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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT/HUMAN SERVICES
INFRASTRUCTURE RFQ BIDDERS CONFERENCE

Bidders Conference held at the Common
Council Chambers, Norwalk City Hall, 125 East
Avenue, Norwalk, Connecticut, Tuesday,
March 24, 2015, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

H e l d B e f o r e:

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER KATHLEEN M. BRENNAN,
CRYSTAL REDDING,
CASSANDRA NORFLEET-JOHNSON

1 DEPUTY COMM. BRENNAN: So
2 good morning, everyone. I think we're going
3 to get started. My name is Kathy Brennan,
4 and I am the Deputy Commissioner of the State
5 of Connecticut Department of Social Services.
6 And on behalf of Commissioner Rod Bremby and
7 the Department of Social Services, I'd like
8 to welcome you here. And thank you for your
9 interest in this competitive procurement to
10 identify a community action agency for the
11 Norwalk catchment area.

12 It was a beautiful drive here
13 today. At least it's -- I wish it was a
14 little bit warmer. At least it's sunny, so
15 it was a beautiful drive down here to
16 Norwalk. So I thank you so much for your
17 time in coming here.

18 This is a very important
19 initiative to identify a service provider for
20 the Norwalk catchment area. I bring with me
21 today some representatives from the
22 Department, Crystal Redding, from our
23 contract administration and procurement
24 group. Crystal is your primary contact, your
25 sole contact for any questions related to

1 this procurement.

2 And Cassie Norfleet-Johnson,
3 who I believe most of you know, is our queen
4 of community action agencies. They are here
5 to help respond to any questions you may have
6 regarding this procurement. Once again, the
7 purpose of this is to help you clarify any
8 questions you may have regarding the
9 requirements of this procurement. It's to
10 help you respond to the questions, the
11 requirements that we set forth. So with
12 that, the length of this bidders conference
13 will be as long or as short as you want.

14 I do want to point out that we
15 have with us, to ensure that we get a precise
16 record of the transcript, a transcriber. So
17 I would ask that, when you ask a question,
18 you announce your name, you state it for the
19 record, and you identify the organization
20 that you represent. Please speak clearly so
21 that we have an accurate record of the
22 questions that are asked.

23 Once we're through with this,
24 we will post the questions and responses on
25 the Department's website so that everyone has

1 an accurate record of any of the questions
2 and answers from this proceeding.

3 So with that I'm going to turn
4 it over to these lovely ladies. And thank
5 you again.

6 MS. REDDING: Welcome
7 everyone. My name is Crystal Redding. As
8 Deputy Commissioner Brennan brought out, I'm
9 the official contact for this RFQ. And I
10 just want to take a few moments to go over
11 some of the general instructions for this RFQ
12 as well as some of the requirements needed in
13 submitting your bid.

14 Again, I'm the official
15 contact. So what that means is that all
16 communication, whether it be question or
17 submission of the required information will
18 be directed to me. And any communication
19 with any other employee is prohibited, and a
20 violation of that can result in your
21 submission being disqualified.

22 What I can do is take a few
23 minutes to just discuss the schedule for this
24 procurement. You can find that on page 19,
25 or page 2 of Addendum 1. It will have the

1 updated information on it.

2 So this RFQ was actually
3 released on March 3rd. We're actually going
4 to be having a technical assistance webinar
5 this coming Friday at 11:30. So if you're
6 interested in participating, you can go to
7 our DAS or DSS website. And within the
8 Addendum 1 you'll see the invitation as well
9 as the link you can use to reserve a space
10 for that.

11 Again, as was mentioned, we
12 would appreciate your questions. We'd like
13 to take those in. And, actually, the
14 deadline for that, if you think of something
15 past, you know, today or the webinar, if you
16 think of questions you would like answered,
17 you can submit that to me on March 31st by
18 2 p.m. And we anticipate that the official
19 answers for those questions will be posted
20 online April 7th.

21 With this RFQ there is a
22 letter of intent, but that's optional, and if
23 you would like to submit that, that will
24 be -- the due date is April 10th at 2 p.m.
25 for that one. And finally the deadline for

1 the submission is April 21st at 2 p.m., and
2 that would be both the electronic submission
3 as well as the hard copy. If both of those
4 can get to me by 2 p.m. on the 21st. And
5 late submission of either one of those can
6 result in your submission not being accepted
7 or reviewed. So it's important to take note
8 of that time and date.

9 Again, all of this information
10 is highlighted on page 19 of the RFQ, and
11 then an updated schedule of that is on page 2
12 of Addendum 1. So just please take note of
13 those times and date submission deadlines.

14 And what I can also do is go
15 over some of the technical requirements,
16 actually Appendix A, which has the minimum
17 submission requirements for submissions. So
18 in order for your submission to be eligible
19 for evaluation, again I'll emphasize the due
20 date, just please have it either before or by
21 that due date and time.

