STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS # 35910-14666
AMENDMENT # 9
FOR BRIGHT FUTURES

DATE: OCTOBER 19, 2026

RFQ # 35910-14666 IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **This RFQ Schedule of Events updates and confirms scheduled RFQ dates.** Any event, time, or date containing revised or new text is highlighted.

EVENT	TIME (central time zone)	DATE
1. RFQ Issued		SEPTEMBER 1, 2026
2. Disability Accommodation Request Deadline	2:00 p.m.	SEPTEMBER 4, 2026
3. Notice of Intent to Respond Deadline	2:00 p.m.	SEPTEMBER 8, 2026
4. Written "Questions & Comments" Deadline	2:00 p.m.	SEPTEMBER 14, 2026
5. State Response to Written "Questions & Comments"		OCTOBER 19, 2026
6. Response Deadline	2:00 p.m.	OCTOBER 26, 2026
7. State Completion of Technical Response Evaluations		NOVEMBER 2, 2026
8. State Notice of Intent to Award Released and RFQ Files Opened for Public Inspection	2:00 p.m.	NOVEMBER 3, 2026
9. End of Protest Period		NOVEMBER 10, 2026
10. State sends contract to Contractor for signature		NOVEMBER 12, 2026
11. Contractor Signature Deadline	2:00 p.m.	NOVEMBER 13, 2026

2. **State responses to questions and comments in the table below amend and clarify this RFQ.**

   Any restatement of RFQ text in the Question/Comment column shall NOT be construed as a change in the actual wording of the RFQ document.

RFQ SECTION	PAGE #	QUESTION / COMMENT	STATE RESPONSE
		1. Primary clinical/claims SaaS platforms rely on globally distributed infrastructure and, in many cases, offshore development/support staff for code maintenance. Does the onshore-only requirement (data, administration, and code testing) apply to the Contractor's direct environment only, or does it flow down to every SaaS subcontractor's infrastructure and support model?	The onshore requirement applies to State Data and the environments, administrative functions, support activities, and code-testing activities used to perform the Contract. It also applies to approved subcontractors and subservice organizations to the extent they access, process, store, transmit, support, or otherwise handle State Data or the Contractor's Processing Environment used for the State service. The Contractor remains responsible for ensuring that subcontractors comply with applicable Contract requirements. Use of a subcontractor does not relieve the Contractor of its obligations to the State. Any proposed offshore access, processing, storage, support, administration, development, testing, or backup arrangement must be reviewed and approved in writing by the State before implementation.
		2. Are State-Controlled encryption keys required for all SaaS applications? Primary clinical/claims applications are cloud-based and cannot meet this requirement.	The RFQ does not require State-controlled encryption keys for every SaaS application unless otherwise required by applicable law, regulation, data classification, or an express Contract provision.
		3. For subcontractors/subservice organizations, will the State accept the SOC 2 "carve-out method" (subcontractor controls excluded from the Contractor's report and separately relied upon via the subcontractor's own attestation or a bridge letter), or is the "inclusive method" (subcontractor controls tested directly as part of the Contractor's examination) required?	The State will not accept a SOC 2 “carve-out method” and seeks what the respondent is describing as an “inclusive method.: for clarity, Subcontractors that access, process, store, transmit, support, or host State Data or the Contract Processing Environment must comply with the security and privacy requirements applicable to the services they perform.

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		4. Given that a SOC 2 Type II (or similar Type II) examination requires an observation period before a report can be issued, what is the State's expectation for timing of the first examination relative to the Contract's Effective Date? Is a defined ramp-up period contemplated?	The Contractor must satisfy the assurance requirement identified in RFQ § D.37.a.(3) by the Contract's Effective Date unless the State approves a written transition period. If a Type II report is not yet available for a newly implemented service, the Contractor must provide equivalent current assurance evidence, identify the examination start and end dates, provide a written gap-remediation plan, and obtain State approval for the interim arrangement. A transition period does not waive the underlying security requirement.
		5. A SOC 2 Type II report is issued months after its observation period ends, meaning the "most current" report is, by definition, already for a lapsed period. Is a defined grace window between examination periods acceptable, and if so, how long?	A reasonable reporting lag may be accepted because SOC 2 Type II reports are issued after the examination period ends. The Contractor must maintain continuous assurance coverage and provide the most current available report, together with a bridge letter or other current-period evidence when appropriate. The State may determine whether the period between reports is acceptable based on the age of the report, the services covered, material changes, incidents, deficiencies, and the existence of current compensating evidence. No fixed grace period should be stated without STS Security approval.
		6. Are Subcontractors required to meet an identical set of cybersecurity requirements? What provisions are available for SaaS vendors which do not maintain this level of compliance with the Contractor?	Please refer to Question 3.
		7. Can the executive summary/abbreviated version of the SOC II Type 2 be provided for compliance with this section? This exposes the vendor to potential risk	No.

