



# COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES  
251 CAUSEWAY STREET, Suite 500  
BOSTON, MA 02114**

**REQUEST FOR RESPONSE (RFR)**

**RFR File # AGR-MASSVETERINARY-FY14**

**FOR**

**THE FY14 Mass Animal Fund**

Purchasing Department: Department of Agricultural Resources  
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RFR File Name/Title: FY14 Mass Animal Fund  
RFR File Number: AGR-MASSVETERINARY-FY14  
Procurement Team Leader / RFR Contact Person: Alex Gill

**REQUEST FOR RESPONSE**

**OVERVIEW AND GOALS:**

**BACKGROUND:** Section 1 of Chapter 193 of the Acts of 2012 created the Massachusetts Homeless Animal Prevention and Care Fund (the "Mass Animal Fund" or the "Fund"). The Mass Animal Fund is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources ("MDAR" or the "Department") used to end the problem of animal homelessness in Massachusetts.

**PURPOSE OF PROCUREMENT:** The Department is authorized to use the Fund to offset costs associated with spaying, and neutering of homeless dogs and cats and the vaccinations which are specifically related to the surgery; to offset costs associated with the vaccination, spaying, and neutering of dogs and cats owned by low-income residents; and to assist with the training of animal control officers. The Department, through this RFR, is seeking licensed veterinarians to participate in the Mass Animal Fund Spay/Neuter Program (the "Program").

**ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:**

The Mass Animal Fund is seeking licensed veterinarians to participate in the Program.

Participating veterinarians must:

- Be licensed to practice veterinary medicine in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and be employed by a veterinary clinic, hospital, shelter within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;
- Provide "one-stop shopping" spay/neuter services – that is, admit an animal for an initial exam, vaccinations, and surgery all on the same day;
- Provide the following to cats/dogs under the Program: DHPP/FVRCP and rabies vaccines, anesthesia and pain management medications, spay/neuter surgery, IV fluids (if necessary), blood tests (if necessary), additional medications (if necessary), and additional supplies (if necessary);
- Provide the above at no cost to the Program participant and for a flat-fee reimbursement from the Mass Animal Fund, using the following pay schedule which is inclusive of the entire surgery and related treatment including vaccines associated with the surgery:

Tier I	Cat neuter	\$75
Tier II	Small dog (<50 lbs.) spay / dog neuter / cat spay	\$150
Tier III	Big dog (>50 lbs.) spay	\$300

- Be willing to schedule spay/neuter surgery within 30 days of any voucher recipient's request for services;
- Have the capacity and resources to complete up to 5 surgeries monthly;
- Understand that the needs of the Program will vary month to month and year to year and will be contingent upon the local population and clients' choice of veterinary service provider;

- Be compliant with state-mandated reimbursement documentation requirements and procedures; and
- Maintain open communication with the coordinator of the Mass Animal Fund about their participation in the Program.

Interested veterinarians should respond to this RFR with a proposal outlining their ability to meet the above requirements. Proposals will be accepted on an open basis.

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

Interested applicants must submit the following to be considered complete proposals:

- 1) A copy of their resume
- 2) Three professional references
- 3) Copy of their Massachusetts Veterinary license

### **REVIEW PROCESS:**

The RFR will remain open and interested applicants who submit a complete proposal will be evaluated based on their experience, references, and meeting the licensure requirements. Those applicants who meet the criteria will be added to a master agreement and be eligible to participate in the Program.

**FORMS TO BE COMPLETED UPON AWARDING OF CONTRACT:** Any successful bidder will be asked to complete and sign, in addition to the Standard Contract, the following forms as part of their agreement. (Forms are available via the State Internet site <http://www.comm-buys.com>).

