



Solicitation Addendum

Solicitation Number: 30-8510-ARPA-RFPQ, 30-8511-ARPA-RFPQ,30-8512-ARPA-RFPQ, 30-8513-ARPA-RFPQ, 30-8514-ARPA-RFPQ, 30-8515-ARPA-RFPQ

Solicitation Description: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Vendor Pre-Qualification Announcement

Solicitation Closing Date & Time: January 24, 2022 at 8:00AM ET

Addendum Number: 3

Addendum Date: January 13, 2022

Purpose of Addendum: Publication of Questions and Responses as related to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Vendor Pre-Qualification Announcement

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1. FOLLOWING ARE QUESTIONS RECEIVED FOR THE SOLICITATION AND THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSES.

 2. QUESTIONS ARE GROUP IN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:
 - MASTER SERVICES AGREEMENT AND TASK ORDERS
 - COMMODITY CODES
 - PAST PERFORMANCE
 - HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESS (HUB) CERTIFICATION
 - TEAMING
 - FUNDING
 - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)
 - INTERACTIVE PURCHASING SYSTEM (IPS) AND ePROCUREMENT
 - ARPA PORTAL
 - GENERAL

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Master Services Agreement and Task Orders

- 1. The website offers sample master agreement. Is there an opportunity that if a vendor is selected that the master agreement language can be modified to meet terms and conditions of both NC and the vendor?**

The sample Master Agreement has been reviewed and approved by the Division of Purchase and Contract as well as DHHS's Counsel. It is the foundational document on which all Task Orders will be built. The Agreement, in our opinion, is balanced and fair to meet the needs of most vendors; however, some vendors may feel that certain provisions could impose significant liability or allocate risks disproportionately. In these cases, the State will consider negotiating to find the best solution for the State and the vendor.

- 2. How many awardees are anticipated for this MSA?**

There is no preset number of awards anticipated. The Department will continuously monitor vendor capacity to ensure there is adequate competition to address the agency's need for a full range of service requirements.

- 3. Vendors that are approved to participate, how long does the approved vendor have to return the Master Agreement once they are selected?**

The turnaround time will be specified in the Agreement packet. Vendors that need additional time should request it at that time.

- 4. Once the Master Agreement is signed, over what period of time will task orders be issued?**

- The period of performance for the Master Agreement is from the date of the NTP (Notice-To-Proceed) through three (3) years thereafter, with two (2) one year option(s) that may extend the cumulative term of the Agreement to five (5) years, if exercised.
- The period of performance for each task order awarded under the Agreement shall be specified in the Task Order Contract. Task Orders must be solicited and awarded prior to the Agreement term expiring and may extend up to five (5) years after the Agreement term expires.
- Task order option periods may be exercised after the Agreement term expires as long as the final task order option period does not extend the cumulative term of the task order beyond five (5) years after the Agreement term expires.
- After the Agreement term expires, the Agreement will remain active until the final Task Order is closed-out and shall govern the terms and conditions with respect to active task orders to the same extent as if it were completed during the Agreement term.

For additional information, please refer to the [Program Plan](#).

- 5. The preconference call made mention that the various agencies were planning for potential projects for services – does the state have an expected date of when projects will start to be advertised?**

These Questions cannot be answered now:

- What specific projects will result in task orders?
- What are details related to specific project task orders?
- How many task orders will be advertised?

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- When will the task orders be advertised?
- What is the average project value
- How will task order responses be evaluated?

Check the [ARPA Projects Portal – ARPA Vendor Information](#) often for updates

6. How soon will vendors that complete the prequalification questionnaire be notified as approved to start receiving tasks order releases?

All prequalification assessments should be completed by February 2022. After Vendors are approved, they must sign the Master Agreement before being added to the Approved Vendor Listing. Task Orders may be released at any time the Division has a need for services.

7. If vendor is pre-qualified by the state and a task order is issued in which they do not wish bid, is there an option to decline for services?

Vendors will be given the opportunity to decline; however, the purpose of prequalification is to provide the Department a prescreened, competitive vendor pool. If Vendors constantly decline opportunities to participate, then competition is diminished and the Department will be forced to On-Ramp additional vendors to meet the program's objective. See "On Ramping", "Off Ramping" and "Vendor Inactive Status Procedure" in the [Program Plan](#).