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		should the report contain unpatched vulnerabilities.	
		8. If the SOC 2 Type II examination results in a qualified, adverse, or disclaimed opinion, does that constitute a breach of contract or grounds for termination, or is a cure period provided for remediation before the State takes action?	No.
		9. What requirements are set forth for state-mandated penetration/vulnerability assessments? Notification, timing, scope, access requirements, etc.	RFQ § D.37.a.(5) requires annual penetration testing and vulnerability assessments of the Processing Environment consistent with NIST SP 800-115. The Contractor must provide: • The testing date and scope; • The systems, applications, interfaces, and environments tested; • Testing methodology and independence of the tester; • High- and critical-risk findings; • Remediation status and planned completion dates; • Any accepted residual risk; and • A written attestation that testing was completed and findings were evaluated and addressed. Testing must be coordinated with the State to avoid service disruption. The State retains the right to perform or commission testing of the Processing Environment at its option. Testing evidence must be provided through an STS-approved secure method.
		10. If a breach originates within a SaaS subcontractor's environment, does the 24-hour notification clock start when the Contractor is actually notified by the subcontractor, or when the incident is later determined to have occurred?	No.

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		11. What requirements are set forth for state-mandated data reproduction of State Data? Notification, timing, scope, format requirements, etc.	Under RFQ § D.37.a.(7), upon State request the Contractor must provide a copy of all State Data it holds on media and in a format determined by the State.
		12. For SaaS applications where the Contractor does not directly control underlying storage media, how will NIST 800-88-compliant destruction be demonstrated at contract termination when that capability resides with the subcontractor?	The Contractor remains responsible for ensuring that the Contractor and all approved subcontractors destroy State Data, including copies and backups, in accordance with the current version of NIST SP 800-88 when required by the Contract and approved transition plan. Where the Contractor does not directly control storage media, it must obtain and provide evidence from the responsible SaaS or cloud provider demonstrating compliant sanitization or destruction. Evidence may include a certificate of destruction, media-sanitization record, provider attestation, documented cryptographic-erasure method, or equivalent evidence acceptable to STS Security. The Contractor must provide written confirmation to the State within ten business days after destruction, as required by RFQ § D.37.a.(8).
		13. The MARS-E standard was deprecated on March 4, 2026, and superseded by the ARC-AMPE framework. What compliance expectations are necessary for this section?	Please refer to Amendment Item 4 below.
		14. MARS-E and ARC-AMPE were both built for ACA health insurance exchanges and Medicaid systems. Please confirm applicability of either framework to this Contract's scope of services, which is not an insurance exchange or Medicaid eligibility system.	Please refer to Amendment Item 4 below.
		15. Are NIST SP 800-53 requirements applied outside of the chosen	Yes. The selected certification, authorization, examination, or assessment under RFQ §

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		framework selected by the vendor in D.37.a.(3)?	D.37.a.(3) does not replace the Contract's independent security requirements.
		16. What requirements are set forth for state-mandated implementation review under this section? Notification, timing, scope, requirements, etc.	The implementation review should be scheduled with the Contractor after award and before production use, and thereafter as reasonably requested by the State. At a minimum, the review should address: • System and Processing Environment scope; • State Data flows and data classification; • Hosting locations and subcontractors; • Access control and privileged access; • Encryption and key management; • Logging and monitoring; • Vulnerability and penetration-testing status; • Incident response and notification procedures; • Backup, recovery, RPO, and RTO capabilities; • Data return and destruction; and • Open risks, exceptions, and corrective actions. The Contractor must provide requested documentation, knowledgeable personnel, and reasonable cooperation. The State may establish the meeting date, agenda, attendees, and evidence requirements.
		17. What requirements are set forth for state-mandated annual review meeting? Notification, timing, scope, access requirements, etc.	The annual review meeting required by RFQ § D.37.b.(1) should be conducted at least annually or as otherwise agreed by the State. The Contractor must provide current security and privacy documentation reasonably requested by the State, including