1. **Commonwealth Terms and Conditions.**
2. **Verification of Taxation Reporting Information (W-9) Form.**
3. **Electronic Funds Transfer Form (EFT).**
4. **Contractor Authorized Signature Verification Form.**

## **RFR SPECIFICATIONS**

### **CONTRACT AND PERFORMANCE SPECIFICATIONS**

1. **PURPOSE OF PROCUREMENT:** The Mass Animal Fund is seeking licensed veterinarians to participate in the spay/neuter voucher program. The fund is used to offset costs associated with the vaccination, spaying, and neutering of homeless dogs and cats; to offset costs associated with the vaccination, spaying, and neutering of dogs and cats owned by low-income residents; and to assist with the training of animal control officers.

The Mass Animal Fund is seeking veterinarians to become participating members of the Mass Animal Fund Spay/Neuter Program. Participating veterinarians must:

- Be licensed to practice veterinary medicine in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and be employed by a veterinary clinic, hospital, shelter, etc. within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Provide “one-stop shopping” spay/neuter services – that is, admit an animal for an initial exam, vaccinations, and surgery all on the same day
- Provide the following to cats/dogs under the Spay/Neuter Program: DHPP/FVRCP and rabies vaccines, anesthesia and pain management medications, spay/neuter surgery, IV fluids (if necessary), blood tests (if necessary), additional medications (if necessary), and additional supplies (if necessary)
- Provide the above at no cost to the voucher recipient and for a flat-fee reimbursement from the Mass Animal Fund, with a pay schedule as follows:

Tier I	Cat neuter	\$75
Tier II	Small dog (<50 lbs.) spay / dog neuter / cat spay	\$150
Tier III	Big dog (>50 lbs.) spay	\$300

- Be willing to perform spay/neuter services for all three tiers as outlined above
- Be willing to schedule spay/neuter surgery within 30 days of any voucher recipient’s request for services
- Have the capacity and resources to complete up to 5 surgeries monthly
- Understand that the needs of the Program will vary month to month and year to year and will be contingent upon the local population and clients’ choice of veterinary service provider
- Be compliant with state-mandated reimbursement documentation requirements and procedures
- Maintain open communication with the coordinator of the Mass Animal Fund about their participation in the Program
- Be willing to assist in advocating for clients to contribute to the Mass Animal Fund tax check-off

Interested veterinarians should respond to this request with a proposal outlining their ability to meet the above requirements. Proposals will be accepted on an open basis.

## 2. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS:

Animal Control Officers (“ACOs”) may give these vouchers to an animal shelter/rescue in need of free spay/neuter services for a homeless animal, may give them to a family they have identified as low-income with barriers to financing a spay/neuter for their pet, or may use the voucher themselves to obtain spay/neuter services for an animal in their municipal animal control facility. The voucher recipient will contact a veterinarian of their choosing from the Mass Animal Fund’s list of participating veterinarians, who will then schedule the surgery. On the day of surgery, the voucher recipient must present the physical voucher to the veterinarian, who will be able to submit the voucher, along with an invoice, for payment from the Mass Animal Fund.

## 3. ACQUISITION METHOD: Contracts

**4. SINGLE OR MULTIPLE CONTRACTORS FOR CONTRACT PERFORMANCE:** Multiple Contractors

**5. SINGLE OR MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS MAY CONTRACT UNDER THIS RFR:** Single

**6. TOTAL ANTICIPATED DURATION OF CONTRACTS** Initial Contract Duration: Two years with two (2) one year options to renew based solely on the discretion of the Department.

**Estimated Value of Procurement:** Approximately \$80,000-\$100,000.

**Will Federal Funds be used to fund part of Contract(s)**  No  Yes (If YES to what extent?)

**7. PROCUREMENT CALENDAR:** This RFR will be distributed electronically using the Comm-BUYS system and on the MDAR website. It is the responsibility of every Applicant to check Comm-BUYS for any addenda or modifications to an RFR to which they intend to respond. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodations to Applicants who fail to check for amended RFRs and submit inadequate or incorrect responses. Potential Respondents are advised to check the "last change" field on the summary page of RFRs for which they intend to submit a response to ensure they have the most recent RFR files. Respondents may not alter RFR language or any RFR component files. Those submitting a proposal must respond in accordance to the RFR directions and complete only those sections that prompt a Respondent for a response. Modifications to the body of this RFR, specifications, terms and conditions, or which change the intent of this RFR are prohibited. Any unauthorized alterations will disqualify response.

