

**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

REQUEST FOR GRANT PROPOSALS

FOR

ADMINISTRATION OF THE HEALTHY SMILES LOAN REPAYMENT INITIATIVE

RFGP Number: 34301-39224

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REQUEST FOR GRANT PROPOSAL

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

I. STATEMENT OF INTENT AND DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES REQUESTED:

The Tennessee Department of Health hereinafter referred to as "State" or "Department" is soliciting grant proposals for the administration of the Healthy Smiles Loan Repayment Program for dental professionals serving in rural Tennessee counties as further described below. The purpose of this Request for Grant Proposal (RFGP) is to define the State's minimum requirements, solicit grant proposals and gain adequate information from which the State can evaluate the services you propose to provide.

The State intends to award **ONE (1)** grant for a period of **Seven (7)** months with an expected effective period from **December 1, 2023** to **June 30, 2024** and with a maximum grant amount of **\$1,500,000.00**.

A. Detailed Description of Services Requested:

Dental students finish training with an average of \$300,000 in debt. Without assistance in repaying extensive loans, graduates are frequently unable to even consider working in underserved areas because of lower income potential. Similar to federal and state programs which provide education loan repayment for providers working in underserved areas, we propose that the State of Tennessee substantially relieve student debt for dental providers who work in health department dental clinics or safety net clinics. Preference will be given to in-state graduates. Both Tennessee dental schools are committed to providing clinical support for newly placed dentists as needed and collaborating with the Department of Health to identify underserved areas and establish mentoring relationships with other practitioners and specialists in those regions.

This Healthy Smiles Initiative intends to provide educational loan repayment for dental providers using the following payment approach: Dentists (\$100,000/year for three years); Hygienists (\$25,000/year for two years); and Assistants (\$10,000/year for two years) with a budget of \$1 million per year. The loan repayment would be immediately offered to address vacancies in health department dental clinics and then would be expanded to other safety net dental clinics. The dental professionals receiving loan repayment would provide care in areas of high need and support training of additional dental students.

The purpose of this Request for Grant Proposal (RFGP) is to identify and hire a person or entity to set up and manage the Healthy Smiles loan repayment program through the duration of its life cycle. This person or entity will be responsible for managing the program's application process, selection of awardees, payment of loan reimbursements, and any necessary reporting, all in conjunction with counterparts at Tennessee Department of Health.

II. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS:

This Request for Grant Proposal (RFGP) is issued by the State of Tennessee, Department of Health. The Competitive Procurement Coordinator shall be the sole point of contact for this RFGP. All correspondence **must** be sent to:

Melissa Painter
 Competitive Procurement Coordinator
 Service Procurement Program
 Division of Administrative Services
 Andrew Johnson Tower, 5th Floor
 710 James Robertson Parkway
 Nashville, TN 37243
 Phone: (615) 741-0285
 Fax: (615) 741-3840
 Email: Competitive.Health@tn.gov

A. Schedule of Events:

The following is an anticipated timetable for the procurement process. The State reserves the right to adjust the schedule as it deems necessary.

EVENT	TIME (central time zone)	DATE (all dates are state business days)
1. RFGP Issued		October 27, 2023
2. Pre-Proposal Tele-Conference	11:00 a.m.	October 31, 2023
3. Notice of Intent to Propose Deadline	2:00 p.m.	November 1, 2023
4. Written "Questions & Comments" Deadline	2:00 p.m.	November 2, 2023
5. State Response to Written "Questions & Comments"		November 6, 2023
6. Proposal Deadline	2:00 p.m.	November 13, 2023
7. State Completion of Organizational & Technical Grant Proposal Evaluations	2:00 p.m.	November 17, 2023

8. State Scoring of Grant Budgets	3:00 p.m.	November 17, 2023
9. Evaluation Notice Released		November 20, 2023
10. Contractor Contract Signature Deadline		November 22, 2023
11. Effective Start Date of Contract		December 1, 2023

A Pre-Proposal Tele-Conference will be held at the time and date detailed in the Schedule of Events. Any proposer desiring to submit a proposal as a prime grantee contractor in response to this RFGP is encouraged to have at least one (1) representative at the tele-conference, however attendance is not mandatory. The tele-conference information is as follows:

Meeting Name: RFGP #34301-39224
 Meeting number (access code): 2319 021 5509
 Meeting password: uqEpPyAV345
 Meeting Link:
<https://tn.webex.com/tn/j.php?MTID=m6c8f9322c05a5a327c61ba10b216d8a6>
 Join by phone: +1-415-655-0001

The purpose of the proposers' tele-conference is to discuss the RFGP scope of services. The State shall entertain questions, however potential proposers must understand the State's response to any question at the Pre-Proposal Tele-conference shall be tentative and non-binding. Potential proposers should submit questions concerning the RFGP in writing pursuant to Part II, Section C.

Potential proposers with a disability may receive accommodation relating to the communication of this RFGP and participating in the RFGP process. Potential proposers may contact the Competitive Procurement Coordinator in Section II to request such reasonable accommodation.

B. Notice of Intent to Propose:

Before the Notice of Intent to Propose Deadline detailed in the RFGP Section II, Part A, Schedule of Events, potential proposers should submit to the Competitive Procurement Coordinator a Notice of Intent to Propose (in the form of a simple e-mail or other written communication). Such notice should include the following information:

- The business or individual's name (as appropriate);
- A contact person's name and title; and
- The contact person's mailing address, telephone number, facsimile number, and e-mail address.

A Notice of Intent to Propose creates no obligation and is not a prerequisite for making a proposal; however, it is necessary to ensure receipt of any RFGP amendments or other notices and communications relating to this RFGP.

C. Questions and Answers:

Questions concerning the RFGP must be presented to the Competitive Procurement Coordinator, in writing, on or before the Deadline for Written Questions and Comments as detailed in Section II, Part A Schedule of Events. Each question should specify the RFGP sections to which questions pertain. Questions should be emailed to the Competitive Procurement Coordinator at the address shown in Section II of this RFGP.

The State's written responses to written questions shall be considered official. Written responses shall be emailed to potential proposers as indicated in Section II, Part B and on the date indicated in Section II, Part A Schedule of Events. Responses shall also be available at the following website <http://tn.gov/health/article/funding-opportunities>. The responses shall be included in the RFGP thereby as an amendment.

D. Submission of Proposals:

The proposer must submit a proposal by online submission via the following link no later than the deadline specified in Section II, Part A Schedule of Events in the form and detail specified in this RFGP. Please contact the Competitive Procurement Coordinator at the address as specified in Section II with any issues or concerns with online submission.

Web Link: <https://www.tn.gov/health/funding-opportunities.html>

It is the sole responsibility of the proposer to ensure that its proposal is delivered at the date and time specified in this RFGP in Section II, Part A Schedule of Events. A late proposal shall not be accepted for review and evaluation by the State.

The proposal filing deadline is important. If proposals are submitted late, they are deemed to be late. The clock-in time shall be determined by the time of the online submission. No other clock or watch shall have any bearing on the time of proposal submission. Proposers are advised to avoid waiting until the last minute to submit proposals.

Each Proposer shall assume the risk of the method of dispatching any communication or proposal to the State. The State assumes no responsibility for delays or delivery failures resulting from the method of dispatch.

E. Proposal Amendment and Rules for Withdrawal:

A proposal may be withdrawn prior to the proposal due date by submitting a written request for its withdrawal to the State, signed by the proposer and mailed to the Competitive Procurement Coordinator shown in Section II.

The State shall not accept any amendments, revisions, or alterations to proposals after the proposal due date, unless formally requested in writing by the State prior to that time.

Any submitted proposal shall remain a valid proposal for six 6 months after the proposal due date.

F. Acceptance of Proposals:

All proposals properly submitted shall be accepted for evaluation. However, the State reserves the right to request clarifications or corrections to proposals, reject any or all proposals received, cancel or withdraw this RFGP, according to the best interests of the State.

Requests for clarifications or corrections by the State may be in writing or may be oral. Requests for clarifications or corrections by the State shall not allow the proposer to alter its technical proposal or price contained in the grant budget, if any. Proposers' responses to State requests for clarifications or corrections shall be in writing and signed by an individual authorized to commit the proposer. Written responses to the State shall be received by the Competitive Procurement Coordinator shown in Section II, pursuant to time frames set forth in the State's request for clarification of corrections.