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			updated system descriptions, assurance reports, corrective action plans, penetration-test attestations, vulnerability summaries, incident history, subcontractor changes, disaster-recovery test results, and material changes to the Processing Environment. The State may conduct the meeting remotely or onsite, subject to reasonable coordination and protection of confidential information. The Contractor must make appropriate personnel available and address identified risks and corrective actions.
		18. How should this requirement be satisfied for remote/non-hosted SaaS applications?	The requirements apply based on the Contractor's and subcontractors' access to State Data and the functions performed, not solely on whether the Contractor operates physical infrastructure. For a remote or non-hosted SaaS application, the Contractor must identify: • The application and service boundary; • The hosting provider and subcontractors; • Where State Data is stored and processed; • Administrative and support access locations; • Security responsibilities allocated to each party; • Applicable assurance reports; • Vulnerability and penetration-testing coverage; • Backup and recovery capabilities; and • Data return and destruction procedures. Where a requirement cannot be performed directly by the Contractor, the Contractor must obtain equivalent evidence from the

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			responsible service provider and remain accountable for the Contract obligation.
		19. For fully-hosted SaaS applications, the Contractor has no visibility into or control over the vendor's underlying middleware/database versioning. Is this provision inapplicable to fully-hosted SaaS, or what evidence would satisfy it?	RFQ § D.37.b.(3) applies to middleware and database software supporting the Application, including fully hosted SaaS where those components are operated by the SaaS provider or another subcontractor. The Contractor may satisfy the requirement through documented evidence from the responsible hosting or SaaS provider, such as a current system-security description, vulnerability-management policy, supported-version statement, patch-management records, SOC 2 or FedRAMP evidence, and corrective-action documentation. The Contractor remains responsible for ensuring that unsupported or vulnerable versions do not introduce unacceptable risk into the Processing Environment.
		20. No physical devices are deployed for this implementation; however, SaaS vendors may replace drives with State Data at will. How will this requirement be satisfied for these applications?	The requirement applies whenever physical or virtual storage media containing State Data is replaced, retired, or otherwise removed from service. For fully hosted SaaS, the Contractor must obtain evidence from the hosting provider that media containing State Data is sanitized or destroyed in accordance with NIST SP 800-88. Acceptable evidence may include a provider attestation, certificate of destruction, documented cryptographic erasure, or equivalent independent assurance. The absence of State-owned physical devices does not eliminate the Contractor's responsibility for media sanitization by its subcontractors.

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		21. SaaS vendors maintain RTO/RPO independently of the Contractor's controls. How will this section be satisfied if the Contractor does not have control of these metrics? Is there flexibility in these timelines?	The Contractor must partner with a Subcontractor that is able to meet the RTO/RPO requirements of the Pro Forma Contract. Any inability to meet the specified RPO or RTO must be disclosed before award or implementation. Should the prospective awardee be unable to meet the contract requirements, the State may consider them non-responsive and reject the response. There is no flexibility in these timelines.
		22. If the Contractor selects an alternate to NIST SP 800-53, can Disaster Recovery Planning be provided which adheres to the selected standard?	No.
		23. For SaaS applications, the Contractor cannot directly execute a failover/restoration test — that capability resides with the SaaS vendor. Will a vendor-provided DR test attestation or report satisfy the annual testing and reporting requirement in lieu of a Contractor-executed test?	Yes, a vendor-provided disaster-recovery test report or attestation may satisfy the evidence requirement when the SaaS provider controls the underlying failover and restoration capability, provided the evidence is sufficiently detailed and covers the State service.
		24. If the Contractor selects an alternate to NIST SP 800-53, will adherence to privacy and security controls for that framework be validated instead?	No. Selecting an alternate assurance framework under RFQ § D.37.a.(3) does not replace the Contract's mandatory NIST SP 800-53 requirements unless the State expressly approves the substitution in writing.
		25. Please reconcile the service volume figures the Department has provided, and identify the denominator each one represents. Attachment G, section A.3 states a targeted average of 1,800 young people on any given day. RFQ section 1.1 states approximately 2,700 young adults annually. Exhibit 1 gives a County total of 1,324, which	The anticipated service volume is 1,800 average young people per day and approximately 2,700 young people annually.