The procurement schedule is provided below.

- RFR posted to Comm-BUYS: April 7, 2014
- Open Enrollment

**8. INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION OF RESPONSES:**

Please send hard copies of the above referenced information to the attention of:

Alexander Gill  
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources  
251 Causeway Street  
Suite 500  
Boston, MA 02114

**RFR REQUIRED SPECIFICATIONS**

**Issue Date: March 24, 2014**

In general, most of the required contractual stipulations are referenced in the *Standard Contract Form and Instructions* and the *Commonwealth Terms and Conditions* (either version). However, the following RFR provisions must appear in all Commonwealth competitive procurements conducted under 801 CMR 21.00:

The terms of *801 CMR 21.00: Procurement of Commodities and Services* (and *808 CMR 1.00: Compliance, Reporting and Auditing for Human and Social Services*, if applicable) are incorporated by reference into this RFR. Words used in this RFR shall have the meanings defined in 801 CMR 21.00 (and 808 CMR 1.00, if applicable). Additional definitions may also be identified in this RFR. Other terms not defined elsewhere in this document may be defined in OSD's [Glossary of Terms](#). Unless otherwise specified in this RFR, all communications, responses, and documentation must be in English, all measurements must be provided in feet, inches, and pounds and all cost proposals or figures in U.S. currency. All responses must be submitted in accordance with the specific terms of this RFR.

Items with the text, "*Required for POS Only*" specify a requirement for Purchase of Service (POS) human and social services procured under *801 CMR 21.00, Procurement of Commodities or Services, Including Human and Social Services* and *808 CMR 1.00, Compliance, Reporting and Auditing for Human and Social Service*.

COMMBUYS Market Center. COMMBUYS is the official source of information for this Bid and is publicly accessible at no charge at [www.commbuys.com](http://www.commbuys.com). Information contained in this document and in COMMBUYS, including file attachments, and information contained in the related Bid Questions and Answers (Q&A), are all components of the Bid, as referenced in COMMBUYS, and are incorporated into the Bid and any resulting contract.

Bidders are solely responsible for obtaining all information distributed for this Bid via COMMBUYS. Bid Q&A supports Bidder submission of written questions associated with a Bid and publication of official answers.

It is each Bidder's responsibility to check COMMBUYS for:

- Any amendments, addenda or modifications to this Bid, and
- Any Bid Q&A records related to this Bid.

The Commonwealth accepts no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to Bidders who submit a Quote based on an out-of-date Bid or on information received from a source other than COMMBUYS.

COMMBUYS Subscription. Bidders may elect to obtain a free COMMBUYS Seller subscription which provides value-added features, including automated email notification associated with postings and modifications to COMMBUYS records. However, in order to respond to a Bid, Bidders must register and maintain an active COMMBUYS Seller subscription account.

All Bidders submitting a Quote (previously referred to as Response) in response to this Bid (previously referred to as Solicitation) agree that, if awarded a contract: (1) they will maintain an active seller account in COMMBUYS; (2) they will, when directed to do so by the procuring entity, activate and maintain a COMMBUYS-enabled catalog using Commonwealth Commodity Codes; (3) they will comply with all requests by the procuring entity to utilize COMMBUYS for the purposes of conducting all aspects of purchasing and invoicing with the Commonwealth, as added functionality for the COMMBUYS system is activated; (4) Bidder understands and acknowledges that all references to the Comm-PASS website or related requirements throughout this RFR, shall be superseded by comparable requirements pertaining to the COMMBUYS website; and (6) in the event the Commonwealth adopts an alternate market center system, successful Bidders will be required to utilize such system, as directed by the procuring entity. Commonwealth Commodity Codes are based on the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code (UNSPSC).