8. Will only vendors that are selected through the prequalification process receive solicitation for projects related to ARPA funding? How will vendors selected to participate received notification of a bid/solicitation?

Vendors must be prequalified to compete for ARPA projects. Vendors can only compete for projects in commodity codes prequalified to perform. Vendors that have been prequalified to provide services within a specific commodity code will receive email notification of the opportunity through the Prequalification Application.

9. Once the vendor completes the service now application and the prequalification questionnaire we will be totally packaged? How will we know when we are prequalified? What is the notification process?

See Questions #3, #6 and #8 in this section.

10. Can we BID for recruitment and retention in the Task Order once we are prequalified?

See Question #5 in this section.

11. When bidding for the specific task order will there be an evaluation criteria or lowest offer accepted?

See Question #5 in this section.

12. For the comprehensive health services group what type of setting will we be providing services to?

See Question #5 in this section.

13. For the disease, prevention, and control what type of setting will we be providing services to? Will we need to include in the BID for the task order equipment?

See Question #5 in this section.

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14. For the medical practice services what type of setting will we be providing services to? Will you allow us to include recruitment and retention in our BID for the TO?

See Question #5 in this section.

15. What if we need to include per diem for out-of-town candidates? How would you like us to handle per diem regarding the task order and bidding?

See Question #5 in this section.

16. For the Humanitarian Aid and Relief Services group what type of setting will we be providing services to? Will we have to provide the temporary sheltering structures?

See Question #5 in this section.

17. What is the process of bidding for the Task Orders?

Specific instructions will be posted with each Task Order.

18. Do you know how long the Request for Proposal to award process will take?

See Question #8 in this section.

Commodity Codes

1. Could you provide a definition for commodity code?

For more information on Commodity Codes, visit <https://eprocurement.nc.gov/training/selecting-commodity-codes>

2. Can you provide a description of the commodity code 85101500 Healthcare centers?

UNSPSC Commodity Codes have four hierarchies: Segment, Family, Class, and Commodity. 85101500 is the general Class description for Healthcare Centers. Healthcare Centers may be prequalified to provide specific client services that include:

- UNSPSC Code 85101501: Emergency or surgical hospital services
- UNSPSC Code 85101502: Private specialized clinic services
- UNSPSC Code 85101503: Medical office services
- UNSPSC Code 85101504: Psychiatric hospital services
- UNSPSC Code 85101505: Respiratory hospital services
- UNSPSC Code 85101506: Substance abuse hospital services
- UNSPSC Code 85101507: Urgent care centers
- UNSPSC Code 85101508: Mobile healthcare centers or services
- UNSPSC Code 85101509: Gynecological or obstetrical hospital services

For more information on Commodity Codes, visit <https://eprocurement.nc.gov/training/selecting-commodity-codes>

3. Is this commodity code for staff augmentation services - 85101600 Healthcare provider support persons?

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UNSPSC Commodity Codes have four hierarchies: Segment, Family, Class, and Commodity. 85101600 is the general Class description for Healthcare Provider Support Persons. Healthcare Staffing Agencies may be prequalified to provide specific support persons that include:

- UNSPSC Code 85101601: Nursing services
- UNSPSC Code 85101602: Midwifery or childbirth preparation services
- UNSPSC Code 85101603: Personal care services in specialized institutions
- UNSPSC Code 85101604: Physicians personnel assistance services
- UNSPSC Code 85101605: Home health assistants

4. I do not see commodity code for staffing personnel. Should staffing agencies just wait until a qualified vendor needs staffing?

See Questions #2 and #12 in this section.

5. Will there be contract opportunities for professional staffing companies?

See Questions #2 and #12 in this section.

6. Do staffing agencies register and sign up for this at this time?

See Questions #2 and #12 in this section.

7. With respect to the commodity codes listed in the RFP, should vendors respond to the codes shown in blue only or for each code within these categories?

UNSPSC Commodity Codes have four hierarchies, the Segment, Family, Class, and Commodity. Vendors must respond to each Commodity within the Class.

8. Do the commodity codes include professional staffing services?

See Question #2 in this section.

