

ITB 34501-11869 Questions and Comments

State Responses in red

1. What is the projected monthly employment and income verification volume?

Estimated 220,000 per month.

And How do expect volumes to change post Public Health Emergency (PHE) now considered to be December 31, 2021 at the earliest? Many states are expecting a backlog of activity around eligibility determinations and reassessments in 2022.

As expected, volume in 2020 was much higher than 2019. March and April of 2020 are our highest volume months where we did have a backlog of applications. Since September of 2020, applications have leveled. What we are steadily seeing now is a 26% increase to the same month the previous year. For example, the November 2020 number of applications is approximately 26% higher than November 2019. Our renewals are stable and did not see a high increase as many of the people that applied were not eligible and caseloads did not increase.

Tennessee did not participate in some of the available waivers offered by FNS. We did not want a backlog and tried to complete work, especially our renewals, at their assigned timeframe. This would mean that our number of inquiries will probably not peak after the pandemic. Applications may increase in July 2021 as the additional \$300 weekly unemployment will end.

2. Under the Income Data Specifications document section A.2, the contract details the state programs and offices expected to have access to the database. Will all listed agencies under A.2 have the ability to submit verification requests or will they simply review what has been previously requested? Only approved designated users will be granted permission to request the employment and wage verification. but DHS may have designated users in any of these divisions listed in A.2. of the Specifications.

3. Will there be unique reporting requirements for these highly varied agencies?

In order to monitor accessibility and to continually assess the effectiveness of the services, Contractor shall provide the State with monthly usage reports for each program office during the term of this Contract at such times and in such form and substance as the State may direct in writing.

- a. At a minimum, usage reports shall contain the following data elements:

- i. specific program;
- ii. user name and user ID number;
- iii. user county (including district, if applicable);
- iv. number of submissions (number of Social Security Account Numbers ("SSANs") submitted);
- v. number of "hits" (database search which successfully returns data - number of employers associated with the Specific SSAN submitted);
- vi. number of transactions or "billable hits" selection of successfully returns data; and

- vii. usage types, including specific program areas such as Appeals: Child Support, SNAP, TANF, SNAP and TANF, TANF; Child Care Certificate: SNAP, TANF, SNAP and TANF, Child support only, Investigations-Child Support, SNAP, TANF, SNAP and TANF; Quality Improvement and Strategic Solutions (QISS) SNAP, TANF, SNAP and TANF; SNAP only; State Office: Child Support, SNAP, TANF, SNAP and TANF, TANF; TANF Only; and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Only.
4. Can you provide the total number of anticipated Income and Employment verification requests for a 1 year period? **DHS estimates a volume of 220,000 transactions per month**
 5. Can you describe your preferred method of ascertaining the employer benefit information for an applicant? **Web-based solution**
 6. In your current process, what is the average number of employers returned and billed for each successful transaction(or hit)? **This can't be determined. Each lookup could have a different total of employers returned during any search request.**
 7. In your current process, what is the average number of employers associated with each person being verified for the period of time required? **This can't be determined. Each lookup could have a different total of employers.**
 8. In your current process, how many years of income and employment data is returned and billed? **(response is from the current contract) Verification may include: the consumer's employer address, employment dates, where available, position title, medical and dental coverage information, where available, pay rate, up to three (3) years of YTD gross income details, and up to three (3) years of pay period detail.**
 9. Do you need data beyond 36 months when it is available? **The Contractor shall be able to retrieve historical employment verification records and shall provide history for up to thirty-six (36) months per employer. Employment history will be available for any period of time. The Contractor shall maintain employment records for an employer for the life of the Contract. Yes, when available data beyond 36 months should be provided to the State.**
 10. In reference to **Section 3.2 of Income_and_Wage_Verification_TCs_DHS_05.10.21** document, the State clarifies that "The State shall have the right to require evidence of the respondent's ability to perform the services or deliver the goods required pursuant to the terms and conditions of this ITB." Some respondents will state they will meet or exceed a requirement without evidence. Will the State accept a response of meets or exceeds, or any combination, without verifiable evidence?
No, the State may request evidence of the respondents ability to perform the services or deliver the goods required pursuant to the Terms and Conditions of this ITB, such as: a procedures manual on services, instructions in operation and maneuverability through the interface provided by the contractor, instructions relating to the request and viewing of responses, and a demonstration of the portal and reports from respondent to this ITB via Section 3.2. of the Terms and Conditions.
 - a. The State has not requested references and/or demonstrations to validate a vendor's ability to perform the specified services. Will the state request references from states in production today with income and employment verifications solutions?
Yes
 - b. Will the State request demonstrations of the requirements?
Yes

- c. Is the State seeking to have all capabilities production ready and implemented on day 1, requiring no additional development?

We need to be live on 7/1/2021 at 8:00 AM EST

- 11. In reference to **Section A.2.a of the Income_Verification_Specifications** document, one of the programs requiring access includes Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). As such, does the State require a solution that delivers income and employment data provided by employers and payroll providers and **not** sources that derive income from state-based wages, NDNH or modeled income, many of which are available at no cost to the state today?

The State requires the successful respondent to maintain a database and system to deliver timely and accurate income and employment verifications. The successful respondent is responsible for its own compliance with all applicable laws in the performance of the contract.

- 12. In reference to **Section A.2.b of the Income_Verification_Specifications** document, the State requires an accessible database for the variety of offices identified. Does the State require the prime contractor to maintain an FCRA compliant database and system to deliver real-time income and employment verifications?

The State requires the successful respondent to maintain a database and system to deliver timely and accurate income and employment verifications. The successful respondent is responsible for its own compliance with all applicable laws in the performance of the contract.

- 13. In reference to **Section A.3.a of the Income_Verification_Specifications** document, the State specifies that “The Contractor shall deliver the requested data immediately.” Integrators or data aggregators leverage partners who perform their verifications manually using a “hybrid approach”. Will the State please confirm that Contractors shall provide real-time, instant verifications for each request, rather than seeking records that are delivered hours or days after the request has been made?

The Contractor shall provide automated services to request employment (web-based solution). The Contractor shall provide the option to use the social security number or employer number to verify employment. The Contractor shall provide up to date, easy to read income verification data with real time access to the State. The Contractor shall deliver the requested data immediately.

- 14. In reference to **Section A.3.b of the Income_Verification_Specifications** document, the State requires that “The Contractor shall provide a platform regulated by the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA); therefore, is required by Federal law to have procedures in place to address accuracy issues for the employment verification information provided as a result of Internet verification.” Does the State require the **prime contractor** delivering the platform to be FCRA compliant prior to award?

Respondents are responsible for compliance with applicable law throughout the response and contract award process. The Contractor must have procedures in place to address accuracy issues for the employment verification information provided as a result of internet verification.