The COMMBUYS system introduces new terminology, which bidders must be familiar with in order to conduct business with the Commonwealth. To view this terminology and to learn more about the COMMBUYS system, please visit the [COMMBUYS Resource Center](#).

Multiple Quotes. Bidders may not submit Multiple Quotes in response to a Bid unless the RFR authorizes them to do so. If a Bidder submits multiple quotes in response to an RFR that does not authorize multiple responses, only the latest dated quote submitted prior to the bid opening date will be evaluated.

Quote Content. Bid specifications for delivery, shipping, billing and payment will prevail over any proposed Bidder terms entered as part of the Quote, unless otherwise specified in the Bid.

Supplier Diversity Program (SDP). Massachusetts Executive Order 524 established a policy to promote the award of state contracts in a manner that develops and strengthens Minority and Women Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) that resulted in the Supplier Diversity Program in Public Contracting. M/WBEs are strongly encouraged to submit responses to this RFR, either as prime vendors, joint venture partners or other type of business partnerships. Similarly, Executive Order 546 established the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE) Program to encourage the participation of businesses owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans in all areas of state procurement and contracting, thereby including them in the SDP. All bidders must follow the requirements set forth in the SDP section of the RFR, which will detail the specific requirements relating to the prime vendor’s inclusion of M/WBEs and/or SDVOBEs. Bidders are required to develop creative initiatives to help foster new business relationships with M/WBEs and/or SDVOBEs within the primary industries affected by this RFR. In order to satisfy the compliance of this section and encourage bidder’s participation of SDP objectives, the Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan for large procurements greater than \$150,000 will be evaluated at 10% or more of the total evaluation. Once an SDP commitment, expressed as a percentage of contract revenues, is approved, the agency will then monitor the contractor’s performance, and use actual expenditures with SDO certified M/WBE contractors and the Center for Veterans Enterprise certified SDVOBEs to fulfill their own SDP expenditure benchmarks. M/WBE and SDVOBE participation must be incorporated into and monitored for all types of procurements regardless of size; however, submission of an SDP Plan is mandated only for large procurements over \$150,000.

Unless otherwise specified in the RFR, the following SDP forms are required to be submitted by the deadlines noted below in order to meet the mandatory participation requirements of the SDP:

<b>SDP Plan Form #/Name</b>	<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>When Submitted</b>
SDP Plan Form #1 – SDP Plan Commitment	All Bidders	With Bid Response
SDP Plan Form #2 – Declaration of SDP Partners	Newly Awarded Contractors	Within 30 days of contract execution
SDP Plan Form #3 – SDP Spending Report	Contractors	Within 45 days of the end of each quarter

**Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Resources:**

- Resources available to assist Prime Bidders in finding potential **Minority Business Enterprises (MBE)** and **Women Business Enterprises (WBE)** partners can be found at: [www.mass.gov/sdp](http://www.mass.gov/sdp)
- Resources available to assist Prime Bidders in finding potential **Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE)** partners can be found on the Operational Services Division’s SDO webpage at: [www.mass.gov/sdo](http://www.mass.gov/sdo)

- The Operational Services Division's Supplier Diversity Program offers training on the SDP Plan requirements. The dates of upcoming trainings can be found at: <http://www.mass.gov/anf/budget-taxes-and-procurement/procurement-info-and-res/osd-events-and-training/osd-training-and-outreach.html> In addition, the SDP Webinar can be located on the SDP website at [www.mass.gov/SDP](http://www.mass.gov/SDP).

Supplier Diversity Program Subcontracting Policies. In addition to the Subcontracting Policies (See Subcontracting Policies section below and see Section 9, Subcontracting By Contractor, in the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions) that apply to all subcontracted services, agencies may define specific required deliverables for a contractor's SDP Plan, including, but not limited to, documentation necessary to verify subcontractor commitments and expenditures with Minority- or Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprises (SDVOBE) for the purpose of monitoring and enforcing commitments made in a contractor's Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan.

