Section 1: OVERVIEW

Title. Community Services Block Grant CARES Supplemental – Continuity of Operations Plan Request for Procurement Proposals (CSBG CARES-COOP_RFP_03/22/21).

Summary. The Connecticut Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA) is soliciting proposals for non-profit Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) services from expert, independent, certified individuals/firms to review and evaluate COOPs currently in place for CAFCA and the state’s nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs), and to identify weaknesses and areas needing improvement. The goal of the COOPs is to mitigate the risk related to a disruption in organization operation and essential functions after an emergency, natural disaster, technology breaches, planned and unplanned disruption that causes an interruption of the organization's operations in service provision. The successful respondent will be expected to actively engage and partner with CAFCA’s senior staff to provide services as further defined below in Section 4: Scope of Work. The Consultant will be expected to possess expert knowledge of Business Continuity of Operations planning and related training and technical assistance requirements, in order to provide effective guidance, support and direction to the CT CAA Network.

Term. The term of the work shall be 1 year from May 1, 2021 through April 30, 2022, with options to extend up by one month, up to five times, by one month each. The estimated maximum funding available through this RFP is between $75,000 - $100,000 and will be determined through contractual negotiations with the successful applicant derived from identified and approved deliverables, tasks and assignments.

Fund Identification. Federal funding has been provided for this contract as follows:
- Award Name: Community Services Block Grant - CARES Act Supplemental Award
- Award Year: 2020
- Name of Federal Agency Awarding: Department of Health and Human Services
- CFDA (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance) Title: Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
- CFDA (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance) Number: 93.569
Community Services Block Grant CARES Supplemental – Continuity of Operations Plan
Request for Procurement Proposals (CARES-COOP_RFP_03/22/21)

Definitions and Acronyms

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<tr>
<td>CAA</td>
<td>Community Action Agency</td>
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<td>CAFCA</td>
<td>The Connecticut Association for Community Action</td>
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<td>COOP</td>
<td>Business Continuity of Operations Plan</td>
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<td>CT</td>
<td>Connecticut</td>
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<td>Prospective Respondent</td>
<td>A person or organization that may submit an application in response to this RFP, but has not yet done so</td>
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<td>RBA</td>
<td>Results Based Accountability</td>
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<td>Respondent</td>
<td>A person or organization that has submitted an application in response to this RFP</td>
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<td>RFP</td>
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<td>ROMA</td>
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<td>T/TA</td>
<td>Training &amp; Technical Assistance</td>
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<td>U.S.</td>
<td>United States</td>
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Section 2: BACKGROUND OF CAFCA AND CT’S COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

CAFCA. The Connecticut Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA) is the state association for Connecticut’s nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs), the state and federally designated antipoverty agencies, established by President Johnson to help fight the War on Poverty. Through our strong partnership with the state and federal agencies, community-based organizations, and other state, regional, and national partners, we work to address the causes and conditions of poverty in Connecticut.

CAFCA is committed to promoting and enhancing the overall direct human services delivery system(s) of the Connecticut Community Action Agency (CAA) Network. CAFCA provides comprehensive administrative and organizational support services to the CAAs, including but not limited to providing training and technical assistance; convening workgroups and conferences; soliciting input from CAAs and responding on behalf of Connecticut CAAs on the economic impact of the Coronavirus on CAAs’ organizational viability and fiscal health. Said activities are intended to strengthen and improve the CAA Network’s ability to continue the provision of its contracted services when conditions disrupt the workplace environment.

CAFCA serves Connecticut’s CAAs through:
- Training & Technical Assistance (T/TA)
- Information dissemination on state and national initiatives
- Advocacy & Public Policy
- Assistance with program administration
- Planning state & regional conferences and events
- Information technology support
CAFCA’s data reporting method utilizes a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework called Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA). This allows Connecticut’s CAAs to efficiently and effectively measure meaningful customer, agency, and community outcomes and results. Through these initiatives, CAFCA is a recognized leader in providing individuals, families, and communities with the appropriate tools, skills, and opportunities needed for economic stability and self-sufficiency.

Last year, over 200,000 people from across Connecticut received assistance from their local Community Action Agencies (CAAs). They got help with immediate needs like food, heat, and child care, as well as with longer-term needs and goals, such as job training, sustainable housing, and asset development. CAAs serve every city and town in Connecticut, providing a wide array of resources and supports to help people improve their financial, economic, and social well-being.

**CAFCA Mission statement.** To strengthen the capacity of our members to empower people in need and improve the communities in which they live.