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		Amendment 2, question 6 states covers a full fiscal year. Amendment 2, question 7 reports 755 young people referred for case management across twelve months. Amendment 2 also provides regional average monthly caseloads totaling approximately 892. The Department has separately reported approximately 1,100 unduplicated young adults served in FY 2024-25.	
		26. Please state the expected active transfer census on the first day of the Contract, broken out by region, and the census the Department expects at the close of the sixty day transfer window and at the end of the first Contract year. Respondents cannot size a workforce against a caseload cap of twenty without this figure, and a Respondent who sizes against the wrong one will either breach the cap or carry staff the Program does not need.	The expected active transfer census on the first day is 1,110 young adults. • Northeast - 161 • East - 181 • TN Valley - 163 • Mid-State - 263 • Mid-West - 174 • West - 168 The expected census at the close of the sixty-day transfer window is 1,207. • Northeast - 173 • East - 191 • TN Valley - 177 • Mid-State - 293 • Mid-West - 183 • West - 190 The expected census at the end of the first contract year is 1,552 • Northeast - 231 • East - 235 • TN Valley - 210 • Mid-State - 351 • Mid-West - 249 • West - 276
		27. Please identify the services and populations, if any, that will remain under the current LifeSet contract after the anticipated Bright Futures award, and explain how the Department will prevent duplicate assignment, duplicate documentation and duplicate billing	LifeSet and Bright Futures are different services. Young adults that are active in the LifeSet program would continue those services as needed.

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		during any period in which the two contracts overlap.	
		28. Attachment F, question 17 states that the $26.00 rate is paid based on a monthly face to face contact being conducted and documented in the Department's electronic system. Please state the effect on payment when that contact does not occur in a given month. Specifically, is the full month of client-days denied, are client-days denied from a particular date, or is payment not reduced. Please also confirm whether client-days are compensable for a young adult who is enrolled but whose case has not yet transferred to the Contractor during the sixty day transfer window.	Payments generate based on a face to face entry being conducted during the full calendar month and documented in the state's electronic record system. Any clients that are enrolled in the program that a face to face visit occurs during the calendar month and within the date range of an active contract will be compensated.
		29. Attachment G, section A.5.d states anticipated Program outcomes at twelve months after discharge. Please confirm whether these are contractual performance standards tied to payment or remedies, or Program goals used for monitoring. Please also state where responsibility and compensation sit for the post-discharge survey activity required at A.5.b and A.5.c, which concerns young adults who are no longer receiving services and for whom no client-day is billable.	Payments generate based solely on a face to face contact during the calendar month. Payments are not generated for a clients after they exit the program. The purpose of the post-discharge survey is to determine the effectiveness of the contracted services.
		30. The Pro Forma Contract at Attachment G leaves the Effective Date blank and sets the Term to end June 30, 2029. The Schedule of Events sets the Contractor signature deadline at October 16, 2026. Please state the Effective Date and the service start date the Department anticipates. Respondents must complete recruiting, Tennessee Bureau of Investigation fingerprint checks, vulnerable persons registry reviews and pre-service training before the transfer window opens, and none of that can be scheduled against a blank date.	The effective date of the contract will be noted on the final agreement, subject to the timeline detailed in item #1 and any subsequent amendments. All other deadlines will be determined following contract award.