Agricultural Products Preference (only applicable if this is a procurement for Agricultural Products) - Chapter 123 of the Acts of 2006 directs the State Purchasing Agent to grant a preference to products of agriculture grown or produced using locally grown products. Such locally grown or produced products shall be purchased unless the price of the goods exceeds the price of products of agriculture from outside the Commonwealth by more than 10%. For purposes of this preference, products of agriculture are defined to include any agricultural, aquacultural, floricultural or horticultural commodities, the growing and harvesting of forest products, the raising of livestock, including horses, raising of domesticated animals, bees, fur-bearing animals and any forestry or lumbering operations.

Best Value Selection and Negotiation. The Strategic Sourcing Team or SST (formerly referred to as Procurement Management Team or PMT) may select the response(s) which demonstrates the best value overall, including proposed alternatives that will achieve the procurement goals of the department. The SST and a selected bidder, or a contractor, may negotiate a change in any element of contract performance or cost identified in the original RFR or the selected bidder's or contractor's response which results in lower costs or a more cost effective or better value than was presented in the selected bidder's or contractor's original response.

Bidder Communication. Bidders are prohibited from communicating directly with any employee of the procuring department or any member of the SST regarding this RFR except as specified in this RFR, and no other individual Commonwealth employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any question or inquiry concerning this RFR. Bidders may contact the contact person for this RFR in the event this RFR is incomplete or the bidder is having trouble obtaining any required attachments electronically through COMMBUYS.

Contract Expansion. If additional funds become available during the contract duration period, the department reserves the right to increase the maximum obligation to some or all contracts executed as a result of this RFR or to execute contracts with contractors not funded in the initial selection process, subject to available funding, satisfactory contract performance and service or commodity need.

Costs. Costs which are not specifically identified in the bidder's response, and accepted by a department as part of a contract, will not be compensated under any contract awarded pursuant to this RFR. The Commonwealth will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders responding to this RFR.



Debriefing. *Required for POS Only. This is an optional specification for non-POS RFRs.* Non-successful bidders may request a debriefing from the department that issued the RFR. Department debriefing procedures may be found in the RFR. Non-successful POS bidders aggrieved by the decision of a department must participate in a debriefing as a prerequisite to an administrative appeal.

Debriefing/Appeals: Administrative Appeals to Departments. *Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* Non-successful bidders who participate in the debriefing process and remain aggrieved with the decision of the department may appeal that decision to the department head. Department appeal procedures may be found in the RFR.

Debriefing/Appeals: Administrative Appeals to OSD. *Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* Non-successful bidders who participate in the department appeal process and remain aggrieved by the selection decision of the department may appeal the department decision to the Operational Services Division. The basis for an appeal to OSD is limited to the following grounds:

- 1) The competitive procurement conducted by the department failed to comply with applicable regulations and guidelines. These would be limited to the requirements of 801 CMR 21.00 or any successor regulations, the policies in the OSD Procurement Information Center, subsequent policies and procedures issued by OSD and the specifications of the RFR; or
- There was a fundamental unfairness in the procurement process. The allegation of unfairness or bias is one that is easier to allege than prove, consequently, the burden of proof rests with the bidder to provide sufficient and specific evidence in support of its claim. OSD will presume that departments conducted a fair procurement absent documentation to the contrary.

Requests for an appeal must be sent to the attention of the Operational Services Division, Legal, Policy and Compliance Office, Room 1017, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108 and be received within fourteen (14) calendar days of the postmark of the notice of the department head's decision on appeal. Appeal requests must specify in sufficient detail the basis for the appeal. Sufficient detail requires a description of the published policy or procedure which was applied and forms the basis for the appeal and presentation of all information that supports the claim under paragraphs 1 or 2 above. OSD reserves the right to reject appeal requests based on grounds other than those stated above or those submitted without sufficient detail on the basis for the appeal.

The decision of the Operational Services Division shall be rendered, in writing, setting forth the grounds for the decision within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of the appeal request. Pending appeals to the Operational Services Division shall not prohibit the department from proceeding with executing contracts.