**CT’s Community Action Agencies (CAAs).** Through the identification and removal of social and economic barriers, the mobilization of community resources, advocacy, and the provision of direct services at the community level, CAAs use cost-effective and community-based processes to help limited income people and communities in all 169 cities and towns across the state. Below is a map of the CAA Network (you can also access an interactive map [here](#)):
Section 3: RFP INFORMATION

Availability. The RFP, addenda to the RFP, and other information associated with this procurement are available in electronic format at the following locations:

- CAFCA’s web site (www.cafca.org/jobs/)
- It is strongly recommended that any respondent or prospective respondent interested in this procurement check CAFCA’s website for updates or subscribe to receive e-mail alerts from the State Contracting Portal. Subscribers will receive a daily e-mail announcing procurements and addenda that are posted on the portal. This service is provided as a courtesy to assist in monitoring activities associated with State procurements, including this RFP.

Contracts. The offer of the right to negotiate a contract pursuant to this RFP is dependent upon the availability of funding to CAFCA.

Eligibility. Eligible quality management consultants will be those individuals, businesses and firms that have the following qualifications:

- Proposer must have a minimum of three years demonstrated experience and expertise in regard to providing the types of services outlined in the Scope of Work.
- Proposer should have a proven track record in providing these types of or similar services for non-profit entities. Special consideration will be given to individuals, businesses or firms who have worked with Community Action Agencies or state associations.
- Minority/Women’s Business Entities are encouraged to apply.
- Preference will be given to Connecticut-based businesses.
- CAFCA reserves the right to reject the submission of any respondent in default of any current or prior contract.

Procurement Schedule. CAFCA may amend the schedule, as needed. Any change will be made by means of an addendum to this RFP and will be posted on the State Contracting Portal and CAFCA’s Jobs page on its website.

- RFP Released: 3/22/2021
- Deadline for Questions: 3/30/2021
- Answers Released (tentative): 4/5/2021
- Proposals Due: 4/15/2021
- Award Decision (tentative): 4/24/2021
- Start of Contract (tentative): 5/1/2021

Inquiry Procedures. All questions regarding this RFP or CAFCA’s procurement process must be directed, in writing, to RFP@cafca.org before the deadline specified in the Procurement Schedule. The early submission of questions is encouraged. Questions will not be accepted or answered verbally – neither in person nor over the telephone. All questions received before the deadline will be answered. However, CAFCA will not answer questions when the source is unknown (e.g., nuisance or anonymous questions). Questions deemed unrelated to the RFP or the procurement process will not be answered. At its discretion, CAFCA may or may not respond to questions received after the deadline. CAFCA may combine similar questions and give only one answer. All questions and answers will be compiled into a written addendum to this RFP. If any answer to any question constitutes a material change to the RFP, the question and answer will be placed at the beginning of the addendum and duly noted as such. The
agency will release the answers to questions on the date established in the Procurement Schedule. CAFCA will publish any and all amendments and addenda to this RFP on the State Contracting Portal and on CAFCA’s web site.

**Proposal Due-Date and Time.** The Official Contact is the only authorized recipient of proposals submitted in response to this RFP. Proposals must be received by the Official Contact on or before the due date and time:

- **Due Date:** 4/15/2021
- **Time:** 2:00 p.m. Eastern
- **Via email to RFP@cafca.org**

Respondents shall email their proposal and supporting documentation to the official contact at RFP@cafca.org. Please be aware of the amount of time it may take for an electronic submission to be sent from one server and accepted by another server, as well as of problems sometimes encountered with large file sizes. The electronic copies of the proposal shall be compatible with Microsoft Office Word or in PDF format, except for the Budget and Budget Justification, which may be compatible with Microsoft Office Excel.

The proposal must be signed; signatures may be electronic. The proposal must be complete, properly formatted and outlined, and ready for evaluation by the Evaluation Team. Note: Proposals received after the stated deadline may be accepted as a clerical function but will not be reviewed.

