state. b. What percentage are loaded to EBT cards? c. Are any cash benefits sent via paper check? If so, how many?	NY and CT: Cash benefit payment statistics provided in Appendix M - NCS and WIC Historical Data are EBT only. Direct Deposit and paper checks are administered by the state. RI - a. 100% Direct Deposit b. 100% EBT c. No Checks VT - a. 30% Direct Deposit b. 69% EBT c.1% Checks MA - a. 12.18% Direct Deposit b. 86.19% EBT c. 1.63% Checks ME - a. 3% Direct Deposit b. 87% EBT c. 10% Checks NH - a. 25% Direct Deposit b. 74% EBT c. 1% Checks
303	Appendix M		Cash Benefit Issuance: Would all the volumes & deposits in this section be what would be moved to an Electronic Payment Card, if/when that is implemented?	It is unknown at this time whether all volumes and deposits would be moved to the Electronic Payment Card.
304	Appendix P		There are only 2 tabs for state specific pricing for the state of New York and Massachusetts, will NCS states allow vendors to add additional tabs for state specific pricing for other states that are not currently included in appendix P?	No, NCS will not allow vendors to add additional tabs for state specific pricing for other states that are not currently included in Appendix P. Appendix P - Pricing Schedule has been revised. Please do not make modifications to Appendix P - Pricing Schedule. <i>This is a change to Appendix P - Pricing Schedule</i>
305	4.3.2.4	Retailer Manual Authorization	The reporting of voice authorizations requirement appears to be a duplicate of requirement 4.2.1.3. Are these requirements both referencing the same report? If not, can the coalition explain the difference?	Sections 4.2.1.3.7 and 4.3.2.4 are referencing the same report.
306	4.5.6	Envelope Customization	This requirement calls for the capability of a second name on the card envelope. Does that coalition expect that this second name be listed anywhere else? In a related question, how will the second name be communicated to the contractor?	NY does not use this contract for the production of EBT cards. If NY were to use the EBT Contractor for card production services, there may be times when a second name needs to be added to the card envelope, and/or on added to an authorized representative card. The second name would be sent in the card file. CT does not use this contract for the production of EBT cards. If CT were to use the EBT Contractor for card production services, there may be times when a second name needs to be added to the card envelope. The second name would be sent in one of the address lines on the card file. Not for RI. It would be communicated to the contractor via file transfer. Not for MA. It would be by batch file. NH - The second name would be part of the address. It would be communicated to the contractor as a "care of" field in the case/client batch file. For VT's there wouldn't be a need to have an additional name. Currently, VT provides second party individuals their own cards and they are tied to the primary account holders case. ME- If a c/o is needed to mail the card, Maine will send to the system as part of the mailing address.
307	4.5.12 -	Vault Cards	For cards that are pre-numbered but not assigned, will the name of the cardholder be printed on the card by the state? Or are the cards issued as-is?	Cards are issued as is.
308	4.5.14 - Item B		Can the coalition provide an example (i.e. manufacturer, model) of at POTS capable device that is currently used for PIN selection in this scenario?	An example is VeriFone Vx510LE POS devices and accompanying 1000SE PIN pads.

Question #	RFP Section Number	RFP Section Name	Question	Answer
309	5.1.5		Can the coalition please describe what it means by "host-to-host" and "client-to-host" functionality in this paragraph?	At a high level, this is how data is interchanged. Each state's implementation is different.
310	9.1.1.7 (A)	Retailer and TPP Agreements	Is the reference to "7 CFR 273" in RFP § 9.1.1.7 (A), correct?	No, it is a typo. The reference in RFP, Section 9.1.1.7 (A) to "7 CFR 273" is hereby deleted and replaced with "7 CFR 274.3". <i>This is a change to the RFP</i>