9. What is the average TO/Project value for Healthcare Provider Support Person's commodity code?

This information is currently unavailable.

10. Child Care services were listed during the last presentation, which commodity code does it fall under?

Childcare is mentioned during the Introduction to ARPA. As you recall, the speaker continued the Introduction by providing the “ Anticipated Funding Amount: \$1.9B” and stating definitively that ARPA funds will be used for (1) Competitive Contracting, (2) Internal Program Management, and (3) Financial Assistance (new and supplements).

Typically, childcare is funded through Financial Assistance (Grants). Prequalification is used to prescreen vendors for competitive contracting.

11. Do the code groupings have a list of specific services being looked for or will just the general overarching code topic be provided?

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NC eProcurement uses the UNSPSC Commodity Code system, which utilizes hierarchical groupings of numbers to identify and list commodities and services by categories and classes. UNSPSC Commodity Codes have four hierarchies, the **Segment**, **Family**, **Class**, and **Commodity**. Each hierarchy consists of two digits representing an ever more specific group of goods or services.

Vendors must respond to each Commodity within the Class. Specific services will be advertised based on Commodity Codes.

12. On slide 5 of the presentation “Types of Projects Anticipated”, there is a bullet for Employment Services, do you anticipate using staffing company(ies) to provide Employment and/or Staff Augmentation Services? If so, do you anticipate multiple awards or using a single company to provide these services?

Healthcare Staffing Agencies may be prequalified to provide specific support persons that include:

- UNSPSC Code 85101601: Nursing services
- UNSPSC Code 85101602: Midwifery or childbirth preparation services
- UNSPSC Code 85101603: Personal care services in specialized institutions
- UNSPSC Code 85101604: Physicians personnel assistance services
- UNSPSC Code 85101605: Home health assistants

There is no preset number of vendors anticipated. The Department will continuously monitor vendor capacity to ensure there is adequate competition to address the agency’s need for a full range of service requirements.

13. Will the following commodity codes will be used for professional staffing services?

- a. **85101604 Physicians personnel assistance services**
- b. **85101605 Home health assistants**
- c. **85121900 Pharmacists**

UNSPSC Commodity Codes have four hierarchies: Segment, Family, Class, and Commodity.

85101600 is the general Class description for Healthcare Provider Support Persons. Staffing Agencies may be prequalified to provide specific support persons that include:

- UNSPSC Code 85101601: Nursing services
- UNSPSC Code 85101602: Midwifery or childbirth preparation services
- UNSPSC Code 85101603: Personal care services in specialized institutions
- UNSPSC Code 85101604: Physicians personnel assistance services
- UNSPSC Code 85101605: Home health assistants

8512000 is the general Family description for Medical Practices. A Medical Practice or Staffing Agency may be prequalified to provide professionals that deliver services in the following Classes:

85121500 Primary care practitioners services

85121600 Medical doctors specialist services

85121700 Healthcare providers specialists services

85121800 Medical laboratories

85121900 Pharmacists

[85121901](#) Pharmaceutical preparation services

[85121902](#) Commercial pharmaceutical services

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- 85122000 Dental services
- 85122100 Rehabilitation services
- 85122200 Individual health screening and assessment services

Vendors must respond to each Commodity within the Class. Specific services will be advertised based on Commodity Codes. Consequently, to be considered for specific “Pharmacists” opportunities, Vendors must respond to each applicable Commodity within the Class as specific services will be advertised based on Commodity Codes.

14. When a vendor submits a questionnaire for a specific solicitation group designated under Attachment A (pages 6-9) that includes multiple commodity codes, will that vendor be approved by code or for the entire group of codes?

Vendors must respond to each Commodity within the Class. Specific services will be advertised based on Commodity Codes. Consequently, to be considered for specific opportunities, Vendors must respond to each applicable Commodity within the Class as specific services will be advertised based on Commodity Codes.

15. If a vendor applies for 10 commodity codes in a specific commodity group, is it possible we will only be prequalified for a lesser number based on experience listed in questionnaire?