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		31. RFQ section 5.5 states that the Attachment B evaluation category carries a maximum of 50 points. Attachment B itself states that the maximum possible score for all Section B items is 10. Please provide the scoring scale and the formula evaluators will apply to Attachment B.	Scoring in Section B is a lump sum score. You may refer to the document and note that a formula is not detailed.
		32. RFQ section 5.2 provides that a Respondent is within the Competitive Range on achieving a raw weighted score above 60 in Section C. Attachment C computes the Section C score as the Total Raw Weighted Score divided by the Maximum Possible Raw Weighted Score, which it defines as five times the sum of the item weights, multiplied by 50. The item weights in Attachment C sum to 100, giving a Maximum Possible Raw Weighted Score of 500. Please confirm that the threshold of 60 in section 5.2 refers to the Total Raw Weighted Score against that maximum of 500, and not to the scaled 50 point section score.	The threshold of 60 in Section 5.2 refers to the raw weighted score, not the scaled 50-point section score. Respondents must achieve a raw weighted score above 60 in Section C to be considered within the competitive range.
		33. RFQ section 5.3 directs the reader to RFQ Attachment D, Cost Proposal. Attachment D in Release 2 is the Statement of Certifications and Assurances, and Attachment F, question 20 confirms that cost proposals are not required for this solicitation. Please confirm that section 5.3 does not apply to this procurement.	Cost is not included in this solicitation.
		34. Attachment E instructs Respondents to add the Respondent's name to the standard reference questionnaire at RFQ Attachment E, and in the preceding paragraph states that the standard reference questionnaire is provided at RFQ Attachment F. Attachment F in Release 2 is the questions and answers exhibit. Please confirm which document is the reference questionnaire Respondents are to use.	Please refer to Amendment Item #3 below.

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		35. Must Respondents reproduce the Attachment A, B and C evaluation guide tables and enter response page numbers in the spaces provided, or may a Respondent use an equivalent indexed format that preserves every item reference and page number.	Respondents are to ensure that their responses are formatted in a way that evaluators are able to review their submissions without issue or error.
		36. Please confirm the preferred file format for the Technical Response, any accessibility requirement that applies to it, and any attachment size limit that applies to electronic submission.	Respondents shall utilize the file type and response delivery options as detailed in the RFQ document.
		37. Attachment A, item A.4 requires two current positive credit references written in the form of standard business letters, signed and dated within the past three months. Please confirm the signature types the State will accept, including whether an electronic signature is acceptable, and state the content the State expects a compliant letter to contain.	Electronic signatures are acceptable. Respondents are to use their best judgement to ensure the references they receive are sufficient.
		38. For Attachment A, items A.5 and A.6, please define the evidence the State will accept as an official document or letter from an accredited credit bureau indicating a positive credit rating, and as a financial statement of access to sixty days of operating capital.	Vendors shall provide as proof of financial stability: (a) an official credit report or rating certificate from an accredited business credit bureau demonstrating a positive commercial credit rating and favorable financial standing; and (b) official financial statements, bank statements, or a verified banking letter demonstrating continuous access to liquid assets or operating capital sufficient to cover sixty (60) days of operations.
		39. Attachment A, item A.7 requires Council on Accreditation, Joint Commission or CARF accreditation from a nationally known accrediting body. Please confirm whether accreditation held by a wholly owned affiliate of the Respondent satisfies this item where that affiliate will perform work under the Contract, and whether the State will consider an equivalent national accreditation held by the Respondent.	The contracted provider and any affiliate delivering services must be accredited.

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		40. Attachment A, item A.11 requires one of the requirements outlined in Contract section D.37.a.(3). Please confirm whether that certification, authorization or examination may be held by a wholly owned affiliate that operates the Respondent's information environment, and identify the evidence the State requires with the response and again at the Effective Date.	The contracted provider and any affiliate delivering services must have completed the identified certification, authorization or examination and provide proof of active and/or non expired credential.
		41. Attachment E permits a reference to email the completed questionnaire directly to the Solicitation Coordinator. Please state how a Respondent confirms that the State received a questionnaire submitted by that route, and confirm whether a response is deemed nonresponsive if fewer than five completed questionnaires reach the State by the Response Deadline through no act or omission of the Respondent.	The respondent may email the solicitation coordinator and request confirmation that references have been received.
		42. Please confirm that the answers at Attachment F are binding for Release 2, including the maximum caseload of twenty cases per case manager, the transfer of existing cases within the first sixty days, the monthly face to face contact as the payment condition, the single statewide award, and the eligibility of completed contracts as references.	The responses to the previously submitted questions and comments are binding.
		43. Please confirm whether the March 2026 DCS Contract Provider Manual applies to this Contract in addition to the RFQ, including the maximum ratio of five case managers per supervisor, eighty hours of instructional training, eighty hours of supervised field or on the job training before independent caseload assignment, forty annual training hours, reassignment of cases within one business day, and monthly summaries due by the fifteenth. Please also confirm whether the caseload limits the Department applies to its own newly hired Case Managers under DCS Policy 31.7, being no more than five cases through the twenty-fourth week and no	All requirements of the DCS Contract Provider Manual and DCS Policy 31.7 apply to this contract.

