



**New York State Services to
VICTIMS OF CRIME NEEDS ASSESSMENT
and Gap Analysis (VOCNA)**

VOCNA Request for Proposals: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1: I am interested in working with you and being a subcontractor to fulfill needs assessment and gap analysis provider services. Are you able to support me in the right direction? I am wondering what is needed to initiate the process.

A1: For the purposes of this solicitation, proposals do not require the use of subcontractors, however, subcontracting is encouraged in order to meet all required experience and desired experience types detailed in [Section 2.5: Minimum Eligibility Requirements](#) and [Section 2.6: Desired Experience](#) of the RFP. OVS requires one Primary Bidder.

Organizations interested in providing services as a subcontractor for the VOCNA Project may consider working with an Organization to serve as the Primary Bidder. Only one applicant can serve as the primary Bidder on the proposal and only one proposal should be submitted. OVS encourages the use of letters of agreements and/or supporting documentation for Bids proposing subcontractors. Please note, OVS may require additional documentation related to prospective subcontractor(s) before awarding a final contract.

Q2: My [organization] is thinking of applying for this work. [Individual] was appointed to a NYS Commission. Does this bar me from applying for this kind of work from State agencies?

A2: Organizations and/or individuals, including research centers who may have affiliations with State Agencies, including appointed roles, are not barred from submitting proposals for the VOCNA Project. Such relationships should be disclosed within the proposal, if applicable. It is encouraged that the individuals seek advisement from their State Agency, Agency or Organization Counsel, or the [Joint Commission on Public Ethics](#) (JCOPE), as this may be considered an outside activity.

Q3: Is there a page limit to the proposal (particularly the technical proposal)?

A3: No, there are no page, word, or character limitations. Bidders should be mindful of submitting proposals that facilitate a prompt and thorough review by evaluators. Bidders are encouraged to avoid including excessive and/or unnecessary documentation or information that does not speak to the requirements detailed in the RFP.



Q4: What, if any, formatting guidelines should be adhered to (e.g. single vs double space, margins, etc.)?

A4: *There are no formatting requirements. Bidders should be mindful of submitting proposals that facilitate a prompt and thorough review by evaluators.*

Q5: Would OVS share examples of past award recipients?

A5: *This is a new, one-time solicitation that has not been offered in the past.*

Q6: If we (a victim service Agency) wanted to apply and partner with a National Organization not based on NY state would that be allowed?

A6: *Yes, this is allowed. Bidders for the VOCNA Project are not required to be located in New York State. National Organizations are eligible to submit proposals.*

For proposals containing subcontracting and/or proposed partnerships, only one proposal should be submitted by the Primary Bidder. The Primary Bidder should be the entity serving as the Project Manager of the VOCNA Project. Please note, OVS may require additional documentation related to prospective subcontractor(s) before awarding a final contract.

Please note, all desired experience, including that of any proposed subcontractor(s) should be included in the desired experience questionnaire.

Q7: Would we need to have our research team in place at the time of application?

A7: *Proposals should identify individuals and/or organizations responsible for conducting the research and how they fulfill the required experience and, if applicable, desired experience. Required and desired experience types are described in [Section 2.5: Minimum Eligibility Requirements](#) and [Section 2.6: Desired Experience](#) of the RFP.*

It is not required to identify specific individuals who may serve as support staff for the VOCNA Project.

If subcontracting, proposals should identify how the subcontractor(s) fulfills the required experience and, if applicable, desired experience. Required and desired experience types are described in [Section 2.5: Minimum Eligibility Requirements](#) and [Section 2.6: Desired Experience](#) of the RFP. Letters of support are recommended. Please note, OVS may require additional documentation related to prospective subcontractor(s) before awarding a final contract.

Please note that all desired experience, including that of any proposed subcontractor(s), should be included in the desired experience questionnaire.

Q8: If submitting proposal by email, should documents within each of the three parts (administrative, technical, cost) be attached (“packages”) as (a) a single PDF document or (c) in a zip file?