That is correct. Subject Matter Experts will review the information provided by vendors in their questionnaires to determine if experience, expertise, and performance are satisfactory and acceptable to meet project’s/program’s deliverable(s). Technical competence is evaluated using information provided per commodity code

16. Are the applicable ARPA commodity codes only the ones highlighted in blue in the original RFP document?

Commodity Codes shown in blue are not available for prequalification. They are Class headers. Vendors must respond to each Commodity within the Class. Specific services will be advertised based on Commodity Codes. Consequently, to be considered for specific opportunities, Vendors must respond to each applicable Commodity within the Class as specific services will be advertised based on Commodity Codes.

17. Can you clarify if Solicitation #30-8510-ARPA-RFPQ (under the “Comprehensive Health Services Group”), commodity code 85101601 (Nursing Services) refers to nurse staffing needs? It falls under the main code “Healthcare Provider Support Persons”. (I own a nurse staffing agency and would like to know if I should prepare to submit the questionnaire)

UNSPSC Commodity Codes have four hierarchies: Segment, Family, Class, and Commodity. 85101600 is the general Class description for Healthcare Provider Support Persons. Staffing Agencies may be prequalified to provide specific support persons that include:

- o UNSPSC Code 85101601: Nursing services
- o UNSPSC Code 85101602: Midwifery or childbirth preparation services
- o UNSPSC Code 85101603: Personal care services in specialized institutions
- o UNSPSC Code 85101604: Physicians personnel assistance services
- o UNSPSC Code 85101605: Home health assistants

18. Where do we provide our commodity codes? Or is that in e-VP?

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Commodity codes are selected during the completion of the questionnaire (after the solicitation document is selected). Please refer to the [Portal Guide](#) for more information on how to complete the questionnaire.

Past Performance

1. Does past performance have to be at the State level or federal level ?

Any performance that is recent, relevant, and adequately described is sufficient to meet past performance requirements.

2. Is past performance required in order to participate?

Yes. Through prequalification, vendors are required to demonstrate that they have the potential to perform a contract by giving evidence of their experience on similar work; staff training, experience and other expertise; compliance with health, safety or similar policies; business and financial structure and resources; and previous levels of customer satisfaction in relation to similar work. The overall purpose of prequalification is to prescreen vendors against general requirements and capabilities to ensure the reasonable probability that each vendor that competes for projects will have demonstrated their capacity to perform satisfactorily.

3. If you're new to this space, what past performance experience or documents are accepted?

Any performance that is recent, relevant, and adequately described is sufficient to meet past performance requirements.

4. What if we don't have past performance in a commodity code but know we can scale to deliver? Can we register for the commodity code?

See Question #2 in this section.

Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Certification

1. Are they HUB set aside?

There is no set aside for HUB vendors.

2. Do you have to be Hub Certified?

HUB certification is not required for prequalification.

3. What if you're in the process of being HUB certified, should we still check the box or will we be able to update that later?

When completing your profile, you should enter current, accurate information. You will be allowed to update information as necessary to ensure your profile remains accurate.

Teaming

1. Can a company team with another company to service task orders?

Companies may subcontract with other companies to service Task Orders. Companies may also form Joint Ventures to create capacity for larger contracting opportunities. A Joint Venture is a separate and independent entity. Seek additional guidance from your tax advisor.

2. Can you team up with IC?

The Department requires more information to answer this question. Please resubmit.

3. Are we able to use staffing that is remote housing in other states remotely?

Specific requirements for staffing will be provided in advertised Task Orders.

4. When teaming with another business to meet the Task Order, are they to be treated as a subcontractor?

There are several options for teaming with other companies to deliver services. Consult your Business or Tax Advisor for the option most suitable for your situation.

5. For commodity code for Healthcare Provider Support Persons (Nursing Services), do they need to be W-2 staff or can they be independent contract 1099 staff?

This is a business decision best answered by your Business or Tax Advisor.

Funding

1. How much money has been allotted for the total grant?

The Department has received approximately \$2 billion in Federal ARPA funding.

2. Are grant funds exclusive to North Carolina business only?

ARPA, which stands for “American Rescue Plan Act of 2021”, is a federal law that was passed in March 2021 to provide direct relief to Americans, contain the COVID-19 virus, and rescue the economy. NCDHHS is one of many direct recipients of ARPA funds.