**Timing Sequence.**
The timing and sequence of events associated with this RFP shall ultimately be determined by CAFCA.

- **Amending or Canceling RFP:** CAFCA reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP on any date and at any time, if CAFCA deems it to be necessary, appropriate, or otherwise in the best interests of the State.
- **No Acceptable Proposals:** In the event that no acceptable proposals are submitted in response to this RFP, the CAFCA may reopen the procurement process, if it is determined to be in the best interests of CAFCA.
- **Contract Offer and Rejection of Proposals:** CAFCA reserves the right to offer in part, and/or to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part, for misrepresentation or if the proposal limits or modifies any of the terms, conditions, or specifications of this RFP. CAFCA may waive minor technical defects, irregularities, or omissions, if in its judgment the best interests of CAFCA will be served. CAFCA reserves the right to reject the proposal of any respondent who submits a proposal after the submission date and time.
- **Sole Property of CAFCA:** All proposals submitted in response to this RFP are to be the sole property of CAFCA. Any product, whether acceptable or unacceptable, developed under a contract executed as a result of this RFP shall be the sole property of CAFCA, unless stated otherwise in this RFP or subsequent contract. The right to publish, distribute, or disseminate any and all information or reports, or part thereof, shall accrue to CAFCA without recourse.
- **Contract Negotiation:** CAFCA reserves the right to negotiate or contract for all or any portion of the services contained in this RFP. CAFCA further reserves the right to contract with one or more respondent(s) for such services. After reviewing the scored criteria, the CAFCA may seek Best and Final Offers (BAFO) on cost from respondents. CAFCA may set parameters on any BAFOs received.
• Clerical Errors in Contract Offer: CAFCA reserves the right to correct inaccurate contract offers resulting from its clerical errors. This may include, in extreme circumstances, revoking the offer of a contract already made to a respondent and subsequently offering the contract to another respondent. Such action on the part of CAFCA shall not constitute a breach of contract on the part of CAFCA since the contract with the initial respondent is deemed to be void ab initio and of no effect as if no contract ever existed between CAFCA and the respondent.

• Key Personnel: When CAFCA is the sole funder of a purchased service, CAFCA reserves the right to approve any additions, deletions, or changes in key personnel, with the exception of key personnel who have terminated employment. CAFCA also reserves the right to approve replacements for key personnel who have terminated employment. CAFCA further reserves the right to require the removal and replacement of any of the respondent’s key personnel who do not perform adequately, regardless of whether they were previously approved by the CAFCA.

• Additional Conditions. All those submitting proposals must be willing to adhere to the following additional conditions and must positively state this in their proposal:
  o The proposer must certify that the personnel identified in its response to this RFP will be the person actually assigned to this project. At its discretion, CAFCA may require the removal and replacement of any of the proposer’s personnel who do not perform adequately, regardless of whether they were previously approved by CAFCA.
  o All subcontractors hired by the proposers awarded a contract or purchase order as a result of this RFP must have prior approval of CAFCA prior to and during the agreement period. However, please note that CAFCA prefers not to have the services subcontracted.
  o Any contract or purchase order resulting from this RFP process will represent the entire agreement between the proposer and CAFCA will supersede all prior negotiations, representations or agreements, alleged or made, between the parties. CAFCA shall assume no liability for payment for services under the terms of the contract or purchase order until the successful proposer is notified that the contract or purchase order has been accepted and approved by CAFCA. Any contract resulting from this RFP may be amended only by means of a written instrument signed by the proposer and signed by the Executive Director.

Section 4: SCOPE OF WORK

1. The overall object of this RFP is to create, implement and test COOP templates, as well provide technical assistance with revisions to existing plans and/or support the CAA Network with development and implementation of a COOP. The successful respondent will be expected to actively engage and partner with CAFCA’s senior staff to provide services as further defined below. The Consultant will be expected to possess expert knowledge of Business Continuity of Operations Planning and related training and technical assistance requirements in order to provide effective guidance, support and direction to the CT CAA Network.

2. The following scope of services is provided as a general overview which may be expanded and further defined through negotiations:
   a. Assess CAFCA’s and each CAA’s COOP current capacity.
   b. Review CAFCA and each CAA’s critical systems and prioritize systems in order of critical recovery time (systems that need immediate recovery vs. systems that can wait).
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c. Assist CAFCA and each CAA with the establishment of written policy and procedures to document how critical organizations function will continue to operate and that personnel and resources are relocated to an alternate facility in case of emergencies.

d. Assist CAFCA and each CAA, as appropriate, in formally documenting all roles, responsibilities and procedures necessary to resume essential functions after an emergency, natural disaster, technology breaches, planned and unplanned disruption that causes an interruption of the organization's operations.

e. Conduct informative interviews with CAA Network to assess current capacities and identify barriers and technical assistance needs.

f. Issue a report that summarizes each CAA’s current capacities, barriers and technical assistance needs. At a minimum, the assessment shall review the following areas related the continuity of its business operations: natural disaster, health pandemic, loss of electricity, floods, disruption in staffing levels, unsafe workplace environment, or any other type of business disruption.