22 You must also provide one
23 original hard copy of Appendix A, a copy of
24 Appendix A as well as a disk. And
25 unfortunately we can't accept any flash

1 drives, so if you submit that, it would just
2 have to be a CD or a disk there. And again
3 these are to be mailed or hand-delivered to
4 my attention. And when you submit your
5 electronic copy via e-mail, again it's to my
6 attention.

7 And we'd also like to stress
8 that the submission must also meet the format
9 requirements, font size, line spacing, all
10 that information, and that's also on page 19
11 of the RFQ. And also in Appendix A it has an
12 outlined that needs to be followed. So I
13 just wanted to stress that as well, to follow
14 the required outline in Appendix A.

15 And some of the information
16 that's required within that section, it
17 states a cover sheet, a table of contents, an
18 executive summary. And what the executive
19 summary is, it's a high-level summary, but if
20 you can keep at an one single-sided page,
21 that's the requirements stated there.

22 And within that summary it
23 does have various information. And one of
24 these -- I'll stress one of the requirements
25 in that summary is evidence that your

1 organization is located in or in a reasonable
2 proximity to the Greater Norwalk common
3 catchment area. So that's just a little bit,
4 but there's other information that should be
5 stated in that executive summary there.

6 And if you choose to add extra
7 attachments other than what's required in the
8 appendix, please note that that's not
9 permitted. And if you were to add that in
10 there, it won't be evaluated. So pretty much
11 stick to the guidelines and what is asked
12 there in order to be evaluated, the
13 evaluation of your summary.

14 In the required appendices and
15 forms, please do not alter or use to extend
16 or enhance or replace any requirements of the
17 RFQ. If you could please keep that in mind.

18 And another thing within your
19 submission, please note that hyperlinks that
20 you may reference within it are not
21 acceptable. So if you want to reference some
22 additional information, please print that out
23 and send in addition with your summary.

24 And there's a couple of
25 minimum requirements within Appendix A that I

1 was asked to bring out in there. And
2 there's -- 1 through 17 is a list of all the
3 information that should be brought out in
4 Appendix A, that minimum submission
5 requirements. And there's a couple of
6 things, such as Number 5, it talks about how
7 the agency audited financials performed
8 within the past two fiscal years, includes a
9 management letter and an agency response.

10 And the audit must be
11 conducted in compliance with standards
12 adopted by the American Institute of
13 Certified Public Accountant's government
14 auditing standards. That's something that's
15 required.

16 Another thing that's being
17 requested is an organizational chart, an
18 agency-wide one, an organizational budget
19 with a list of current funding sources and a
20 line of credit. And one more thing I was
21 asked to bring out is it is required to have
22 three specific programmatic references to
23 submit, and there's actually a question there
24 that's hyperlinked within the RFQ that the
25 reference would need to print out, fill in

1 and send to my attention. So I just wanted
2 to bring out a couple things there.

3 So again, please note that
4 submissions that fail to follow the time
5 schedule or the required outline or
6 instructions could result in your submission
7 not being reviewed and can also affect your
8 scoring outcome. So please just stick to the
9 guidelines as well as the required
10 information.

11 So that was just a little
12 overview of what is required. And at this
13 time I can turn over to the next part of our
14 program to Cassie Norfleet-Johnson.

15 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Good
16 morning, everybody. So my portion here is to
17 really talk about some of the key
18 programmatic elements that should be looked
19 at in the RFQ. So specifically to that, if
20 indeed there are copies of the actual RFQ
21 addendum in front, however there are some key
22 items that I just wanted to point out for
23 people.

24 And, on page 1 of the
25 procurement announcement, it gives a brief

1 overview of what the RFQ is and identifies
2 what eligible entities are. And it talks
3 about qualifications specific to what would
4 be needed, and that's really important that
5 people should look at that and pay attention
6 to it because it will help your response in
7 addressing the information requested by the
8 Department in the RFQ.

9 There's another section on
10 page 4 under the introduction that talks
11 about funding sources. Under that piece that
12 identifies the two funding streams that are
13 going to be utilized for this procurement,
14 it's the community service block grant
15 funding stream and the HSI funding stream.
16 And in that it breaks out with those dollars
17 are as well as the footnotes associated with
18 it. So it's really important that entities
19 pay attention to that item and those
20 elements.

21 The footnote also identifies
22 under the state HSI dollars of when those
23 funds actually have to be incurred and
24 expended. So, when you're doing your budget,
25 you should pay attention to those items and

1 those details. So I wanted to point out that
2 section for you.

