

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES (RFR)



Skill Training for Employment Pathways (STEP) Program

Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI)

1 Ashburton Place, 5th floor, Boston, MA 02128

August 14, 2026

COMMBUYS BID #: FY27-ORI-04

Management Group Category: Health, Human & Social Services/SERVICES – Employment Training or Support

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Please Note: This is a single document associated with a complete Bid (also referred to as Solicitation) that can be found on COMMBUYS (www.COMMBUYS.com). All Bidders are responsible for reviewing and adhering to all information, forms and requirements for the entire Bid, which are all incorporated into the Bid. Bidders may also contact the COMMBUYS Help Desk at OSDHelpDesk@mass.gov or at 1-888-MA-STATE. The Help Desk is staffed from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, Eastern Standard or Daylight time, as applicable, except on federal and state holidays.

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Procurement Calendar

EVENT	TIME/DATE
STEP RFR Posted	August 14, 2026
Deadline for Submission of Questions through COMMBUYS “Bid Q&A”	5 pm, August 21, 2026
Response to STEP RFR (Due Date)	5 pm, September 11, 2026
Contract Start Date for STEP (Estimated)	September 30, 2026

SECTION 1. RFR GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND PROCUREMENT QUESTIONS

1.1. Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI)

The Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) was established by St. 1992, c. 133, § 171; M.G.L. c. 6, §§ 205 through 208. ORI's statutory mission is to promote the full participation of refugees and immigrants as self-sufficient individuals and families in the economic, social, and civic life of the Commonwealth. To advance its statutory mission, ORI administers a diverse portfolio of federally and state funded programs offering services designed to support successful integration, economic mobility, and long-term self-sufficiency. These services are delivered in a manner that is responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of refugees and immigrants, reflecting ORI's broader agency mission to welcome and empower all immigrants in Massachusetts to access resources, opportunities, and supports.

ORI is the state agency responsible for administering the federal refugee resettlement program, established pursuant to the federal Refugee Act of 1980; 8 USC 1521 *et seq.* As the designated state agency for refugee resettlement, and subject to available federal funds, ORI contracts with local refugee resettlement agencies and service providers throughout Massachusetts to provide a coordinated set of services which comprise the Massachusetts Refugee Resettlement Plan (MRRP). The purpose of the MRRP is to assist refugees to achieve durable self-sufficiency. ORI administers the MRRP consistent with federal requirements set by statute and federal regulation, as well as the policy directives of the Office for Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

1.2. Overview of Procurement

Through this procurement, ORI is soliciting proposals for its Skill Training for Employment Pathways (STEP) Program. STEP is designed to *provide Vocational Skills Training (VST) and related support services to refugees and immigrants through a collaborative partnership model.*

STEP utilizes a cohort-based approach and focuses on career-specific training pathways that prepare participants for employment in high-demand industries. ORI seeks responses from Bidders that offer career-specific training programs of up to six months in duration, which result in a certificate or licensure. Bidders must combine their proposed training program, with support services targeted at the cohort of participants to support completion of the program. Examples of training fields include, without limit: culinary, hospitality, health care related certificates or licensure, drivers' education, and others (see Section 1.2.4, below). Support services may include language training, career coaching and similar services, to support completion of the training program. ORI anticipates Bidders may propose partnerships to provide the combined STEP services. This program will include robust metrics demonstrating impact of this training program in assisting participants to secure employment following completion. As detailed below, Bidders may submit responses to provide all STEP program components, or for defined subsets of services. (See Section 1.3.7. below)

1.3. STEP Program

1.3.1. Background and Purpose

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The Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) is issuing this Request for Responses (RFR) to identify qualified training providers ("Contractors") to deliver a collaborative model, cohort-based, career-specific vocational training and related support services in the Greater Boston area, North Shore, Worcester, Lowell, Greater Springfield area and Brockton.

The STEP Program is designed to help participants successfully complete occupational training, obtain industry-recognized certifications or licenses, and secure employment in high-demand occupations. STEP is fully designed, administered, monitored, and evaluated by ORI.

The target population consists of work-authorized immigrants, including ORR-eligible populations¹, who have limited English proficiency (LEP) and/or other barriers to accessing mainstream vocational skills training and obtaining or retaining employment in high-demand occupations. There are no time-based eligibility restrictions for participants under this program, ensuring that individuals can access services regardless of how long they have resided in the United States or how much time has elapsed since their arrival or grant of status.

Despite possessing valuable skills, past professional experience, and a strong desire to work, individuals with LEP remain significantly underrepresented in many industries and face persistent barriers to career pathways that lead to economic mobility. This disparity is especially pronounced in sectors requiring customer contact, such as food service and healthcare, where LEP workers earn 25%–40% less than their English-proficient counterparts.

1.3.2. Program Description

STEP provides vocational skills training and supportive services to work-authorized immigrants, and ORR-eligible populations. By combining industry-specific skills instruction with language and academic support, participants will be prepared to meet state and industry requirements and obtain the credentials needed for employment in their chosen fields.

A defining feature of STEP is the provision of bilingual and bicultural assistance—both inside and outside the classroom—to help participants navigate the academic and practical components of occupational training and make a successful transition into employment. Support services are

¹ Eligible populations are employable individuals between the **ages of 18-65** and include: foreign-born work authorized immigrants who are eligible for TAFDC benefits, refugees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, including Cuban Medical Professional Parolees, asylees; victims of trafficking who have received certification, eligibility or interim assistance letters from ORR, and certain other specified family members, certain Amerasians from Vietnam who are admitted into the U.S. as immigrants, certain Amerasians from Vietnam who are U.S. citizens, and Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrants. See Policy Letter 16-1, 45 CFR 400.43, 45 CFR 400.111, and 45 CFR 400.208.

- For further reference ORR State Letters may be found at <https://acf.gov/orr/policy-guidance/policy-letters> . Specifically, Policy Letter 16-1: <https://acf.gov/orr/policy-guidance/documentation-requirements-refugee-resettlement-program>
- ORR regulations under the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) may be found at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-B/chapter-IV/part-400>

responsive to individual participants' educational, linguistic, cultural, and workforce development needs and may be delivered directly by the Contractor or through established community partnerships.

STEP is designed to implement innovative training models that will enable participants to secure higher-paying jobs, enter occupations with clear advancement opportunities, and achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency. These models may include structured vocational instruction, work-based learning, apprenticeships, accelerated training, and competency-based approaches, provided they demonstrate clear pathways to credential attainment and employment outcomes.