Contracts awarded as a result of prequalification will meet competition requirements as prescribed by the State Procurement Office.

§143-59 provides additional information related to preference given to North Carolina products and citizens, articles manufactured by State agencies, and reciprocal preferences.

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3. When the monies be made available?

Monies will be available after the Department finalizes the spending plan and is granted approval to implement.

Information Technology (IT)

1. Is the State considering Business Process Outsourcing such as processing childcare provider payments, etc. as "IT" services? The codes listed don't seem to contemplate BPO such as call center, staffing, payment processing, etc.

IT services are not included in the ARPA Prequalification Program. Modifications to the Department's approach to acquiring IT services will be communicated via public notification, i.e., solicitation or amendment.

2. Is telemedicine considered IT?

Telemedicine focuses on the provision of clinical care. The use of tools, such as technology used to provide clinical care, is secondary to the primary purpose. Vendors that provide healthcare services should detail the various means of service provisioning, i.e., in-person, in-home, telemedicine, etc.

3. Will there be an IT component to ARPA pre-qualification program?

IT services are not included in the ARPA Prequalification Program. Modifications to the Department's approach to acquiring IT services will be communicated via public notification, i.e., solicitation or amendment.

Interactive Purchasing System (IPS)) and eProcurement

1. Why were there 6 posting for this program on IPS?

Vendors select commodity codes to receive notification of contracting opportunities. You will notice that each posting included a different commodity code. To ensure all vendors receive adequate notification of this prequalification opportunity, a posting was provided for each commodity code class.

2. The Request for Prequalification will be found on the IPS?

Yes. It will explain the program and provide a link to the ARPA Portal: [ARPA Projects Portal – ARPA Vendor Information](#).

3. To confirm, the IPS is where we find updates and posts for this?

- a. When and where will the responses to questions be posted?
- b. Will the responses be issued as Addenda to the associated RFP?

Yes. IPS will be your source of information about the posting, including addendums. You may also access the [ARPA Projects Portal – ARPA Vendor Information](#) on the NC DHHS website.

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4. What is the submission deadline?

Please refer to the posting for accurate, up-to-date information on the schedule.

5. Where do we find our Vendor Number on the eVP Portal? Is that the same as the Customer Number on the Company Information Page of the portal?

Vendor number is the same as Customer Number.

6. Vendors must be registered in eProcurement – if a vendor is already registered in eProcurement doing business with the State of NC, does the vendor need to register again to receive a different vendor number to enter into the ARPA prequalification application? Or is vendor allowed to use the vendor number already registered in eProcurement?

Vendors should use their current Vendor Number. If the Vendor is not currently registered in eProcurement, the Vendor must register to be assigned a number.

ARPA Portal

1. To be clear - the portal guide has all of the questions and data points vendors may need to collect to complete the prequalification process?

That is correct. Please refer to the [Portal Guide](#) for information on creating a profile and completing the questionnaire.

2. We can only monitor the portal after we register correct?

The [ARPA Portal](#) is public. You must register to enter information into the prequalification questionnaire application, edit information, and view information about your prequalification.

3. What is the address for the portal?

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/about/administrative-offices/office-procurement-contracts-and-grants/ncdhhs-american-rescue-plan-act-arpa-projects-portal-arpa-contracting-opportunities/arpa-about>

4. In general, is the application process lengthy (meaning taking how long does it take to complete the application)?

The number of questions required to complete the application is not excessive; however, the commitment of time required to complete the application is unique to each vendor. The number of past performance entries, decided level of detail, and other factors, which are specific to each vendor, will determine the amount of time required to complete the application.

5. Will the step by step video be available?

All artifacts created to support ARPA prequalification are posted on the [ARPA Projects Portal – ARPA Vendor Information](#). There is a [Program Plan](#) on the main ARPA Projects landing page that provides useful information about the ARPA Prequalification Program.

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6. Will all written questions submitted to NCDHHS be published with answers in the ARPA Projects Portal for all potential vendors to view responses?

Yes

7. Will the proposal conference recorded session and powerpoint presentation from December 14, 2021 be posted to the ARPA Vendor Resources section of the NCDHHS website?

Yes

8. Upon approval, how will we know that a Task Order is posted? Will we have to monitor (keep an eye out on the portal) or will we be notified via email?