3 The rest of the actual
4 procurement itself or the qualification goes
5 on and talks about the expectation that the
6 Department actually has for this actual
7 qualification of who and what the
8 responsibilities would be of this new
9 eligible entity. It talks about the actual
10 services that are expected for this greater
11 catchment area.

12 It also talks about
13 programmatic activities for this greater
14 catchment area. It takes the time to
15 actually identify organizational standards,
16 program reporting. It talks about the
17 tripartite board and the advisory
18 requirements. It talks about the eligible
19 uses of funds. So that's what's really
20 important in the actual addendum and the
21 actual procurement document.

22 What I'd also like you to do
23 is to turn your attention to the Appendix A,
24 which is actually going to be the document
25 that whoever is going to be responding to

1 this procurement is actually going to be
2 taking the time to actually answer those
3 kinds of questions. Under the addendum the
4 first part is the cover sheet which is
5 hyperlinked into this document. It's really
6 important that each agency submit the cover
7 sheet as requested by the Department. If
8 indeed the cover sheet isn't in, the
9 Department isn't going to have the needed
10 information.

11 It again, asks about the
12 requirements for the Appendix A, an original,
13 a hard copy and a flash drive. And it also
14 takes the time to mention that no hyperlinks
15 are actually included in that document. So
16 it's really important that agencies, when
17 they're responding to this qualification
18 submission, they are aware of that and they
19 meet the submission deadline.

20 So all of the documents need
21 to be received by the official contact for
22 the Department by 2 p.m. It's really, really
23 important. It's not enough to say, well, I
24 got the hard copy in by 2 p.m., and I hit
25 send in my office at 1:59 and it didn't get

1 to the Department by two o'clock. It's
2 really important that everything is received
3 by that time. So it's every agency's
4 responsibility to pay attention to that and
5 be aware of the April 21, 2015, 2 p.m., all
6 of the submissions, those three pieces, an
7 original, a hard copy and a disc is actually
8 received by the Department by 2 p.m. I'm
9 just saying that again just to make sure,
10 because it can get a little confusing with
11 the various methods that we're requesting
12 that it's actually done.

13 Also, in the actual Appendix
14 A, it covers through, and I'll go -- Crystal
15 mentioned just a couple of the key items in
16 the minimum submission. And it talks about
17 17 items that have to be submitted by the
18 agency, and you need to make sure that these
19 17 items are in each of those submissions.
20 So if indeed it's in your hard copy, it's in
21 your electronic and it's on your flash drive.
22 So just wanted to make sure. Those are
23 common errors that happen. We want to take
24 the time to point that out.

25 There's another section on

1 page 3 of the Appendix A that talks about
2 organizational capacities. Each agency
3 should look at what the Department is
4 requesting for each of those items and
5 respond accordingly. You will note for each
6 section there is a page limit. For example,
7 under organizational capacities, it says ten
8 pages, single-sided pages. So it's really
9 important you stay within those limits.

10 If indeed you exceed those
11 limits, the actual evaluators have been
12 instructed not to go past those pages. There
13 are requirements for a reason, and everyone
14 has to be treated fairly in all of that. So
15 I wanted to point that out, as you look at
16 the brief history of your organization, a
17 description of your overall staffing
18 patterns, pay attention to the information
19 that's being requested at the page limitation
20 tied to that piece of it.

21 In addition to organization
22 and capacity, we talk about the scope of
23 services. That's where you're, whoever the
24 respondent is, actually going to be able to
25 tell the Department about how you implement

1 the functions of the CAA to serve the greater
2 Norwalk catchment area. How are you going to
3 do it? Tell us how you're going to do it,
4 and respond to those questions that the
5 Department has asked. Try to respond
6 completely, as completely as possible, and
7 address the points.

8 And then we go on from that
9 piece of the actual scope of services and we
10 talk about the cost section. And the cost
11 section is really, really important because
12 in the procurement document, the
13 qualification document, the RFQ there are
14 budget pages that are actually hyperlinked
15 into that. There is the actual budget
16 document. There is some backup detail, and
17 then the Department asks for a narrative.

18 Do not assume because you
19 filled out the information in the detailed
20 information that you're responding to the
21 narrative. The Department took the time to
22 say we would like your budget, we would like
23 the detail in that. And there's a narrative
24 because the Department takes the time to ask
25 you, these are one-time costs, these are

1 ongoing costs. Certain costs have to be as
2 it's stated in the actual funding source
3 document. Certain costs have to be incurred
4 by a certain date. You have to be able to
5 demonstrate that you're aware of that fact
6 and you're meeting those kinds of
7 requirements.

8 So that's why I just want just
9 to take a second to point out the cost
10 section. Read the information. Look at the
11 various documents. It is a budget. It's the
12 detail that's hyperlinked that calculates the
13 budget, and then there is the narrative tied
14 to all of that.