Electronic Communication/Update of Bidder's/Contractor's Contact Information. It is the responsibility of the prospective bidder and awarded contractor to keep current on COMMBUYS the email address of the bidder's contact person and prospective contract manager, if awarded a contract, and to monitor that email inbox for communications from the SST, including requests for clarification. The SST and the Commonwealth assume no responsibility if a prospective bidder's/awarded contractor's designated email address is not current, or if technical problems, including those with the prospective bidder's/awarded contractor's computer, network or internet service provider (ISP) cause email communications sent to/from the prospective bidder/awarded contractor and the SST to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering.

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). All bidders responding to this RFR must agree to participate in the Commonwealth Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) program for receiving payments, unless the bidder

can provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. EFT is a benefit to both contractors and the Commonwealth because it ensures fast, safe and reliable payment directly to contractors and saves both parties the cost of processing checks. Contractors are able to track and verify payments made electronically through the Comptroller's Vendor Web system. A link to the EFT application can be found on the [OSD Forms](http://www.mass.gov/osd) page ([www.mass.gov/osd](http://www.mass.gov/osd)). Additional information about EFT is available on the [VendorWeb](http://www.mass.gov/osc) site ([www.mass.gov/osc](http://www.mass.gov/osc)). Click on MASSfinance.

Successful bidders, upon notification of contract award, will be required to enroll in EFT as a contract requirement by completing and submitting the *Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form* to this department for review, approval and forwarding to the Office of the Comptroller. If the bidder is already enrolled in the program, it may so indicate in its response. Because the *Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form* contains banking information, this form, and all information contained on this form, shall not be considered a public record and shall not be subject to public disclosure through a public records request.

The requirement to use EFT may be waived by the SST on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the bidder. If a bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in its response. The SST will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis and communicate the findings with the bidder.

Environmental Response Submission Compliance. In the event that paper submissions are required and in an effort to promote greater use of recycled and environmentally preferable products and minimize waste, all required paper responses that are submitted should comply with the following guidelines:

- All copies should be printed double sided.
- All submittals and copies should be printed on recycled paper with a minimum post-consumer content of 30% or on tree-free paper (i.e. paper made from raw materials other than trees, such as kenaf). To document the use of such paper, a photocopy of the ream cover/wrapper should be included with the response.
- Unless absolutely necessary, all responses and copies should minimize or eliminate use of non-recyclable or non re-usable materials such as plastic report covers, plastic dividers, vinyl sleeves and GBC binding. Three ringed binders, glued materials, paper clips and staples are acceptable.
- Bidders should submit materials in a format which allows for easy removal and recycling of paper materials.
- Bidders are encouraged to use other products which contain recycled content in their response documents. Such products may include, but are not limited to, folders, binders, paper clips, diskettes, envelopes, boxes, etc. Where appropriate, bidders should note which products in their responses are made with recycled materials.
- Unnecessary samples, attachments or documents not specifically asked for should not be submitted.

Executive Order 509, Establishing Nutrition Standards for Food Purchased and Served by State Agencies. Food purchased and served by state agencies must be in compliance with Executive Order 509, issued in January 2009. Under this Executive Order, all contracts resulting from procurements posted after July 1, 2009 that involve the purchase and provision of food must comply with nutrition guidelines established by the Department of Public Health (DPH). The nutrition guidelines are available at the Department's website: [Executive Order # 509 Guidance](#).

Filing Requirements. *Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* Successful bidders must have filed their Uniform Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report

(UFR), as required for current contractors, with the Operational Services Division via the Internet using the UFR eFiling application for the most recently completed fiscal year before a contract can be executed and services may begin. Other contractor qualification/risk management reporting requirements and non-filing consequences promulgated by secretariats or departments pursuant to 808 CMR 1.04(3) may also apply. In the event immediate services are required by a department, a contract may be executed and services may begin with the approval of OSD and the appropriate secretariat. However, unless authorized by OSD and the appropriate secretariat, the contractor will not be paid for any such services rendered until the UFR has been filed.