Vendors that have been prequalified to provide services within a specific commodity code will receive email notification of the opportunity through the [Prequalification Application](#).

9. I created a profile. Can you see the Knowledge link but do not see link to create a Vendor Profile?

The Department requires more information to answer this question. Please resubmit.

10. For owners, what do we enter if a public company or large partnership?

Enter "Publicly Traded" and "100%"

11. The "Company Ownership Percentage" question appears to be geared toward privately owned companies. Will the Department please provide guidance on how to answer this question for larger, publicly traded companies? Our Board members do not own the company in the way the question and it table implies.

Enter "Publicly Traded" and "100%"

12. In the Vendor Profile, should we enter the Federal Tax ID in the FEIN/SS field the TIN field is linked and auto-populated by the FEIN/SSN field?

Enter either the Federal Identification Number or the Social Security number, as appropriate for the business type.

13. What if they ownership is a Board? There is not the option to enter that. There is also not the option to change the text for ownership in "update/submit vendor profile".

For a Board of Directors, enter "Board of Directors" and "100%"

14. If there is a question in the questionnaire that does not apply to us, how would you like us to address/answer it?

Please review other questions/answers in this section to see if your situation is resolved. There are few questions that are not required. If your question refers to a question that does not require a response, then you can skip a response (i.e., the question regarding HUB certification is not required, so if your firm is not HUB certified you should skip entering a response).

General

1. How does it work if you have been in business for a year? New Company?

New businesses are encouraged to seek prequalification in commodity codes that the company, through its owner(s), employees, or contracted labor, have potential to perform. Past performance should provide evidence of specific skills, or similar work with transferrable skills and competences.

2. What do you enter for ownership if it is a non profit?

For all organizations, including non-profit organizations, the ownership percentage must equal 100%. We realize that no single person “owns” a non-profit organization. Daily operations are typically managed by Executive Officers that are appointed by a Board of Directors. For non-profits, the ownership percentage merely provides a proxy value to satisfy a *required* field. If your organization is classified as a non-profit organization, (1) enter the full name(s) and title(s) of each Executive Officer, i.e., Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Operating Officer (COO), Chief Fiscal Officer (CFO), etc. followed by “NP” For example: Jane Doe, CEO-NP, and (2) equally divide 100 by the number of Executive Officer positions.

3. If you didn't submit the initial response can you not submit now?

The Department requires more information to answer this question. Please resubmit.

4. For the Certificate of Existence, does it have to be dated within a certain time period? For example, we have been registered/in good standing with the State since 2000, but the last time we needed this documentation was 2015. Is it okay to use that copy of the certificate (or should we request an updated copy from the Secretary of State)?

Our goal is to ensure your company is currently eligible to do business with the State. Please consult the Secretary of State's Office for guidance.

5. You are not able to update the company ownership section once draft is submitted. Is there a way to reset this so we can update ownership correctly since the nonprofit option has been added?

Future enhancements to the application will allow for edits to the profile.

6. In the project's portal, what are organizations to list as company ownership if a publicly traded company within the vendor profile details?

Enter “Publicly Traded” and “100%”

7. In the projects portal we have entered information numerous times within the portal, clicked save but information is not showing as saved. How or who do we contact to work through this issue?

Send a message to ARPA_Projects@DHHS.NC.GOV. Someone will contact you to assist with problem resolution.

15. Could you please explain the cloning process? Do we put multiple commodity codes in the first application, reply to experience questions about the first, and then clone with the same info?

Please refer to the Portal Guide for information on the cloning process.

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- 16. The question regarding "have you received payment from NC state for services?" , Is Medicaid payment applicable for this questions?**

Only if Medicaid payments to the vendor was processed through the Office of State Controller.

- 17. Will the State be reaching out to the customer POC for each commodity code as we have to request and receive authorization from each client POC?**

SMEs will review the information provided by vendors in their questionnaires to determine if experience, expertise, and performance are satisfactory and acceptable to meet project's/program's deliverable(s). This validation may require the SME to contact client POC's.

- 18. Where are the key staff resumes uploaded in the process?**

Staff resumes are required during Task Order evaluation.