To maximize participants' success and ensure access to a comprehensive continuum of services, collaborative partnerships among training providers, employment service providers, community-based organizations, and employers are strongly recommended for a successful program which meets all requirements. Through these partnerships, participants may receive additional support designed to address barriers that could impede progress toward training completion, credential attainment, and employment. For instance, a training education center may partner with local refugee/immigrant assistance organizations to complement the training component with additional services that provide individualized coaching, career planning, employment services, and other supportive resources to mitigate any barriers they may have to program completion. Most importantly, these additional services will be provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

1.3.3. Cohort-Based Approach

Bidders must implement cohort-based vocational training models that align with documented labor market demand and lead to the attainment of industry-recognized credentials and/or employment. The cohort-based approach refers to grouping a class or cohort of similarly situated participants in a training together. The cohort may have a similar level of English proficiency, share a common level of experience in a certain sector, or similar grouping to allow for targeted supports to facilitate successful training completion.

STEP cohort models may combine any of the following approaches, or any other innovative approach proposed by the bidders:

- (1) *Shared occupational track* (e.g., healthcare, manufacturing, hospitality, or logistics), allowing participants to progress together through sequenced coursework, language-integrated instruction, and employer-connected activities such as worksite tours, guest employer panels, or job shadowing;
- (2) *Shared language proficiency level*;
- (3) *Shared scheduling needs* (e.g., evening or weekend cohorts for working adults); or
- (4) *Shared geographic or site-based grouping*, to improve accessibility for participants across service areas.

Within each cohort, instruction must integrate occupational skills training with contextualized English language and workplace communication support, peer mentoring, and case management. This integrated approach is designed to enable participants to build technical competencies, earn industry-recognized credentials, and transition into employment as a unified group, supported by shared milestones and mutual peer support throughout the training period.

1.3.4. Training Fields

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STEP funding is targeted at occupational and workforce development programs that will lead to employment in high-demand industries and occupations. Eligible training areas include, but are not limited to:

- Healthcare (including direct care and allied health occupations)
- Information Technology
- Food service and Hospitality
- Culinary arts
- Manufacturing
- Skilled trades

Add-on training where directly related to employment access and job requirements:

- Customer service, driver education, digital literacy, including AI and technology skills applied in the workplace

Bidders that run high-quality training programs in these identified areas, are encouraged to respond to this RFR. All training must be aligned with local labor market demand and lead to industry-recognized credentials, certifications, licenses, or clearly defined pathways to employment.

1.3.5. Service Delivery Models

Bidders must propose vocational training models that are aligned with labor market demands and lead to attainment of industry-recognized credentials and/or employment. Acceptable service delivery models may include, but are not limited to, any of the following or a combination thereof, provided they demonstrate clear pathways to employment outcomes and career advancement:

(1) Competency-based instruction

Training in which advancement is based on demonstrated mastery of skills and competencies rather than seat time.

(2) Hybrid or classroom-based vocational training

Training delivered through a combination of in-person instruction and online/remote components, or fully classroom-based instruction in a vocational setting.

(3) Accelerated occupational training programs

Compressed-timeline programs designed to move participants into employment more quickly than traditional program lengths.

(4) Work-based learning

Structured learning that occurs through real workplace experiences, including internships, externships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training (OJT).

(5) Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship models

Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) or pre-apprenticeship models combining paid work experience with related technical instruction.

(6) Industry-sponsored Training

Training designed and/or co-delivered in partnership with employers to meet specific hiring needs.

(7) Stackable credential pathways

Sequenced training leads to multiple, progressively advanced credentials within an occupational cluster.

Bidders will ensure that all partnership arrangements are designed to maximize service delivery accessibility, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, and alignment with workforce development outcomes. Bidders will also maintain documented systems for referral tracking, service coordination, and partner performance review to ensure accountability and quality across service pathways.

1.3.6. Length of Training

STEP prioritizes training programs of six months or less. However, longer programs may be approved when justified by the nature of the occupation, industry standards, or the skills and competencies to be acquired. The key consideration is whether the training is structured, relevant to the participants' objectives, and reasonably designed to achieve its intended outcomes. Training programs exceeding six months are therefore permitted, provided the extended duration is clearly justified and aligned with the goal of employment.

1.3.7. Scope of Services

ORI's Skill Training for Employment Pathways (STEP) Program is designed to provide Vocational Skills Training (VST) and related support services to refugees and immigrants through a collaborative partnership model.

The selected Bidder is expected to deliver the following core and supportive services, either directly or through formal collaborations with partner organizations. Where services are provided through partnerships, the selected Bidder must ensure that a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and/or subcontract is in place, clearly outlining each party's roles, responsibilities, and the specific services to be delivered.

The core components of STEP are:

1. Recruitment and Cohort Identification

- a. Outreach and recruitment of eligible participants;
- b. Intake and assessment of participant skills, experience, and training needs;
- c. Development of Individualized Training, Support and Employment Plan (ITSEP). When services are delivered through a partnership, the ITSEP must be developed collaboratively, with close coordination among all partnership members.

2. Training Administration

- d. Provision and delivery of a training course(s) with current curricula aligned with high-demand industries;
- e. Bilingual and bicultural curriculum and instructional support;
- f. Assistance with training-related fees, tools, equipment, or uniforms;

3. Support Services

- g. Contextualized English language instruction;
- h. Training-related coaching outside the classroom, as needed;

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- i. Digital literacy instruction and AI-use introduction, as needed;
 - j. Assistance with other training-related expenses not listed above;
 - k. Transportation and childcare assistance- as needed;
4. Post-training Services
- l. Career counseling and case management to identify and remove barriers to participation and training completion;
 - m. Assistance with credential evaluation, certification, and licensing requirements;
 - n. Job readiness, employability services, and job placement assistance;
 - o. Internship, externship, or other work-based learning opportunities;
 - p. Referrals to effective community-based and public resources as needed; and
 - q. Accurate and comprehensive tracking of participant progress and milestones achieved;

STEP services are delivered through a concurrent, integrated, cohort-based model that combines core vocational training with supportive services. This coordinated approach is designed to support participants' successful entry into the workforce by aligning training activities with employment opportunities in targeted industries, while mitigating barriers to success.

To facilitate partnerships and opportunities for interested organizations to respond to this RFR, ORI will accept bids in the following **three Categories**:

Category #1: The Bidder offers all four components of STEP services and/or serves as primary contractor for already formed partnerships. Category #1 Bidders will present a proposal that includes recruitment and cohort identification, administration of the training program, and additional STEP program supports, including post-training services. (Components 1-4, above)

Category #2: The Bidder offers a Training program(s), that results in a certificate and/or license and would be consistent with STEP objectives. (Component #2, above only).

Category #3: The Bidder offers Recruitment and Cohort Identification, Support Services, and Post-training Services, as described above. (Components 1, 3, and 4, above).

Bidders may additionally propose adjustments or varying components for the STEP program components, consistent with overall STEP objectives. For bid responses for Categories #2 and #3, ORI will review for consistency with STEP objectives and may offer opportunities for partnership to achieve the STEP objectives.