15 So again, look at that
16 information. I'm not sure if you've had a
17 chance to look at it. If you haven't, please
18 go back and look at it. There is a question
19 and answer period that if indeed you have any
20 questions after you leave here, you can ask
21 us that question. Again, there's also the
22 webinar we'll be hosting -- on Friday? -- on
23 Friday that you can also participate, sign
24 up, register. And if indeed you have those
25 questions, you can ask those questions there

1 also.

2 So we're offering you three
3 opportunities to ask us questions here. The
4 webinar in case you didn't get a chance to
5 look at the detail level and then the regular
6 question and answer period for that deadline.

7 So in saying that and
8 highlighting the level of information here,
9 we are open for questions specific to this
10 RFQ for the Greater Norwalk area. We have
11 cards on the podium. We ask that you write
12 down your questions on the card to help the
13 transcriber. It's also being recorded so we
14 will actually capture what your question is
15 and we can accurately respond. The responses
16 today, I have to state, are not the
17 Department's official responses until they're
18 actually posted through Addendum 2.

19 DEPUTY COMM. BRENNAN: It's a
20 good point. Thank you.

21 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: So I
22 just wanted to say that. So I can get up and
23 pass out cards if people want to take moment
24 and think. Or if people would like to come
25 up and you can ask your question, and then

1 you can write your question down later on.
2 We would like to make this convenient, but we
3 would like to make sure that as -- people ask
4 questions, we're recording it appropriately
5 so we can answer appropriately.

6 DEPUTY COMM. BRENNAN:

7 No one likes to ask the first question.

8 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Also
9 there is a sign-up sheet up front if indeed
10 you'd like to sign up. If indeed you do sign
11 up, we ask that you also leave a business
12 card. And if you prefer to do neither of
13 those things, at least when you ask your
14 question, you must identify your name. And
15 if your name is not a common name, please
16 spell it if you have not signed in, and then
17 state -- the agency or community that you're
18 representing for the transcriber to
19 accurately record the information.

20 DEPUTY COMM. BRENNAN:

21 While you're thinking of your question, I
22 just wanted to comment on a few things that
23 Crystal had commented on regarding the letter
24 of intent, which is, in fact, an optional
25 letter of intent.

1 One of the reasons why we ask
2 for a letter of intent is to help us schedule
3 things. When we used to make letters of
4 intent mandatory, it was so we knew exactly
5 how many bids we'd be getting in, which would
6 help us then with our timetable to ensure,
7 okay, if you're getting five bids in, it's
8 going to take us this long.

9 So again, we're trying not to
10 make the process difficult or too
11 prescriptive, but it does help the agency in
12 allowing us to schedule our work,
13 understanding, of course, like as you, this
14 is being done as we're continuing to do our
15 regular day-to-day work. And this is,
16 obviously, something very important for us to
17 get done in a timely manner.

18 And it's also very important
19 to pay attention to those requirements. I've
20 been doing this for a lot of years, and it
21 amazes me how individuals submit responses
22 and don't pay attention to the rules because
23 they think it looks better if they do it
24 their way. And we do things prescriptively
25 to make sure that every response is reviewed

1 in the same manner, which keeps everyone on
2 the same level playing field.

3 STUART GOOSMAN: I have a
4 question. Did you say we had to write down
5 them down first?

6 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Yes.
7 There are index cards. You can ask your
8 question first here.

9 STUART GOOSMAN: Oh, okay.
10 It's a rather simple question. You were
11 referring to -- my name is Stuart Goosman,
12 G-o-o-s-m-a-n, and I'm from the Norwalk
13 Housing Authority.

14 Simple question. You were
15 referring to an appendix. I don't see an
16 appendix in here listed. Is everything that
17 we need in this packet?

18 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: It's
19 hyperlinked in this document, so it's not in
20 this package, but it's hyperlinked in the --

21 STUART GOOSMAN: Okay. So we
22 go to the website, and then we can find all
23 that we need?

24 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Yes.

25 STUART GOOSMAN: Okay. Very

1 good. Thank you.

2 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Any
3 other questions?

4 (No response.)

5 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Well,
6 we're here for -- we have two hours, I think,
7 blocked aside. If indeed you want to take a
8 couple moments, we don't want to rush you.
9 We're captive here.

10 GARY DelVECCHIO: What's the
11 format here?

12 THE REPORTER: I believe the
13 format is you step up to the podium and ask
14 your question.

15 Oh, okay. Where he asked it?

16 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: That
17 would be the normal format tied to that piece
18 of it. Because again, it's being recorded,
19 so press the button. We speak -- it's being
20 recorded.

21 GARY DelVECCHIO: You want me
22 to repeat the question, or do you think we
23 have it?

24 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: We have
25 that. He's sitting right next to you.