HIPAA: Business Associate Contractual Obligations. Bidders are notified that any department meeting the definition of a Covered Entity under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) will include in the RFR and resulting contract sufficient language establishing the successful bidder's contractual obligations, if any, that the department will require in order for the department to comply with HIPAA and the privacy and security regulations promulgated thereunder (45 CFR Parts 160, 162, and 164) (the Privacy and Security Rules). For example, if the department determines that the successful bidder is a business associate performing functions or activities involving protected health information, as such terms are used in the Privacy and Security Rules, then the department will include in the RFR and resulting contract a sufficient description of business associate's contractual obligations regarding the privacy and security of the protected health information, as listed in 45 CFR 164.314 and 164.504 (e), including, but not limited to, the bidder's obligation to: implement administrative, physical, and technical safeguards that reasonably and appropriately protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the protected health information (in whatever form it is maintained or used, including verbal communications); provide individuals access to their records; and strictly limit use and disclosure of the protected health information for only those purposes approved by the department. Further, the department reserves the right to add any requirement during the course of the contract that it determines it must include in the contract in order for the department to comply with the Privacy and Security Rules. Please see other sections of the RFR for any further HIPAA details, if applicable.

Minimum Quote (Bid Response) Duration. Bidders Quotes made in response to this Bid must remain in effect for at least 90 days from the date of quote submission.

Prompt Payment Discounts (PPD). All bidders responding to this procurement must agree to offer discounts through participation in the Commonwealth Prompt Payment Discount (PPD) initiative for receiving early and/or on-time payments, unless the bidder can provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. PPD benefits both contractors and the Commonwealth. Contractors benefit by increased, usable cash flow as a result of fast and efficient payments for commodities or services rendered. Participation in the Electronic Funds Transfer initiative further maximizes the benefits with payments directed to designated accounts, thus eliminating the impact of check clearance policies and traditional mail lead time or delays. The Commonwealth benefits because contractors reduce the cost of products and services through the applied discount. Payments that are processed electronically can be tracked and verified through the Comptroller's Vendor Web system. The PPD form can be found as an attachment for this Bid on [COMMBUYS](#).

Bidders must submit agreeable terms for Prompt Payment Discount using the PPD form within their proposal, unless otherwise specified by the SST. The SST will review, negotiate or reject the offering as deemed in the best interest of the Commonwealth.

The requirement to use PPD offerings may be waived by the SST on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the bidder. If a bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in or attached to the PPD form.

Provider Data Management. *Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) has established a Provider Data Management (PDM) business service that is integrated into the Virtual Gateway. PDM is accessible by providers with current POS contracts. Departments may require that bidders with current POS contracts submit certain RFR-required documents through PDM. These documents have been specified in the RFR. When submitting documents via PDM, bidders are required to print and sign a PDM Documentation Summary. PDM users should verify that all information is accurate and current in PDM. Bidders are required to include the signed PDM Documentation Summary in their RFR response.

Public Records. All responses and information submitted in response to this RFR are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L., c. 66, s. 10, and to c. 4, s. 7, ss. 26. Any statements in submitted responses that are inconsistent with these statutes shall be disregarded.

Reasonable Accommodation. Bidders with disabilities or hardships that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of RFR information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to the contact person. Requests for accommodation will be addressed on a case by case basis. A bidder requesting accommodation must submit a written statement which describes the bidder's disability and the requested accommodation to the contact person for the RFR. The SST reserves the right to reject unreasonable requests.

Restriction on the Use of the Commonwealth Seal. Bidders and contractors are not allowed to display the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Seal in their bid package or subsequent marketing materials if they are awarded a contract because use of the coat of arms and the Great Seal of the Commonwealth for advertising or commercial purposes is prohibited by law.

Subcontracting Policies. Prior approval of the department is required for any subcontracted service of the contract. Contractors are responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors. Human and social service subcontractors are also required to meet the same state and federal financial and program reporting requirements and are held to the same reimbursable cost standards as contractors.