1.3.8. Program Outcomes

STEP is designed to produce measurable, sustained employment outcomes for participants by combining skills assessment, language instruction, vocational skills training, and credentialing with robust job placement and retention support.

Performance will be tracked quarterly and annually against the following indicators, which reflect both the quality and volume of service delivery, and the depth of impact achieved — from initial enrollment and training completion through long-term job retention, wage quality, benefits access, and career advancement. These measures are designed to demonstrate not only that participants enter

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the workforce, but that they remain employed, advance in their careers, and achieve greater economic self-sufficiency over time.

STEP Measures/Indicators (yearly)	# Outcomes (Indicative per Bidder)
# STEP Outreach	A minimum of 100
# Participants Assessed in their skills	A minimum of 60
# Participants in some form of ESOL instruction	70% or higher
# Participants enrolled in VST under STEP	A minimum of 60
# Participants completing training	90% or higher
# Participants Receiving Licenses/Certifications	85% or high
# Participants enter 1 st employment	80% or higher
# of 30-day retentions	75% or higher
# of 90-day retentions	73% or higher
# of Jobs with Benefits (health and other)	80% of 1 st employments or higher
# of Quality Jobs at 90-day retention (>\$18.00/hr.)	85% of all 1 st employments
# of reductions/terminations from Cash Assistance	80% cash reductions/terminations
# of Job Upgrades (e.g. additional hours, increase salaries, title promotion, etc.)	15% of those in 1 st jobs
# of participants building up their Career Path	10% or higher

1.3.9. Service Delivery Options (In-person and Hybrid)

STEP services may be delivered through in-person or hybrid options, as appropriate to participant needs and program design. It is expected that most services will be delivered in person, unless a declared state or federal emergency or other exceptional circumstances apply.

Bidders are *expected* to engage in collaborative partnerships with workforce development entities, community-based organizations, refugee employment services providers, educational training providers, and employers to ensure a coordinated service delivery system.

All services must be culturally and linguistically appropriate and responsive to the needs of LEP populations.

1.4. Bidder Requirements

1.4.1. Bidder Required Qualifications

To be eligible for award under this RFR, the Bidder—along with each partner operating under a collaborative partnership model—must meet all the following minimum requirements:

- a. The Bidder must be a non-profit organization that is authorized to do business in Massachusetts. This requirement applies to all partners in the collaborative model
- b. The Bidder must be a vocational training institution and/or service provider with proven, multi-year experience delivering training, employment and support services to refugees and work-authorized immigrants;

- c. The Bidder must be in sound financial condition, as determined by ORI;
- d. Through the collaborative partnership model, demonstrate the knowledge, expertise, and programmatic capacity necessary to deliver the services and outcomes required under this RFR;
- e. The Bidder must demonstrate substantial and relevant experience delivering a cohort-based, vocational/occupational skills training and/or workforce development services to refugees and work-authorized immigrants, including individuals with LEP, over the past two state fiscal years (SFY2025–SFY2026);
- f. The Bidder must not be subject to corrective action, contract termination, or other administrative sanctions due to poor program performance, noncompliance, or misuse of state funds within the last two (2) years;
- g. The Bidder must demonstrate capability and readiness to perform all responsibilities set forth in the RFR, in a timely manner.

1.4.2. Bidder Preferred Qualifications

In addition to meeting all other requirements set forth in this RFR, ORI will give preference to Bidders that demonstrate the following qualifications:

- a. Demonstrated and extensive experience serving refugees and/or immigrants through culturally and linguistically appropriate service delivery models;
- b. Demonstrated experience designing, coordinating, and implementing workforce development and occupational skills training programs for refugees and/or immigrants, including those identified in Section 1.2.4.;
- c. Organizations that provide direct support services to refugees and/or work-authorized immigrants and have the capacity to partner with education and training providers to deliver vocational skills training and related services;
- d. Education and training providers with demonstrated experience delivering occupational skills training and the capacity to adapt curricula and instructional approaches to meet the needs of refugees and/or work-authorized immigrants, while partnering effectively with organizations that provide direct support and workforce development services to these populations;
- e. Demonstrated willingness and capacity to collaborate with refugee and immigrant employment services providers and other workforce system partners to ensure coordinated, non-duplicative service delivery for eligible participants, consistent with applicable federal requirements;
- f. Organizations that deliver training and/or support services through in-person or hybrid models. Fully remote training programs may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

SECTION 2: PROCUREMENT DETAILS AND REQUIREMENTS

2.1. Applicable Procurement Law

This RFR is issued under the following laws: MGL c.7, §§22, 22N; c.30, §§51, 52; 801 CMR 21.00; 808 CMR 1.00 (Human and Social Services)

STEP is funded through the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED), Workforce Investment Trust Fund, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 23N, § 18, which authorizes funding for workforce development opportunities, including job skills training, adult literacy, and English language learning programs. Accordingly, all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements governing the Workforce Investment Trust Fund shall apply to this procurement and any resulting grant awards.

Consistent with the purpose of the Workforce Investment Trust Fund, STEP supports workforce development initiatives that expand access to employment and career pathway opportunities for refugees and immigrants. For STEP, selected recipients shall provide vocational skills training and workforce development services that prepare participants for employment through a combination of educational instruction and hands-on skills development. Programs may offer training in multiple languages, as appropriate, and may focus on a variety of occupational sectors and career pathways that respond to labor market demand and participant needs.

2.2. Acquisition Method

This contract is Fee for Service.

2.3. Single or Multiple Contractors Required for Contract

Multiple Contractors are required.

2.4. Number of Awards

The target maximum number of Contractors is a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of four (4). This is a target number, and ORI may award more or fewer Contracts if it is in the best interest of the Commonwealth to do so.

2.5. Adding Contractors after Initial Contract Award

If, over the life of the Contract, ORI determines that additional Contractors should be added, these may first be drawn from qualified Bidders that responded to this RFR but were not awarded contracts. If necessary, to meet the requirements of the Commonwealth, the RFR may be reopened to obtain additional responses.

2.6. Entities Eligible to Use the Resulting Contract

This is a Limited User Contract – Restricted to Use by Issuing Entity (ORI) only.

2.7. Expected Contract Duration

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The anticipated term of the Contract(s) shall commence on September 30, 2026, and conclude on June 30, 2027. At ORI's discretion, and subject to program performance, funding availability, and other relevant considerations, ORI may elect to renew some or all awarded contracts for up to three additional one-year terms.

Subsequent one-year renewal terms shall align with the Commonwealth's fiscal year and run from July 1 through June 30.

2.8. Anticipated Expenditures, Funding or Compensation for Expected Duration

Subject to agency approvals and the availability of funding, ORI anticipates awarding up to \$450,000 in total funding for the initial contract period of September 30, 2026, through June 30, 2027. Individual contract awards are expected to range from \$50,000 to \$150,000. Funding for all contracts awarded under this RFR is provided entirely through state funds.