1 GARY DelVECCHIO: It's a small
2 room. Well, I'll ask another question.

3 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Well
4 then, this time you have to come up.

5 GARY DelVECCHIO: Sure. The
6 other question is, are you more interested or
7 do you have an opinion about whether you're
8 going to look at a preexisting organization?
9 Or what if a new organization were to try to
10 pull partners together to start this?

11 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Well,
12 in this instance, you would go back to what
13 the procurement stated, and there is a
14 section under organizational capacities and
15 what the Department is looking for. And it's
16 about your ability to provide services in
17 this catchment area.

18 So you look at your ability to
19 respond to those questions, and if indeed
20 you're one entity or three entities, and you
21 are an entity, and you can demonstrate that,
22 but there's going to have to be some lead
23 agency to actually state their organizational
24 capacity, their fiscal solvency and that
25 level of work. But again, all -- specific to

1 that point, if you go back and you look at
2 the RFQ, there's a section under
3 organizational capacity.

4 Also in the addendum, which I
5 believe you do have a copy, it talks about
6 specifically, in the procurement notice, what
7 the Department is actually looking for
8 specific to that piece of it. And also
9 there's a section there, on page 2, that
10 talks about qualifications. So if indeed
11 your group of three or four agencies are able
12 to address those qualifications, then you can
13 submit the response, and it will be sorted
14 like any other response.

15 The Department will not say
16 it's one entity or five entities or two
17 entities. We are going to evaluate this
18 process and the completeness of it under that
19 piece of it. We can't have a conference. We
20 have to be able to impartially decide, based
21 upon the responses, how did you respond to
22 this and what are your qualifications tied to
23 that piece of it.

24 GARY DELVECCHIO: Okay. Well,
25 I haven't read it yet, so I'm asking, you

1 know, in ignorance.

2 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: We're
3 here. It's okay. You wouldn't be the first
4 person to come to a bidders conference that
5 hasn't read it yet. They listened and said,
6 you know what, I think I'm interested. I'm
7 going to go read it and then take the plunge.

8 GARY DelVECCHIO: Right.
9 Well, some RFQs advocate for community
10 partnerships, but it sounds like you're
11 neutral in that area.

12 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Well, I
13 would suggest that you read the RFQ because
14 there is a section about linkages and
15 partnerships and your ability to address
16 community needs. So again, there's a section
17 about that piece of it in the RFQ.

18 GARY DelVECCHIO: Okay. Thank
19 you.

20 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: You're
21 welcome.

22 Nothing? It's like you're
23 looking at me like you want to say something,
24 but --

25 GARY DelVECCHIO: No. I don't

1 have anything.

2 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Oh,
3 okay.

4 DEPUTY COMM. BRENNAN: You
5 didn't make us drive all the way down to
6 Norwalk and not ask any questions, not that
7 we didn't enjoy the ride.

8 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: I
9 answered your question, didn't I, Gary?

10 GARY DELVECCHIO: Somewhat,
11 yes.

12 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Remember
13 , no question is a bad question when you can
14 ask about a procurement kind of thing, when
15 you can get that level of clarity from the
16 people that are actually responsible for
17 being the Department's authorized contact
18 person.

19 So we just wanted to point
20 out, in case someone may not know, the towns
21 associated with the greater Norwalk catchment
22 area. And if you look at the Addendum 1 on
23 page 7, we list the five towns associated
24 with the Norwalk catchment area, which is New
25 Canaan, Norwalk, Weston, Westport and Wilton.

1 So I just wanted to point that out.

2 So when we are talking about
3 the Greater Norwalk catchment area, these are
4 the towns that we're talking about that would
5 need to be -- the applicant or the respondent
6 would need to respond about their ability to
7 serve this area.

8 So one of the other items I
9 thought about highlighting for you and
10 pointing out to you, on page 12 of the
11 document here, Addendum A, is the actual CSBG
12 contract language. And so, if you haven't
13 looked at that, you might want to click on
14 that link when you get a chance.

15 That is the current
16 departmental template that we have with the
17 other community action agencies in the state
18 of Connecticut. So I just wanted to point
19 that out to you so you would actually see
20 what those responsibilities would be in case
21 you haven't had a chance to look at it. In
22 this actual RFQ there are a number of items
23 that are actually hyperlinked and underlined
24 in the document, but I wanted to point that
25 one out to you to make sure you had a chance

1 to look at it.

2 So while you're all still
3 thinking, and I'll keep talking until maybe
4 someone has a question, or just to keep the
5 game going. On page 12 is another item that
6 I just wanted to point out to you. Under G,
7 organizational standards, that's something
8 new that community action agencies, the state
9 CSBG offices, and the federal government are
10 actually being involved with.