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		more than ten for the remainder of the first year, apply to Contractor staff.	
		44. The RFQ directs the Contractor to enter specified information in the State Electronic Records System. Department guidance describes a change to that system, after which case management providers document in their own electronic record and submit monthly information through a provider interface or an approved file process. Please identify the controlling workflow after that change takes effect and provide the interface data dictionary, file specifications, testing process, access schedule, training requirements and error resolution standard that will apply to the selected Contractor.	The Contractor for the Bright Futures case management will enter their documentation directly into the State's Electronic Records System.
		45. If the first sixty days of the Contract overlap the information system change or required Departmental training, please state whether the Department will authorize phased credentials, supervised or dual assigned case acceptance, parallel documentation, or another transition control, so that every case can be accepted without any case being left unassigned.	All Bright Futures cases are expected to be converted to the new information system at the start time of the new system. The expected start date of the new system is October 19 which would be prior to the contract start date according to the current timeline.
		46. Will the State allow the previously submitted reference questionnaires for RFQ #35910-14666 Bright Futures to meet the reference requirements for RFQ #35910-14666 Bright Futures – Release #2? Or do reference questionnaires need to be resubmitted to meet the reference questionnaire requirements for RFQ #35910-14666 Bright Futures – Release 2?	References submitted with RFQ 35910-14666 Release #1 will be accepted for Release #2.

3. Delete RFQ section 3.3.4. in its entirety and insert the following in its place (any sentence or paragraph containing revised or new text is highlighted)**:**

3.3.4. E-mail Submission

3.3.4.1. Technical Response
The Technical Response document should be in the form of one (1) digital document in "PDF" format or other easily accessible digital format attached to an e-mail to the

Solicitation Coordinator. Both the subject and file name should be clearly identified as follows:

"RFQ #35910-14666 TECHNICAL RESPONSE"

The customer references should be delivered by each reference in accordance with RFQ Attachment E. Reference Questionnaire.

4. **Delete RFQ 35910-14666 Attachment F- Pro Forma section D.37.a.9. in its entirety and insert the following in its place** (any sentence or paragraph containing revised or new text is highlighted)**:**

   (9) The Contractor shall meet requirements of current version of Minimum Acceptable Risk Standards for Exchanges (ARC-AMPE) controls.

5. **Delete RFQ 35910-14666 Attachment F- Pro Forma section D.37.a.(2). in its entirety and insert the following in its place** (any sentence or paragraph containing revised or new text is highlighted)**:** The Contractor shall encrypt State Data at rest and in transit using the current version of Federal Information Processing Standard ("FIPS") 140-3 (or current applicable version) validated encryption technologies. The Contractor shall implement encryption, cryptographic key management, and related controls consistent with applicable NIST guidance, including NIST Special Publication 800-57 for key management. The Contractor shall provide installation and maintenance support at no cost to the State.

6. **Add the following as RFQ 35910-14666 - Attachment F - Pro Forma section A.4.z. and renumber any subsequent sections as necessary:**

   z. Contractors requiring unlimited access licenses to the DCS Electronic Record Submission portal will be responsible for reimbursing DCS on a per user/per month basis.

      1. The contractor shall remit a standalone monthly payment to the State, calculated per user, for access to the DCS Electronic Record submission portal. The payment frequency shall be monthly, and the rate per user may be adjusted annually.

7. **RFQ Amendment Effective Date.** The revisions set forth herein shall be effective upon release. All other terms and conditions of this RFQ not expressly amended herein shall remain in full force and effect.