g. Determine whether additional controls or policies need to be implemented or existing controls/policies strengthened for those CAAs that have existing policies.

h. Evaluate policies and procedures judged against professional standards, policy, manuals, law, etc.; identify difficulties and opportunities for improvements.

i. Successful Narrative response shall describe development of COOPs for non-profits; training and technical assistance provision to non-profits; writing sample of developed COOP; identification of essential components; describe respondent’s strengths and weaknesses; experience working with CAAs, if any, and identification of five (5) of the most common errors made in the development of a COOP.

j. Submit workplan that clearly delineates work to be performed and applicable reimbursement for said activities.

3. All activities must be submitted and accepted by CAFCA no later than September 30, 2022.

Section 5: PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals must include accurate and complete information for each of the items listed below. At CAFCA’s discretion, failure to do so could result in disqualification.

Required Outline. All proposals must follow the required outline presented below.

1. Cover Sheet. The Cover Sheet is Page 1 of the proposal.
2. Table of Contents. All proposals must include a Table of Contents that conforms to the required proposal outline.
3. Executive Summary. Proposals must include a high-level summary not exceeding one page.
4. Main Body of Proposal – see below
5. Work Plan/Timeline – see below
6. Attachments – see below

Main Body of Proposal. Please include the following:

1. Proposer Information: Please provide the Firm Name; permanent mail office address and website; date the firm organized; legal form of ownership (if a corporation, indicate where incorporated); number of years engaged in the services provided under the entity’s present
name; and names, titles, reporting relationships, background, and experience of the principal members of your organization, including officers.

2. Organizational Overview: Describe the background and experience of the Respondent and any proposed subcontractors. The responses must also address details regarding the size and resources of the Respondent and any proposed subcontractors, and their experience relevant to the knowledge of Business Continuity of Operations Planning and related training and technical assistance requirements in order to provide effective guidance, support and direction to non-profits. Please be sure to include, for the bidding organization and any subcontractors:
   a. Date of agency establishment, the agency mission at time of establishment, the current agency mission and, if the current agency mission is different from the original, a description of the changes in focus that led to the current mission.
   b. Agency size, including annual budget, revenues, number and type of personnel.
   c. A listing and brief description of other programs operated by the organization.
   d. Organizational changes within the last two years, including any reorganization and/or turnover of key personnel, acquired grants for current programs, lost grants, including the reasons for loss of grants.
   e. Technological capabilities, challenges, and goals of the bidding organization.
   f. Agency experience relevant to the functions to be performed under this Request for Proposal and a listing and summary of recent contracts (defined contracts that are currently or were during the past five years in effect) for similar services.

3. Administrative and Operational Capabilities - Include a summary of the overall qualifications to implement a CAA Network project of Business Continuity of Operations Planning and related training and technical assistance requirements in order to provide effective guidance, support and direction to non-profits. This section should include, at a minimum:
   a. Experience/Expertise and Capabilities - Summarize overall expertise and capabilities to implement the CAA Network project described in this procurement.
   b. Philosophy statement and business focus. A statement of the respondent’s philosophy and approach in undertaking the services of the nature outlined in the RFP, as well as a description of its primary business focus.
   c. Identify who will be the primary client relationship manager and other key staff for this project proposal.
   d. Provide a general representation of the key factors and other important considerations that you feel separates your organization/firm from others in providing requested services.
   e. Provide a detailed description of your firm’s technical resources and experience in providing the desired scope of services.
   f. Summary of relevant experience. A listing of projects that the respondent has completed within the last three (3) years of a similar nature to those included in the Scope of Services in this RFP must be provided.
   g. Provide contact information for those projects including name of customer’s project officer, title, address, telephone number, and email address.
   h. Experience serving culturally and linguistically diverse populations.
   i. Experience providing services that are culturally sensitive and appropriate.
   j. Describe how the Respondent contributed creativity, innovation, and problem-solving expertise to a collaborative relationship with the non-profit or commercial vendor for selected contracts listed above.

4. List all sanctions, fines, penalties, or letters of noncompliance issued against the Respondent by any of the contracting entities listed above during the three years immediately preceding the
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release date of this RFP (the list shall describe the circumstance eliciting the sanction or letter of noncompliance and the corrective action or resolution to the sanction, fine, penalty, or letters of noncompliance; if no sanctions, fines, penalties, or letters of noncompliance were issued, a statement that attests that no sanction, penalty, or compliance action has been imposed on the Respondent within the three years immediately preceding the date of this RFP must be submitted).