11 In January of 2015, HHS issued
12 IM138. And in that IM it identifies
13 organizational standards that each community
14 action agency would have to be annually
15 assessed with. So we wanted to highlight
16 this to point this out to you so you would be
17 aware of this would be an expectation.
18 That's new. That's -- prior to this
19 issuance, it was issued as draft, but right
20 now it's going to be a new expectation of
21 community action agencies.

22 So we wanted to highlight that
23 piece of it. It's really organizational
24 standards. The document, again, is
25 hyperlinked. If indeed you're curious, click

1 on it. You'll see what those actual
2 standards are, and you're aware of that
3 expectation.

4 Okay. So Crystal has just
5 alerted me that because I might have an older
6 copy, the item I just referenced is on
7 page 15 of the addendum, if indeed you picked
8 it up off the table.

9 One of the other items, and
10 I'm not sure which page this is on --
11 actually it's on page 12 of the addendum
12 document that was on the table. And it's
13 about part way through, and it starts off
14 with the sentence of "The HSI service
15 delivery model." And in that it states about
16 the four existing case management systems
17 that the current entities are using and the
18 Department actually supports.

19 So I just wanted to highlight
20 that fact if any successful community action
21 agency would be required to utilize a case
22 management system that is compliant with ROMA
23 and able to address that, we have four
24 systems currently in the State of Connecticut
25 that the Department supports. You could

1 utilize these resources to either partner
2 with one of the other agencies to do this to
3 get training or something else, but the
4 Department would not support the purchase of
5 a new case management system at this point in
6 your proposals.

7 We state the fact that there
8 are four existing systems, and although the
9 Department is not going to be prescriptive of
10 which of the four systems you have to use, it
11 is going to be an expectation that you will
12 use one of the four systems. So I just
13 wanted to highlight that fact in case there
14 was an entity here who says, we have a case
15 management system, and we're going to use
16 that.

17 And I'm here to advise you
18 that because the Department cannot be assured
19 that it's going to meet our ROMA and our HSI
20 and our case management expectations, we're
21 identifying or we're stating that there are
22 four systems, and we're going to expect you
23 to use one of those four.

24 As you're thinking about this
25 procurement and this item, one of the other

1 things you might want to think about, and
2 it's under program activities, there are six
3 overarching community action agency goals.
4 And I just want to point those goals out to
5 you. And they are on page 12 of the
6 addendum, and they're Goals 1 through 6. So
7 as you think about this and the community
8 action agency's goals of the actual network
9 and the expectation, these are the items that
10 actually drive how the network actually does
11 services tied to that piece of it. Those
12 goals are agency goals, community goals, and
13 family goals.

14 So we wanted to just point
15 those out to you. And as you're thinking
16 about it and responding, be aware of that
17 fact, that in order to be a community action
18 agency, you're going to have to be able to
19 respond to that level of detail.

20 No questions yet?

21 STUART GOOSMAN: I have
22 another one. Sorry to bore everyone.

23 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: No.

24 No. No.

25 STUART GOOSMAN: I didn't read

1 the -- Stuart Goosman again. I didn't read
2 the -- obviously, though you probably have
3 the answer somewhere. What's your timeline
4 for planning and implementation of this
5 project?

6 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: It's
7 actually in this document. Just a minute. I
8 need to look into the actual document because
9 that is actually one of the responses to a
10 question of your ability tied to start-up
11 activities and such.

12 So in the Appendix A, which
13 you don't have a copy, and I will -- so on
14 Appendix A, page 3, tied to that piece of it,
15 under Question Number 4 under organizational
16 capacity, there is an actual business plan
17 that asks you about that timeline tied to
18 that piece of it. There is a short period of
19 time tied to that piece of it that they
20 expect certain activities to be able to
21 begin.

22 And tied to that piece of it, in
23 one of the sentences, it states that the
24 designated CAA selected through this RFQ
25 procurement process will be expected to

1 operate as the community action agency, or
2 CAA for the Greater Norwalk catchment area
3 effective July 1, 2015.

4 So there it's in this, and in this
5 question, whoever the respondent is should
6 actually be able to answer the questions:
7 What are your abilities to do that; how are
8 you going to do that; can you meet this
9 timeline? Because the Department hasn't
10 identified what they expect to happen, but
11 your response to it, and you're going to be
12 telling us how you're going to be able to do
13 that. What are you going to be able to do in
14 the short term. What are you going to be
15 able to do in the long term? And that's why
16 they say it's a business plan.

17 STUART GOOSMAN: So what do
18 you mean by "operating"? That's a lot. It's
19 a lot to do by July. So when you say
20 "operate," are you fully operational?

21 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: It
22 means that the services that the Department
23 has identified in the procurement, you're
24 going to be able to provide that.