A8: *If submitting a proposal by email, documents for each separate package (administrative, technical, and cost) may be attached by any of the methods listed in the question. Submission*

of each separate package attachment should be clearly identified. PDFs and/or other submission document type should be separated by package proposal item. Bidders are cautioned to ensure that any zip files (if using such files) open correctly prior to submission. Please refer to [Section 3.1: Proposal Requirements](#) and [Section 3.5: Proposal Submission](#) of the RFP.

Q9: If submitting proposal by email, should the three parts be in three separate emails, or in one email with three PDFs or zip files?

A9: Bidders are requested to submit proposals in separate Administrative, Technical, and Cost packages. The separation of information will facilitate the review of the materials by evaluators.

Each of the three packages may be separated within one email or may be separated into three separate emails. As long as each distinct package and/or submission is clearly identified, OVS will accept such submission(s). Please refer to [Section 3.1: Proposal Requirements](#) and [Section 3.5: Proposal Submission](#) of the RFP.

Q10: 3.2 says “The Administrative Proposal should contain all items listed below”; the footnote says “Forms are only necessary in certain circumstances. See Attachment 1: RFP VOCNA Project Complete Submission Checklist for more info.” The checklist provides links to the forms, but does not indicate the circumstances?

A10: The checklist includes all items required in proposal submissions. Some Administrative Proposal forms may not be applicable to some vendors. It is the Bidder’s responsibility to review each form and determine its applicability.

If, upon review of the Administrative Proposal form requirements (including items with an asterisk), the Bidder determines a form is not applicable, the Bidder may include language stating the form is omitted due to inapplicability.

OVS reserves the right to request additional information as deemed necessary to fully review a proposal.

Q11: 6.1 says “All attachments and appendices are listed in the order they should be received” and has no such note about “optional” forms. If we determine that a form with an asterisk in 3.2 is not necessary, (how) do we indicate such?

A11: See A10.

Q12: Are the subaward percentages a goal or requirement?

A12: Any stated subcontracting or subaward percentages are goals.

For the purposes of this solicitation, proposals do not require the use of subcontractors, however, subcontracting is encouraged in order to meet all required experience and desired experience types detailed in [Section 2.5: Minimum Eligibility Requirements](#) and [Section 2.6: Desired Experience](#) of the RFP. OVS requires one Primary Bidder.

Q13: Is there a page limit for the technical?

A13: See A3.

Q14: Are letters of support allowed?

A14: Yes, letters of support are encouraged, especially where Bidder proposes subcontracting and/or partnerships.

Q15: Should this project focus on child victims or just adult victims?

A15: The VOCNA Project should adhere to the objectives of the project as related to all victims of crime, regardless of age or crime type. Victims of crime should include but not be limited to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and underserved victims of crime.

This project should include a particular focus related to underserved victims of crime as detailed in [Section 2.2: VOCNA Project Objectives](#).

Q16: Should we focus on the agencies that OVS funds or broaden scope?

A16: Bidders should broaden the scope beyond OVS-funded programs in order to fully identify the needs and gaps in service. Participation from victims of crime, victim service providers, and other stakeholders who represent a cross-section of organizations and agencies with whom victims of crime might interact is a required component in fulfilling the VOCNA Project Objectives. Stakeholders should include those who represent underserved, diverse, and/or, culturally specific communities. Additional details are in [Section 2.3: VOCNA Project Components](#) of the RFP.

Q17: The start date of the project is 12/1/21, please clarify.

A17: The project period will start December 1, 2021 through September 30, 2024.

Q18: Could OVS send survey link to agencies?

A18: It is the responsibility of the Bidder to develop, disseminate, and conduct accessible surveys and interviews for the VOCNA Project. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the Bidder and/or proposed subcontractors to identify organizations and individuals from underserved communities to also participate in surveys and interviews. See [Section 2.3: VOCNA Project Components](#) of the RFP for additional details.

Q19: The RFP says that languages and numbers of interviewees will be decided. By whom and when?

A19: *Bidders should expect to provide and conduct an appropriate number of surveys and interviews that will elicit a strong sample of participants in order fulfill the requirements and deliverables of the VOCNA Project. Bidders may propose the number of interviews and surveys to be conducted based on their expertise of conducting research projects. Quantities will be determined in collaboration with selected vendor upon contracting and/or project implementation.*

Bidders should refer to New York State's Language Access Policy translation and interpretation requirements found [here](#). Additionally, Bidders should refer to the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements to ensure surveys and interviews accommodate and are accessible for all participants, including those with disabilities. Bidders should provide interviews and surveys that are appropriate for literacy levels.