This amount represents the aggregate maximum funding available under this RFR and may be distributed among up to four (4) Contractors. The actual number of awards and the amount awarded to each Contractor will be determined by ORI based on the quality of proposals received, geographic and programmatic considerations, funding availability, and other relevant factors. ORI reserves the right to award less than the total available funding and to make fewer than four (4) awards.

However, this is an initial estimate, and ORI reserves the right to change these budget amounts. ORI makes no guarantee that any services will be purchased from any Contract(s) resulting from this RFR. Any estimates referenced in this RFR are included only for the convenience of Bidders and are not to be relied upon as any indication of future expenditures, funding or compensation levels.

2.9. Bidders' Conference

ORI will not hold a bidders' conference for this RFR.

2.10. Estimated Procurement Calendar

Please refer to the estimated procurement calendar above for deadlines for this procurement. The procurement calendar is subject to change at the discretion of ORI. Notification of any adjustment to the RFR Timetable shall be posted on COMMBUYS.

Bidders are required to monitor COMMBUYS for changes to the procurement calendar for this Bid.

2.11. Online Questions (Bid Q&A)

Written Questions must be entered using the "Bid Q&A" tab for the Bid in COMMBUYS no later than the "Online Questions Due" date and time indicated in the Estimated Procurement Calendar (above). The issuing department reserves the right to not respond to questions submitted after this date. It is the Bidder's responsibility to verify receipt of questions.

It is the responsibility of the prospective Bidder and awarded Contractor to maintain an active registration in COMMBUYS and to keep current the email address of the Bidder's contact person and prospective contract manager, if awarded a contract, and to monitor that email inbox for communications from the Purchasing Department, including requests for clarification. The Purchasing Department and the Commonwealth assume no responsibility if a prospective Bidder's/awarded Contractor's designated email address is not current, or if technical problems, including those with the

prospective Bidder's/awarded Contractor's computer, network, or internet service provider (ISP) cause email communications sent to/from the prospective Bidder/Awarded contractor and the Purchasing Department to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering.

Written Responses to Questions will be posted on the Bid Q&A Tab for this Bid in COMMBUYS.

SECTION 3: BIDDERS' RESPONSE

Responses will be evaluated based on the strength of the proposed partnership and collaboration, the clarity of roles among partner organizations, the quality of proposed trainings, and the adaptability of curriculum and services to a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) population. Evaluators will also consider the innovativeness of proposed approaches in addressing the needs of eligible populations, responsiveness to labor market demand, cost-effectiveness, and the ability to achieve both short- and long-term goals related to credential attainment and, ultimately, employment in high-demand industries.

Interested bidders must submit a response to ORI that includes the following components:

3.1. Cover Page (Attachment #1)

Applicants responding to this STEP RFR must deliver Vocational Skills Training (VST) and/or related support services to refugees and immigrants through a collaborative partnership model. Applicants' response must clearly identify whether they are responding under Category #1, #2 or #3, as described in RFR Section 1.3.7.

3.2. Project Abstract

The project abstract must be no more than one (1) page, with 1-inch margins, single-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font. The abstract must fully address items 1–6 below. The narrative and any attachments are separate from, and not counted within, this one-page limit.

1. Describe the agency's mission and its alignment with STEP program goals.
2. State the total funding amount requested.
3. Identify the target population's demographics, the number of individuals to be served, and the region(s) of operation.
4. Briefly describe the organization's most recent experience (within the last two years) delivering services described in this RFR to the target population.
5. Provide a brief description of the proposed training(s) and/or service delivery model.
6. Briefly name the providers that are part of the partnership and the role of each partner organization, if applicable.

3.3. Program Design (Narrative)

The program narrative must be paginated, on letter-size paper, with 1" margins, using 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced. The program narrative must not exceed 10 pages in length and should include responses to the items below.

Note: for Bidders that are responding under Category #1, responses to all items below are required. For Bidders responding under Category #2 (Training) or Category #3 (Support Services), the Bidder

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may adjust the narrative response to only those items below that are relevant for their response Category.

Program Structure & Partnerships

1. If your organization offers training and support services, describe how they will be delivered and the components of these services.
2. If you propose a collaborative partnership where training and support services are provided by different organizations, describe the proposed partnership structure, the division of roles and responsibilities of each partner organization, and how you will resolve any areas of disagreement.

Enrollment & Intake

3. Description of the proposed cohort-based approach(es), consistent with Section 1.3.3, and how participants will be determined eligible for enrollment in training(s) upon receiving a referral for services.
4. Description, in detail, of your intake process, including assessment of English proficiency for the training.

Training Curriculum & Service Design

5. Description of how curriculum and services will be adapted to meet the needs of a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) refugee and immigrant population.
6. Description of how proposed training aligns with documented labor market demand.

Ongoing Support & Case Management

7. Description, in detail, of the process used by staff to monitor clients' progress toward employment, match identified needs with available resources, and plan follow-up actions to remove barriers to clients' successful completion of training and employment.

Performance Evaluation and Outcomes

8. If your agency was or has been placed under corrective action by ORI or another state agency or has had a contract terminated due to underperformance in the last three years, describe the measures and tools your agency implemented to ensure successful service delivery and ongoing evaluation going forward. If not applicable, please indicate in your response.
9. Describe in detail how your agency will achieve the proposed goals and evaluate the program to ensure proper levels of enrollment; adherence to the STEP scope of services and terms of contract, including outcomes; effective and timely service delivery; timely, complete, and accurate reporting; and proper use of ORI's database system and record-keeping/case files.

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State how frequently your agency will conduct this evaluation and describe the quality assurance function you will implement to track each of these measures.

10. Describe anticipated short- and long-term outcomes, including credential/license attainment and employment placement. Describe partnerships you have with employers in the field to ensure successful placement of clients.

3.4. List of Proposed Training(s)

Provide a list of proposed training(s), along with a brief description of training delivery model, service model, proposed class size, number of sessions proposed during the fiscal year, and duration of training(s). (**Attachment #2**)

3.5. Line-Item Budget and Budget Narrative (Attachments #3 and #4)

In the interest of maximizing the investment of limited funds to direct services, respondents are expected to limit administrative costs to no more than 20% of the proposed program budget. Facilities costs are included in the 20% administrative cap.

Administrative budgets that exceed 20% of the total funding request may be disqualified from further consideration unless supported with a strong justification, demonstrating a clear need for a higher level of administrative support.