25 STUART GOOSMAN: Beginning

1 July 2015?

2 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: So
3 that's why when the Department asks a
4 question about tied to organizational
5 capacity, and they ask about your brief
6 history in, you know, providing services to
7 low-income people, are you an entity that
8 only has the experience of providing one
9 service, or are you an entity that are able
10 to provide a lot of services?

11 The Department has defined the
12 breadth of what a community action agency
13 provides in an actual community. Do you have
14 that ability to provide that breadth? Or are
15 you going to be able to provide one service
16 and plan out how you're going to do
17 everything else? Because the community
18 action agency is about addressing that
19 self-sufficiency providing services to
20 low-income populations. What services are
21 you providing? What is the need in the
22 community? And so that's why we ask persons
23 about what's your experience in all this,
24 what's your staffing levels tied to this
25 piece of it.

1 And so it takes that time
2 under organizational capacity. We give you a
3 chance within ten pages to answer those four
4 -- no, there are about six, seven items tied
5 to that piece of it. Do you have a DUNS
6 number? So if indeed you have a DUNS number,
7 then the Department would actually know, in
8 one instance or another, either you've had
9 experience managing federal dollars tied to
10 that piece of it. And so each of these
11 questions tied to organizational capacity is
12 asking that question, do you have the
13 capacity to provide the services as we define
14 for an entity in this section, because we
15 start off with, what are your minimum
16 qualifications on the Addendum 1? And I
17 think it's in the procurement announcement.

18 There is a section under
19 minimum qualifications, but of course I'm not
20 finding it at this moment because I'm looking
21 for it. Yes. So in the actual addendum on
22 page 5 it talks about the qualifications, and
23 that's really the key. Under that section it
24 states under qualifications, "Organizations
25 eligible to apply for designation as the

1 entity serving the Greater Norwalk catchment
2 service area must currently provide services
3 to low-income persons located in the Greater
4 Norwalk catchment area or that is contiguous
5 to the catchment area."

6 It talks about the ability to
7 demonstrate physical -- fiscal programmatic
8 and information technology capacity to
9 provide services designed to eliminate the
10 causes of poverty and foster
11 self-sufficiency. It also states you have to
12 be able to be governed by a local tripartite,
13 three-part board, for a private nonprofit or
14 a local advisory for local units of
15 government. It also states that you must be
16 fiscally solvent, which means respondents'
17 currently operating capacity covers two
18 months of resources to cover expenditures due
19 to late issuance on the part of the
20 Department.

21 So those are the
22 qualifications, minimum qualifications, but
23 tied to that piece of it those elements are
24 really key about your ability to provide
25 services.

1 Can you actually -- currently
2 providing services to low-income persons
3 located in the Greater Norwalk catchment area
4 or contiguous. So are the services that
5 you're providing, are they targeted to the
6 low-income populations? What are those
7 services? So you have to be able to describe
8 and translate whatever services that you are
9 providing at your agency, how do they
10 translate into the actual questions, then,
11 under organizational capacity that the
12 Department is asking about.

13 STUART GOOSMAN: But you're
14 also looking for implementation to begin on
15 July 1st?

16 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Yes.

17 STUART GOOSMAN: Up, start and
18 just -- then we start doing it. And
19 qualifications imply that there's a past, you
20 know, past history and capability, but it
21 needs to get translated into what needs to be
22 done.

23 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: That's
24 what -- the qualifications that you are
25 currently providing. So if indeed you are

1 currently providing, it's not saying, we want
2 you to go out and create a service. We're
3 saying that you should be currently providing
4 those services.

5 STUART GOOSMAN: Okay. I get
6 it. Thank you.

7 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: You're
8 welcome.

9 Any other questions?

10 (No response.)

11 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: So
12 again, we're your captive audiences. If
13 indeed you have questions, I guess we can sit
14 here about 15?

15 DEPUTY COMM. BRENNAN: We can
16 sit here for a little while longer.

17 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: We'll
18 sit here for a little while longer, and we'll
19 evaluate at a quarter of twelve -- that's 15,
20 20 minutes, and at that time you have a
21 chance to look at the documents that we
22 provided tied to the Addendum A. Think about
23 it if indeed you have questions. We'll take
24 a short break so people can get up and chat
25 and decide if, indeed, you want to ask a

1 question or not ask a question. And we'll be
2 here.

3 MICHELLE JAMES: I'll ask a
4 question.

5 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Although
6 h we know who you are, you're going to have
7 to introduce yourself, state your agency, and
8 then write your question -- when you're done.

9 MICHELLE JAMES: I brought my
10 glasses.

11 So Michelle James, Community
12 Action Agency of Weston, Connecticut. With
13 the Governor's new budget and HSI being
14 eliminated in '16, '17, what happens to the
15 funding of the catchment area if that should
16 happen?