The State reserves the right to waive variances in proposals provided such action is in the best interest of the State.

Where the State may waive variances, such waiver shall not modify other RFGP requirements or excuse the proposer from full compliance with the remainder of RFGP specifications and other grant requirements if the proposer is awarded a grant.

G. Right to Further Negotiate:

The Department can, at its sole discretion, further clarify or negotiate with the best evaluated proposer(s) subsequent to Notice of Intent to Award.

H. Assignment and Subcontracting:

The proposer must clearly identify in the proposal any intended subcontracts, the scope of work to be subcontracted, and the name(s) of potential subcontractor(s). All subcontracts must be approved by the State. The proposer (prime grantee), however, shall be responsible for all work performed.

I. Incurring Costs:

All costs incurred by the proposer in preparing its proposal shall be borne by the proposer.

J. Disclosure of Proposal Contents:

All proposals and other materials submitted in response to this RFGP become the property of the State of Tennessee. Selection or rejection of a proposal does not affect this right. All proposal information, including detailed budget information, shall be held in confidence during the evaluation process. Only upon the completion of the evaluation of proposals, indicated by public release of a Notice of Intent to Award, shall the proposals and associated materials be open for review. By submitting a proposal, the Proposer acknowledges and accepts that the full contents of the proposal and associated documents shall become open to public inspection.

III. PROPOSER ASSURANCES AND REQUIREMENTS:

All proposers must submit the **Letter of Transmittal** and **Competitive Requirements** for the Request for Grant Proposal, which are signed by an individual legally authorized to bind the proposer regarding compliance with the assurances and submission requirements. If a proposer fails to submit a Letter of Transmittal and Competitive Requirements or to comply with any of the requirements contained in the Letter of Transmittal and Competitive Requirements, the State may consider the proposal to be non-responsive and reject the proposal.

IV. PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT:

Your proposal shall address at least Sections IV.A, B, and C as follows. These sections shall be evaluated by the State and awarded points based upon the appropriateness, completeness and quality of the proposal.

Proposer must provide a detailed description of organizational capacity and experience, program scope and approach to service delivery, and program evaluation process to describe how they shall achieve the requirements of the grant. Proposer must address each segment of the project separately for the relevant section of your proposal.

A. Organizational Capacity: Organization, Experience and Staff: (30 TOTAL POINTS)

This section shall contain pertinent information relating to your organization, staffing and experience that would substantiate your credentials to perform the services requested by the State. The following information should be included, at a minimum:

Describe your organization's experience as it relates to this proposal

- a. Describe your organization's demonstrated capacity with similar projects and populations. If your organization is requesting "continuation" of previously funded activities, these should be described and indicators of program success should be included.
- b. If your organization is, or has been, in a contractual relationship with the State of Tennessee, please provide the following information:
 - State agency name
 - Time period of the contract
 - Services provided

- Name of main contact at state agency
3. Describe staff qualifications for the proposal. Include job descriptions, resumes, staffing pattern and other resources for implementing the project.

B. Technical Proposal for Scope of Services: (60 TOTAL POINTS)

This section should describe your plans and approach for providing the services requested. The information should be in sufficient detail to enable the State to ascertain your understanding of the services to be accomplished. The following information must be included, at a minimum:

1. Project Description/Understanding (20 SUB-POINTS)

You must provide a comprehensive narrative captioned, "Project Description/Understanding" that illustrates your organization's understanding of the State's requirements. The section must include the following information:

- Describe the target population and the geographic areas to be served.
- Describe the minimum numbers to be served, and an estimate of other persons to be impacted by your proposal.
- Describe how the program shall focus on and meet the identified needs of the target population.
- Describe any gaps in services to be addressed by the project.
- Describe when, where and how often services shall be delivered.