3.5.1. Complete **Program Budget Form** for the proposed STEP program.

3.5.2. Provide a detailed budget narrative that includes the following:

- A list of all proposed staff positions for the STEP program, including (if available) staff names, functional titles, FTE allocations, and the number of hours per week supported through the STEP budget.
- A clear narrative for each budget line item, explaining:
 - the necessity and justification of the expense in relation to the program's goals and scope of services; and
 - the methodology used to calculate the requested amount.
- A summary of all matching funds, if applicable, including funding sources, dollar amounts, and how these resources will support the STEP program.
- A description of any in-kind contributions or supplemental resources (e.g., volunteers, interns, donated services), including how they will be integrated into program operations and contribute to service delivery.
- A per-participant cost calculation, including the proportion of costs supported by STEP funds and the proportion covered by other funding sources.

3.6. Additional Required Attachments (*Complete and submit with Bid response.*)

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1. Sample curriculum for each proposed training program;
2. Letters of Intent from each partner describing their roles, responsibilities, and how the partnership will function;
3. Resumes and staff qualifications, including bilingual/bicultural capacity to serve the target population, including languages spoken relative to participant demographics, staff recruitment and retention strategies for bilingual/bicultural roles, and ongoing cultural competency training provided to staff.;
4. For each partner organization, an organizational chart;
5. **Participant Demographics (SFY25 & SFY26):** Information describing participants' countries of origin, age ranges, and highest level of education completed prior to enrolling in the training program (e.g., high school diploma, associate degree, some college, bachelor's degree, etc.).
6. Describe your **Program Outcomes for SFY25 and SFY26** in similar training programs. Please use Attachment #2A.
7. Proposed Outcomes for SFY27. Please use **Attachment #2A**.
8. **Employer Engagement (1-page max.):** Description of existing or proposed employer partnerships, including the role employers will play in shaping training content, providing work-based learning opportunities (e.g., on-the-job training, internships, job shadowing), and hiring program graduates.
9. **Retention Follow Ups (1-page max):** Description of the process for tracking employment retention after placement, including planned follow-up intervals (e.g., 30, 60, and 90 days), the type of support provided to participants who experience job-related barriers after placement, criteria for re-engaging a participant in services if employment is lost, and anticipated short- and long-term retention outcomes.

3.7 Mandatory Required Forms *(Complete and submit with Bid response.)*

1. The most current documentation of the status of the fiscal conduit organization as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit entity
2. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2027 Prequalification Package submission *(applicable only to bidders who are not already prequalified by ORI or another EOHHS agency)*
3. Supplier Diversity Plan (SDP) Form for Purchase of Service
4. Prompt Payment Discount (PPD) Form

3.8 Other Attachments for Informational Purposes Only *(Do not complete and submit with Bid response. These attachments will be required at the time of contract execution and are provided to Bidders for informational purposes only).*

1. Standard Contract Form and Instructions.
2. Commonwealth Terms and Conditions for Human and Social Services

3. Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing form
4. W-9 Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification form
5. Electronic Funds Transfer Register form
6. POS Attachment 1: Program Cover Page
7. POS Attachment 2: Performance Measures

All required forms are posted with the RFR on COMMBUYS.

SECTION 4: EVALUATION CRITERIA

ORI's Evaluation Committee will review and evaluate all responsive proposals using a standardized Evaluation Form with pre-established scoring criteria. Each proposal will be assessed based on the extent to which it satisfies the requirements and evaluation criteria outlined below in this RFR.

- Bidder demonstrated capacity and favorable track record to successful implementation and delivery of proposed training and support services in a timely manner.
- Bidder favorable track record to abide by state policies, directives, state and federal regulations, including reporting requirements and deadlines.
- Capacity to collaborate with other organizations serving refugees and immigrants to ensure services are culturally and linguistically appropriate and responsive to participant needs².
- Bidder capacity and track record in operating training programs and/or support services for refugees and work-authorized immigrants.
- Bidder demonstrated understanding of the need for the proposed services and experience serving the target population.
- Appropriateness of the proposed program design and activities to the purpose of STEP.
- Appropriateness of performance goals, measures and evaluation process.
- Quality of the proposed training and curriculum adapted to the target populations
- Strength and reliability of current agency's employer network
- Effectiveness of evaluation processes in identifying areas for improvement in program design
- Appropriateness of staffing and staff qualifications, including bilingual/bicultural capacity
- Cost-effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed program, including ability to partner to leverage existing resources and non-duplication of services.

In addition to meeting the required submission criteria, proposals will be evaluated on their overall quality, strength of training(s) proposed, training and support services experience, comprehensiveness

² ORI encourages the meaningful participation of RES providers and similarly qualified organizations to strengthen coordination, leverage existing expertise, and promote efficient use of resources. When proposers are otherwise equally qualified, preference will be given to those with demonstrated experience serving these populations and delivering employment services in collaboration with ORR-funded programs.

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of services, strong partnerships and collaborations, feasibility, clarity, innovation and creativity, organizational capacity, and cost-effectiveness.

The Evaluation Committee may also consider any relevant information about the Bidder that is available to or otherwise known by the Commonwealth, as permitted under applicable procurement laws, regulations, and policies.

The Evaluation Committee will:

1. evaluate the Programmatic Responses in accordance with the criteria described above,
2. rate the Bidder's overall Programmatic Response according to the following scale:
"Excellent," "Very Good," "Good," "Fair," "Poor," or "Non-Responsive,"
3. compare the Responses to one another, and
4. assign an overall rating to each Programmatic Response.

ORI will give preference to those proposals that present well-designed, highly demanded training, cost-effective, cost-competitive collaborative models of value to ORI. The Bidder's proposed training cost and number of individuals served will be key factors, but not the sole factor, considered in ORI's evaluation.

ORI will select the Response(s) which, in its sole discretion, it determines demonstrates best overall value to ORI and the Commonwealth.

Actions for Non-Compliance with RFR requirements

ORI, in its sole discretion, may determine that non-compliance with any RFR requirement is insubstantial. In such cases, the Evaluation Committee may:

1. Seek clarification from a Bidder;
2. Allow the Bidder to make technical corrections;
3. Apply appropriate adjustments in the scoring of the evaluation; or
4. Utilize other remedial action ORI deems appropriate, such as applying a combination of all three remedies.

SECTION 5: RFR - REQUIRED SPECIFICATIONS FOR PURCHASE OF SESERVICE (POS)

The following RFR provisions must appear in all Commonwealth competitive procurements conducted under 801 CMR 21.00. In general, most of the required contractual stipulations are referenced in the *Standard Contract Form and Instructions* and the *Commonwealth Terms and Conditions for Human and Social Services* (also referred to as Purchase of Service).

The terms of 801 CMR 21.00: Procurement of Commodities and Services and 808 CMR 1.00: Compliance, Reporting and Auditing for Human and Social Services, are incorporated by reference into this RFR. Words used in this RFR shall have the meanings defined in 801 CMR 21.00 and 808 CMR 1.00. Additional definitions may also be identified in this RFR. Other terms not defined elsewhere in this document may be defined in OSD's [Glossary of Terms](#). Unless otherwise specified

in this RFR, all communications, responses, and documentation must be in English, and all cost proposals or figures in U.S. currency. All responses must be submitted in accordance with the specific terms of this RFR.