17 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Well,
18 that is a great question, and that was
19 actually taken into consideration with the
20 actual funding sources that are actually
21 done. So HSI, state resources were
22 eliminated in the Governor's budget. That's
23 why there's this little footnote that says,
24 dollars have to be incurred by a certain date
25 tied to these state dollars. That's what

1 that piece is.

2 HSI is also funded through
3 SSBG Tanner. It's a smaller portion of
4 money, but those resources will still exist.
5 And so that's why the budget is built in such
6 a way that it has CSSB and it has HSI. So
7 HSI state dollars will end as of -- at least
8 as proposed in the Governor's budget, and
9 we're projecting that way, and that's how we
10 wrote the actual budget -- as of 6/30/2015.
11 However HSI federal will continue, and the
12 funding will be on that.

13 MICHELLE JAMES: Thank you.

14 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: So
15 we're going to take a short break, about ten
16 minutes. You can get up, stretch her legs,
17 run to the bathroom. And I am told -- I'm
18 not sure about this, but the bathroom is out
19 the door and to the left -- left and then
20 right.

21 (Whereupon, a recess was taken
22 from 11:26 a.m. to 11:40 a.m.)

23 MS. REDDING: Excuse me.

24 We're going to get started.

25 We're just going to check

1 and see if anyone has any additional
2 questions before we wrap up, if you thought
3 of anything over the break that maybe we can
4 help out with.

5 DEPUTY COMM. BRENNAN:

6 Otherwise, I need to go back and balance the
7 budget, so make sure that HSI funding doesn't
8 get cut.

9 GARY DELVECCHIO: I have a
10 simple question for this. How much is the
11 difference between the total HSI funding?
12 About what percentage is state and what
13 percentage is federal?

14 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: That is
15 a question we'll have to --

16 DEPUTY COMM. BRENNAN: I don't
17 know. It's a good question.

18 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: We will
19 take it back and officially respond to that
20 question. Gary, you're going to have to come
21 up and write it on a card.

22 MICHELLE JAMES: And state
23 your name and who you're with. If I have to
24 do it, you have to do it too.

25 GARY DELVECCHIO: Talk to the

1 card.

2 MS. REDDING: Yes.

3 DEPUTY COMM. BRENNAN: Talk
4 to the card.

5 GARY DelVECCHIO: Yeah, just a
6 general percentage would be --

7 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: No --
8 and that is fine. It's a legitimate question
9 because it's part of the information that's
10 also identified under the funding source
11 section and taking into consideration the
12 elimination of the state HSI line item in the
13 Governors' budget.

14 GARY DelVECCHIO: All right.
15 Gary DelVecchio with the Community Action
16 Agency of Weston Connecticut. I'm just
17 asking, how much of HSI funding is federal
18 and how much is state? And if it doesn't
19 equal a hundred percent, I'd like to know
20 what the difference is.

21 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: Oh, it
22 will always equal a hundred percent.

23 GARY DelVECCHIO: We'll all
24 have complementary numbers. Right?

25 MS. NORFLEET-JOHNSON: So we

1 were taking a break to stall for time to see
2 if indeed anyone had any additional
3 questions, because if we didn't we were going
4 to wrap up the bidders conference. And if
5 indeed someone has a question, you would need
6 to come up to the podium, state your name,
7 your agency and write down your question so
8 we can provide it to the transcriber, because
9 the information is being recorded.

10 (No response.)

11 DEPUTY COMM. BRENNAN: Well,
12 we thank you all for your time and your
13 interest in this very important initiative.
14 We wish you the best of luck in preparing
15 your submissions. We encourage you to
16 participate in the webinar, which is Friday.

17 MICHELLE JAMES: What time?

18 MS. REDDING: 11:30.

19 DEPUTY COMM. BRENNAN:
20 There's still the opportunity to submit
21 written questions until -- when is that date?

22 THE HEARING OFFICER:

23 March 31st is the deadline for
24 questions.

25 DEPUTY COMM. BRENNAN: Okay.

1 And that's it. Thank you very much.

2 (Whereupon, the above
3 proceedings were adjourned at 11:44 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

1
2 I hereby certify that the foregoing 44
3 pages are a complete and accurate
4 computer-aided transcription of my original
5 verbatim notes taken of the Bidders
6 Conference In Re: COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK
7 GRANT/HUMAN SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE RFQ
8 BIDDERS CONFERENCE, which was held before
9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER KATHLEEN BRENNAN, CRYSTAL
10 REDDING, AND CASSANDRA NORFLEET-JOHNSON,
11 which was held at the Common Council
12 Chambers, Norwalk City Hall, 125 East Avenue,
13 Norwalk, on March 24, 2015.

14
15
16
17 -----
18 Robert G. Dixon, CVR-M 857

19 Notary Public

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22 Hartford, Connecticut 06114
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