2. Project Approach (20 SUB-POINTS)

You must provide a comprehensive narrative captioned "Project Approach" that illustrates how your organization shall provide the scope of services and meet the state's service needs. The section must include the following information:

- Describe the overall services and specific activities to be provided by the project.
- Describe how the target population shall be identified, recruited and retained.
- Describe innovative approaches to provision of services. Explain the benefits of those approaches and how they shall maintain local autonomy and the voices of consumers and providers in each region of the state
- Describe partnerships and involvement with other community agencies for the project.
- Describe the use of volunteers, if any.
- Describe any special program issues such as confidentiality, client safety, transportation, etc.

3. Project Management and Evaluation (20 SUB-POINTS)

The “Project Management and Evaluation” section must provide a description of the goals and objectives to be established to measure the project’s success, as well as how your organization shall determine it has accomplished its goals in terms of impact upon project participants. The “Project Management and Evaluation” section must include the following:

- Identify the goals and objectives for the project to establish how the project shall impact the target population.
- Identify the performance indicators to be used to measure the project’s success.
- Identify the data sources to be used to capture both benchmark and periodic outcome measures.
- Identify any potential barriers to the project’s success and describe how your agency shall address each anticipated barrier.

C. Grant Budget: **(10 TOTAL POINTS)**

This section shall contain all information relating to cost, based on a line-item budget. Complete the Grant Budget form and attached line-item details found in the Sample Grant Contract as attachment 2. A position description should be provided with the expected qualifications for each position listed on the attached Salaries Detail. Indicate the percentage (%) of time a person’s salary is to be charged to the proposed contract. A description of how dollars shall be used must be provided for each line item completed on the budget with a superscript 2 on the end.

Note: Please use the Department of Finance and Administration – Policy 03 Schedule A, (please refer to pages 11-16) in determining which expense category an item should be listed in your grant budget. This policy can be found on the internet at the address listed below:

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/finance/documents/fa_policies/policy3.pdf

V. **PROPOSAL EVALUATION:**

An evaluation committee made up of at least three (3) representatives of the Department of Health will be established to judge the merit of eligible proposals. Proposals are not judged solely on consideration of price or solely on consideration of technical factors.

- A. Any proposal or Grant Budget that is incomplete or contains significant inconsistencies or inaccuracies shall be rejected. The State reserves the right to waive minor variances or reject any or all proposals. The State reserves the right to request clarifications from all proposers.
- B. The committee shall analyze Organizational and Technical proposals on the basis of factors pertinent to the services requested in this RFGP. The specifications within this RFGP represent the minimum performance necessary for response.

- C. The Competitive Procurement Coordinator shown in Section II, shall meet with the evaluation committee to summarize and record their point awards on the Organizational and Technical sections of the proposal.
- D. The Competitive Procurement Coordinator shown in Section II shall open and review Grant Budgets in the presence of the evaluation committee. The Competitive Procurement Coordinator, in conjunction with the evaluation committee, shall review the costs and determine if they have any significant impact on the Organizational and Technical scores. Adjustments may be made accordingly.
- E. Once total scores for Organizational and Technical sections and Grant Budgets are finalized, the Competitive Procurement Coordinator shall recommend to the Commissioner of the Department of Health the best evaluated proposal(s). Once approved by the Commissioner of the Department of Health, the Competitive Procurement Coordinator shall send out the Notice of Intent to Award.

VI. GENERAL PROPOSER INFORMATION REGARDING GRANT CONTRACT:

- A. Sample Grant Contract:

Please see the Sample Grant Contract which delineates the scope of services and/or options for the scope of services which the State expects the Grantee to provide (see Section A. of Sample Grant Contract). Additionally, the Sample Grant Contract includes the terms and conditions considered standard by the State. Do not complete the blanks in the Sample Grant Contract; the State shall complete the blanks upon award of the Grant Contract.

- B. Additional Services:

If a proposer indicates that services shall be provided beyond those described in the Sample Grant Contract, these additional services should be listed in the proposal and, if accepted by the State, shall be included in the grant document.

- C. Proposer Exceptions to the Sample Grant Contract and/or RFGP:

If a proposer has an exception or objects to any of the terms and conditions listed in the Sample Grant Contract, the exception(s) must be listed in the proposal. Similarly, if a proposer is unable to provide any information requested in the RFGP for evaluation, that information is to be listed along with an explanation as to why the proposer cannot comply with the RFGP. Exceptions may result in disqualification of the proposer's proposal.