5.1. COMMBUYS Market Center

COMMBUYS is the official source of information for this Bid and is publicly accessible at no charge at www.commbuys.com. Information contained in this document and in COMMBUYS, including file attachments and information contained in the related Bid Questions and Answers (Q&A), are all components of the Bid, as referenced in COMMBUYS, and are incorporated into the Bid and any resulting contract.

Bidders are solely responsible for obtaining all information distributed for this Bid via COMMBUYS. Bid Q&A supports Bidder submission of written questions associated with a Bid and publication of official answers.

It is each Bidder's responsibility to check COMMBUYS for:

- Any amendments, addenda, or modifications to this Bid, and
- Any Bid Q&A records related to this Bid.

The Commonwealth accepts no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to Bidders who submit a Quote based on an out-of-date Bid or on information received from a source other than COMMBUYS.

5.2. COMMBUYS Registration

To respond to a Bid, Bidders must register and maintain an active COMMBUYS Seller account. Bidders may elect to obtain a free COMMBUYS Seller registration which provides value-added features, including automated email notification associated with postings and modifications to COMMBUYS records.

All Bidders submitting a Quote (previously referred to as Response) in response to this Bid (previously referred to as Solicitation) agree that, if awarded a contract: (1) they will maintain an active seller account in COMMBUYS; and (2) in the event the Commonwealth adopts an alternate market center system, successful Bidders will be required to utilize such system, as directed by the procuring entity. Commonwealth Commodity Codes are based on the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code (UNSPSC).

COMMBUYS introduces new terminology, with which bidders must be familiar to conduct business with the Commonwealth. To view this terminology and to learn more about COMMBUYS, please visit the [Learn about COMMBUYS](http://www.mass.gov) page on www.mass.gov.

5.3. Multiple Quotes

Bidders may not submit Multiple Quotes in response to a Bid unless the RFR authorizes them to do so. If a Bidder submits multiple quotes in response to an RFR that does not authorize multiple responses, only the latest dated quote submitted prior to the bid opening date will be evaluated.

5.4. Quote Content

Bid specifications will prevail over any proposed Bidder terms entered as part of the Quote, unless otherwise specified in the Bid.

5.5. Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) for POS Contracts

Required for contracts with an estimated annual value greater than \$250,000.00

Program Background

Pursuant to [Executive Order 599](#), the Commonwealth's [Supplier Diversity Program](#) (SDP) promotes business-to-business relationships between awarded Contractors, including health and human service providers, and diverse businesses and non-profit organizations ("SDP Partners") certified or recognized by the [Supplier Diversity Office \(SDO\)](#).

Financial Spending and Reporting Requirements

All Bidders responding to this solicitation are required to make a significant **annual** financial commitment ("SDP Commitment") to partnering with one or more SDO-certified or recognized diverse business enterprise(s) or non-profit organization(s). Providers that are issued a contract from this procurement (Bid) will be required to submit an **annual** "Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan Form for Purchase of Service (POS)" with their Uniform Financial Report (UFR) through the [Operational Services Division's \(OSD\) eFiling](#) site.

Providers that file a UFR exemption request are to submit the SDP Plan Form for POS with their exemption request. The plan will be evaluated yearly by the Commonwealth Department with the most Purchase of Service funding to a provider during the previous fiscal year. This Department commonly is referred to as the Principal Purchasing Agency (PPA).

No contract shall be awarded to a Provider without an SDP Commitment that meets the requirements stated herein. This requirement extends to **all** Providers regardless of their own supplier diversity certification.

SDP Commitment Goal for POS Providers

It is **desirable** that Providers aim to direct at least 1% of their Commonwealth contract revenue toward spending with SDP Partners. The Provider's percentage of spending with SDP Partner(s) for the prior fiscal year can be seen as "PERCENT (%) OF POS SPEND" on the completed "SDP Plan Form for POS" for that fiscal year.

SDP Plan Form Submission Requirements for this RFR

Providers responding to this RFR are required to submit a copy of the "SDP Plan Form for POS" most recently filed via the [OSD's UFR eFiling](#) website. If the content of the "SDP Plan Form for POS" being submitted with the response to this RFR deviates from the form filed via the [UFR eFiling](#) website or if the form was not filed, the Bidder is additionally required to submit the "SDP Plan Form for POS" via the UFR as a "Refile UFR/Piecemeal UFR Filing."

Providers that do not currently hold POS contracts with Commonwealth Departments have to complete the Form and include it with their proposal. The "SDP Plan Form for POS" may be found at the COMMBUYS Bid Solicitation; File Attachments Section.

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Eligible SDP Partner Certification Categories and Directories

SDP Partners must be business enterprises and/or non-profit organizations certified or recognized by the SDO in one or more of the following certification categories:

- Minority-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE)
- Minority Non-Profit Organization (M/NPO)
- Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE)
- Women Non-Profit Organization (W/NPO)
- Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (VBE)
- Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE)
- Disability-Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Business Enterprise (LBGTBE)

Only spending with SDP Partners that appear in the [SDO Directory of Certified Businesses](#) or in the [U.S. Dept of Veterans Affairs VetBiz Vendor Directory](#) shall be counted toward a Contractor's compliance with their SDP Commitment. Spending with SDP Partners that do not appear in the directories above shall not be counted towards meeting a Contractor's SDP Commitment.

It is always the responsibility of the Contractor to ensure they meet their SDP Commitment, and the SDO, and the issuing Department, assume no responsibility for any Contractor's failure to meet its SDP Commitment.

Eligible Types of Business-to-Business Relationships

Bidders and Contractors may engage SDP Partners as follows:

- **Subcontracting**, defined as a partnership in which the SDP partner is involved in the provision of products and/or services to the Commonwealth.
- **Ancillary Products and Services**, defined as a business relationship in which the SDP partner provides products or services that are not directly related to the Contractor's contract with the Commonwealth but may be related to the Contractor's own operational needs. These may include but are not limited to the following examples: professional services (e.g., IT, legal, advertising, HR, accounting etc.), maintenance services (e.g., cleaning, landscaping, tradespersons services, etc.), office expenses (e.g., office supplies, furniture, IT supplies, etc.). Anything declared as a business expense in which a certified vendor is used would qualify.

Other types of business-to-business relationships are not acceptable under this contract. All provisions of this RFR applicable to subcontracting shall apply equally to the engagement of SDP Partners as subcontractors.

Program Flexibility

The SDP encompasses the following provisions to support Bidders in establishing and maintaining sustainable business-to-business relationships meeting their needs:

- SDP Partners are **not** required to be subcontractors.
- SDP Partners are **not** required to be Massachusetts-based businesses.
- SDP Partners **may be changed or added** during the term of the contract, provided the Contractor continues to meet its SDP Commitment.