Q20: **Can you clarify what type of agreement the awardee would be receiving? Will they be considered a vendor or a subrecipient?**

A20: *The selected Bidder will be considered a Vendor and entered into a State Operations Contract Agreement with the New York State Office of Victim Services.*

The Bidder may propose subcontracting components of the VOCNA Project. If subcontracting, proposals should identify how the subcontractor(s) fulfills the required experience and, if applicable, desired experience. Required and desired experience types are described in [Section 2.5: Minimum Eligibility Requirements](#) and [Section 2.6: Desired Experience](#) of the RFP. Letters of support are recommended. Please note, OVS may require additional documentation related to prospective subcontractor(s) before awarding a final contract.

Please note, all desired experience, including that of any proposed subcontractor(s), should be included in the desired experience questionnaire.

Q21: **Can you clarify the budget format? Is this cost reimbursable? Or can we submit a fixed price proposal?**

A21: *Cost proposals should include a fixed budget for the entirety of the project in the format detailed in [Section 3.4: Proposal Requirement Three \(3\): Cost Proposal](#) and [Section 4.4: Evaluation Categories, Proposal Requirement Three \(3\): Cost Proposal](#) of the RFP. Allowable expenses from an approved fixed budget are paid on a reimbursement basis. OVS will work with the selected vendor to submit invoices on a recurring basis that are complete and accurate in order to receive payment.*

Q22: **The needs assessment will identify underserved populations and underserved service areas. Are there specific criteria used by OVS to inform what is defined as an underserved population or service area, and if so, what are those criteria?**

A22: *The culmination of the VOCNA Project Objectives as detailed in the RFP [Section 2.2: VOCNA Project Objectives](#) should result in identification and a definition of underserved populations of victims of crime. OVS expects the selected Bidder and/or subcontractors will utilize their expertise as proposed in research and engagement to develop the criteria that defines underserved victims of crime in New York State.*



For reference, the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 Guidelines provide the proceeding definition. Bidder's may use this as a reference for planning purposes only to serve as a guide to provide an accurately refined definition based on the outcome of the VOCNA Project.

State administering agencies (SAAs) must identify such services for underserved victims of violent crime by the type of crime they experience (e.g., elder abuse), the characteristics of the victim (e.g., victims who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender, queer, or questioning [LGBTQ]), or both (e.g., victims of violent crime in high-crime urban areas). Underserved victims differ among jurisdictions, but some examples of often-underserved victim populations include, but are not limited to, DUI/DWI victims; survivors of homicide victims; American Indian/Alaska Native victims in certain jurisdictions with insufficient victim service resources; victims of physical assault; adults molested as children; victims of elder abuse; victims of hate and bias crimes; victims of kidnapping; child victims and adult survivors of child pornography; child victims of sex trafficking; victims of violent crime in high-crime areas; LGBTQ victims; victims of federal crimes; victims of robbery; and victims of gang violence.

Q23: To reach diverse and culturally-specific communities, translation of surveys and language accessibility during interviews will be critical. Are there specific languages that are likely to be prioritized for this project, and if so, how many and which ones?

A23: See A19.

Q24: The successful Bidder will be required to print all report materials. For budgeting purposes, approximately how many printed copies will be required?

A24: *At least one final report, including attachments, appendices, and complimenting resources should be delivered. Bidder may propose more if desired. All materials should also be made available electronically to OVS for reference and duplication indefinitely. For additional details regarding deliverables, please refer to [Section 2.3: VOCNA Project Components](#) of the RFP.*

Q25: The successful Bidder will be convening participants and stakeholders. For budgeting purposes, are there any events required to be held in-person?

A25: *For the purposes of meaningful engagement and participation with underserved communities, it is recommended, albeit not required, to hold participation efforts in-person where possible in a way that accounts for public-health guidelines surrounding COVID-19, is trauma-informed, and is practical. All meetings should in compliance with ADA requirements.*

Meetings with OVS to gather information, provide project updates, and to present findings and final report may be held virtually.