Evaluation of SDP Forms

To encourage Bidders and Contractors to develop substantial supplier diversity initiatives and commitments as measures valuable to the Commonwealth, at least 25% of the total available evaluation points for this bid solicitation shall be allocated to the evaluation of the SDP Plan submissions. A portion of the score may also be allocated to the evaluation of additional equity and inclusion criteria relevant to health and human services, including but not limited to addressing racial disparities, health equity, as well as cultural and linguistic accessibility and proficiency; however, the total score allocation for such additional criteria may not exceed 10% of the total evaluation score

SDP Spending Verification

The SDO and the contracting Department reserve the right to contact SDP Partners at any time to request that they attest to the amounts reported to have been paid to them by the Contractor.

Program Resources and Assistance

Contractors seeking assistance in the development of their SDP Plans or identification of potential SDP Partners may visit the SDP webpage, www.mass.gov/sdp, or contact the SDP Help Desk at sdp@mass.gov.

5.6. Best Value Selection and Negotiation

The Procurement Management Team or PMT (also known as Strategic Sourcing Team or SST) may select the response(s) which demonstrates the best value overall, including proposed alternatives that will achieve the procurement goals of the department. If services are not rate regulated, the PMT and a selected bidder, or a contractor, may negotiate a change in any element of contract performance or cost identified in the original RFR or the selected bidder's or contractor's response, which results in a more cost effective or better value.

5.7. Bidder Communication

Bidders are prohibited from communicating directly with any employee of the procuring department or any member of the PMT regarding this RFR except as specified in this RFR, and no other individual Commonwealth employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any question or inquiry concerning this RFR. Bidders may contact the contact person for this RFR in the event this RFR is incomplete or the bidder is having trouble obtaining any required attachments electronically through COMMBUYS.

5.8. Contract Expansion

If additional funds become available during the contract duration period, the department reserves the right to increase the maximum obligation or the number of units purchased to some or all contracts executed as a result of this RFR or to execute contracts with contractors not funded in the initial selection process, subject to available funding, satisfactory contract performance, and service need.

5.9. Costs

Costs which are not specifically identified in the bidder's response and accepted by a department as part of a contract will not be compensated under any contract awarded pursuant to this RFR. The Commonwealth will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders responding to this RFR.

5.10. Debriefing

POS requirement only. Non-successful bidders may request a debriefing from the department that issued the RFR. Department debriefing procedures may be found in the RFR. Non-successful POS bidders aggrieved by the decision of a department must participate in a debriefing as a prerequisite to an administrative appeal.

5.11. Debriefing/Appeals: Administrative Appeals to Departments

POS requirement only. Non-successful bidders who participate in the debriefing process and remain aggrieved with the decision of the department may appeal that decision to the department head. Department appeal procedures may be found in the RFR.

5.12. Debriefing/Appeals: Administrative Appeals to OSD

POS requirement only. Non-successful bidders who participate in the department appeal process and remain aggrieved by the selection decision of the department may appeal the department's decision to the Operational Services Division. The basis for an appeal to OSD is limited to the following grounds:

1. The competitive procurement conducted by the department failed to comply with applicable regulations and guidelines. These would be limited to the requirements of 801 CMR 21.00 or any successor regulations, the policies in the OSD Procurement Information Center, subsequent policies and procedures issued by OSD, and the specifications of the RFR; or
2. There was a fundamental unfairness in the procurement process. The allegation of unfairness or bias is one that is easier to allege than prove, consequently, the burden of proof rests with the bidder to provide sufficient and specific evidence in support of its claim. OSD will presume that departments conducted a fair procurement absent documentation to the contrary.

Requests for an appeal must be sent to the attention of the Operational Services Division, Legal and Compliance Office, Room 1608, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108 and be received within fourteen (14) calendar days of the postmark of the notice of the department head's decision on appeal. Appeal requests must specify in sufficient detail the basis for the appeal. Sufficient detail requires a description of the published policy or procedure which was applied and forms the basis for the appeal and presentation of all information that supports the claim under paragraphs 1 or 2 above. OSD reserves the right to reject appeal requests based on grounds other than those stated above or those submitted without sufficient detail on the basis for the appeal.

The decision of the Operational Services Division shall be rendered, in writing, setting forth the grounds for the decision within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of the appeal request. Pending appeals to the Operational Services Division shall not prohibit the department from proceeding with executing contracts.

5.13. Electronic Communication/Update of Bidder's/Contractor's Contract Information

It is the responsibility of the prospective bidder and awarded contractor to keep current on COMMBUYS the email address of the bidder's contact person and prospective contract manager, if awarded a contract, and to monitor that email inbox for communications from the PMT, including requests for clarification. The PMT and the Commonwealth assume no responsibility if a prospective bidder's/awarded contractor's designated email address is not current, or if technical problems,

including those with the prospective bidder's/awarded contractor's computer, network, or internet service provider (ISP) cause email communications sent to/from the prospective bidder/awarded contractor and the PMT to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering.

5.14. Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

All Bidders must agree to participate in the Commonwealth Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) program for receiving payments. Additional information about EFT is available on the Comptroller's VendorWeb site located at: <https://massfinance.state.ma.us/VendorWeb/vendor.asp>.

Upon notification of award, Contractors are required to enroll in EFT by completing and submitting the "Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form" to the SST for review, approval, and forwarding to the Office of the Comptroller, unless already enrolled in EFT. A copy of the form will be supplied to the successful bidder upon award. This form, and all information contained on this form, shall not be considered a public record and shall not be subject to public disclosure through a public records request.

5.15. Executive Order 509, Establishing Nutrition Standards for Food Purchased and Served by State Agencies.

Food purchased and served by state agencies must comply with Executive Order 509, issued in January 2009. Under this Executive Order, all contracts resulting from procurements posted after July 1, 2009, that involve the purchase and provision of food must comply with nutrition guidelines established by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). The nutrition guidelines are available on the Department's website: [Executive Order # 509 Guidance](#).

5.16. Filing Requirements

Successful bidders must have electronically uploaded their Uniform Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report (UFR), as required for current contractors, with the Operational Services Division to the UFR eFiling application for the most recently completed fiscal year before a contract may be executed and services begin. Other contractor qualification/risk management reporting requirements and non-filing consequences promulgated by secretariats or departments pursuant to 808 CMR 1.04(3) also may apply. In the event immediate services are required by a department, a contract may be executed, and services may begin with the approval of OSD or the appropriate secretariat. However, unless authorized by OSD or the appropriate secretariat, the contractor will not be paid for any such services rendered until the UFR has been filed.

5.17. HIPAA: Business Associate Contractual Obligations

Bidders are notified that any department meeting the definition of a Covered Entity under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) will include in the RFR and resulting contract sufficient language establishing the successful bidder's contractual obligations, if any, that the department will require to comply with HIPAA and the privacy and security regulations promulgated thereunder (45 CFR Parts 160, 162, and 164) (the Privacy and Security Rules). For example, if the department determines that the successful bidder is a business associate performing functions or activities involving protected health information, as such terms are used in the Privacy and Security Rules, then the department will include in the RFR and resulting contract a sufficient description of business associate's contractual obligations regarding the privacy and security of the protected health information, as listed in 45 CFR 164.314 and 164.504 (e), including, but not limited

to, the bidder's obligation to: implement administrative, physical, and technical safeguards that reasonably and appropriately protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the protected health information (in whatever form it is maintained or used, including verbal communications); provide individuals access to their records; and strictly limit use and disclosure of the protected health information for only those purposes approved by the department. Further, the department reserves the right to add any requirement during the course of the contract that it determines must be included in the contract to comply with the Privacy and Security Rules. Please see other sections of the RFR for further HIPAA details, if applicable.

5.18. Minimum Quote (Bid Response) Duration

Bidders' Quotes made in response to this Bid must remain in effect for at least 90 days from the date of quote submission.

5.19. Public Records

All responses and information submitted in response to this RFR are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L., c. 66, s. 10, and to c. 4, s. 7, ss. 26. Any statements in submitted responses that are inconsistent with these statutes shall be disregarded.

5.20. Reasonable Accommodation

Bidders with disabilities or hardships that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of RFR information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to the contact person. Requests for accommodation will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. A bidder requesting accommodation must submit a written statement which describes the bidder's disability and the requested accommodation to the contact person for the RFR. The PMT reserves the right to reject unreasonable requests.

5.21. Restriction on the Use of the Commonwealth Seal

Bidders and contractors are not allowed to display the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Seal in their bid package or subsequent marketing materials if they are awarded a contract, because use of the coat of arms and the Great Seal of the Commonwealth for advertising or commercial purposes is prohibited by law.

5.22. Subcontracting Policies

Prior approval of the department is required for any subcontracted service of the contract. Contractors are responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of their subcontractors. Human and social service subcontractors also are required to meet the same state and federal financial and program reporting requirements and are held to the same reimbursable cost standards as contractors.

5.23. Workplace Violence Prevention and Crisis Response Plan

101 CMR 19.00, Workplace Violence Prevention and Crisis Response Plan, governs the procedures and criteria for workplace violence prevention and response plans for programs that provide direct services to clients that are operated, licensed, certified, or funded by a department, commission, office, board, division, institution, or other entity within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services under M.G.L. c. 6A § 16. Any direct service program that contracts with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) or the constituent agencies of EOHHS must comply with 101

CMR 19.00, including having a plan that meets the criteria set forth in 101 CMR 19.04, which is updated annually, available electronically, and provided to any human service worker upon request. The regulations and response plan guidelines are available at the following web site: <https://www.mass.gov/regulations/101-CMR-1900-workplace-violence-prevention-and-crisis-response-plan-0>.

SECTION 6: ADDITIONAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIFICATIONS

6.1. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Standard Contract Form, Terms and Conditions

Any Bidder selected as the Contractor shall agree to and abide by the terms of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Standard Contract Form; Standard Contract Form Instructions and Contractor Certifications and the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions. ORI is prohibited from amending these documents or agreeing to any change in the language. Any Bidder suggestion or requirement altering these documents will be disregarded.

6.2. Background Check Requirements

The following background check requirements apply to all staffing for the services provided under any Contract resulting from this RFR, including staffing and volunteers of any subcontractor providing such services. Contractor must comply with 101 CMR 15.00, et seq. Pursuant to 101 CMR 15.00, the Contractor must conduct a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check for all applicants, employees, and volunteers seeking a paid or unpaid position under this Contract who may have contact with program clients. Contractor must also comply with all prescribed actions set forth in 101 CMR 15.09, as appropriate. Additionally, as provided in 101 CMR 15.09(5), Contractor must comply with the requirements of the Division of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) governing CORI at 803 CMR 2.00 et seq.

In the event of a background check result that requires additional approval from ORI to proceed, consistent with 101 CMR 15.00, Contractor must obtain written authorization from ORI's Executive Director or designee.

6.3. Protection of Personal Data and Information

In the performance of any Contract resulting from this RFR, the Contractor will access "personal data," as defined in M.G.L. c. 66A, and that in so doing it will become a "holder" of personal data under M.G.L. c. 66A. As a holder of personal data, Contractor must agree to maintain the privacy and security of such personal data and otherwise comply with all requirements of M.G.L. c. 66A and 801 CMR 3.00, with respect to such personal data.

The Contractor further shall be required to comply with all additional applicable state and federal regulatory, statutory, and other requirements related to protected information and data, including M.G.L. c. 93H, M.G.L. c. 93I, 201 CMR 17, and other applicable laws, regulations, and policies. ORI may require specific written assurance and further agreements regarding the security and privacy of Protected Information. To protect the security of protected data, Contractor shall comply with the [Enterprise Information Security Policies and Standards](#) published by the Executive Office for Technology Services and Security (EOTSS). ORI may specify additional requirements with respect to personal data and information, and other Commonwealth Data in the final contract.

6.4. Program Modifications and New Initiatives

ORI shall have the option at its sole discretion to modify, increase, reduce or terminate any activity related to the resulting Contract whenever, in the judgment of ORI, the goals of the project have been modified or altered in a way that necessitates such changes. In the event that the scope of work or portion thereof must be changed, ORI shall provide written notice of such action to the Contractor, and the parties shall negotiate in good faith to implement any such changes proposed by ORI.

ORI additionally reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to amend the resulting Contract to implement state or federal statutory or regulatory requirements, judicial orders, settlement agreements, or any state or federal initiatives or changes affecting ORI or the Contract.

Notwithstanding the generality of the foregoing, ORI reserves the right to amend any resulting Contract to implement new initiatives or modify initiatives related to: New programs or funding initiatives of the state or federal government; Expansion of or changes to existing ORI programs; Other programs as specified by ORI; Programs or program changes resulting from state or federal legislation, regulations, policies and initiatives, or judicial decisions that may affect in whole or in part ORI or the Contract; and Quality or programmatic review activities for any ORI program.

The parties shall negotiate in good faith to implement any such initiative proposed by ORI. The Contractor's responsibilities are subject to change due to implementation of such initiatives. ORI reserves the right to modify the Contract due to program modifications. In addition, the Contractor may request an opportunity to enter into negotiations with ORI over amendments to the Contract related to new initiatives or modified initiatives as described in this section. ORI may grant such a request in its sole discretion. Any changes under this section shall be subject to appropriate approvals.