Work Plan and Timeline.
1. Work Plan. To submit a responsive proposal, the Respondent shall summarize the proposed Work Plan:
   a. Identify key elements and their importance specific to a COOP.
   b. Describe the delivery model that would be followed.
   c. Identify key staff and their responsibility to carry out work plan.
   d. Describe communication methods to carry out this project.
   e. Services Expected from CAFCA. Identify the nature and scope of the services that would be generally required of CAFCA in undertaking this project.

2. Deliverable Timeline. To submit a responsive proposal, the Respondent shall summarize of its proposed timeline to complete projected deliverables. Key elements of the work plan are as follows: initial work plan submission, assessment of existing COOPs, identification of proposed required elements for a COOP, initial COOP template submission, final COOP template submission, proposed technical assistance, submittal of initial COOP for the CAA Network, submittal of final COOP for the CAA Network.

Attachments. Please include as attachments:
1. Proof of insurance - Before commencing performance, the Contractor shall obtain and maintain the following insurance coverage at its own cost and expense for the duration of the Contract:
   a. Commercial General Liability. $1,000,000 combined single limit per occurrence for bodily injury, personal injury and property damage. Coverage shall include Premises and Operations, Independent Contractors, Products and Completed Operations, Contractual Liability, and Broad Form Property Damage coverage. If a general aggregate is used, the general aggregate limit shall apply separately to the services to be performed under this Contract or the general aggregate limit shall be twice the occurrence limit.
   b. Automobile Liability. $1,000,000 combined single limit per accident for bodily injury. Coverage extends to owned, hired and non-owned automobiles. If the Contractor does not own an automobile, but one is used in the execution of this Contract, then only hired and non-owned coverage is required. If a vehicle is not used in the execution of this Contract then automobile coverage is not required.
   c. Professional Liability. $1,000,000 limit of liability, if applicable; and/or
   d. Workers' Compensation and Employers Liability. Statutory coverage in compliance with the Compensation laws of the State of Connecticut. Coverage shall include Employer's Liability with minimum limits of $100,000 each accident, $500,000 Disease with a Policy limit of $100,000 each employee.

2. Business Cost Proposal (See Section 6)
Style Requirements. Submitted proposals must conform to the following specifications:

1. Paper Size: Generally, 8½” x 11” in “portrait” orientation. Optionally key graphics, diagrams and flow charts can use 11” x 17” in “landscape” orientation.
2. Font Size: 11- or 12-point. Please use an easy-to-read font, such as Times New Roman or Calibri.
3. Margins: All margins shall be 1”.
5. Pagination. The respondent’s name must be displayed in the header of each page. All pages, from the Cover Sheet through the required Appendices and Forms, must be numbered consecutively in the footer.

Section 6: BUSINESS COST PROPOSAL

Original written materials will be evaluated based on the needs and requirements of the work. While the consultant’s rate is an important aspect of evaluating the Request for Proposals (RFP), it will be weighed equally with quality of writing, provided examples, and references.

Each proposal must include cost information and other financial information in the following order.

1. Business Cost Proposal - Provide the hourly rates for the key positions who will be responsible for the success of the project. Hourly rates must be all-inclusive (i.e., consulting services, administrative expenses, travel expenses, attendance at meetings, and any other activities initiated to fulfill the requirements of this RFP). Please also include the total cost of the proposal, which should be in the range of $75,000-$100,000.
2. Business Narrative (maximum two pages) - Provide a written explanation of the proposed all-inclusive hourly rates for the key positions and for the total cost of the proposal. The narrative must also include any business, economic, legal, programmatic, or practical assumptions that underlie the cost proposal. The Respondent may separately identify cost-saving and cost-avoidance methods and measures and the effect of such methods and measures on the cost proposal and requirements of the RFP.
3. Cost Standards - Budgetary information included in the Respondent’s response to this RFP must comply with the Federal Cost Standards titled the Uniform Guidance. The Uniform Guidance cost principles are available online and can be accessed by clicking on the following link: CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part200.pdf (govinfo.gov).
4. Payment Structure - The contractor shall be paid in accordance with expenditures incurred in accordance with the approved cost summary. While specific payment terms will be made final during contract negotiations, it is expected that payments will be made monthly, contingent upon the contractor’s timely compliance with the resultant contract deliverables including, but not limited to, the contractor’s submission and CAFCA’s acceptance of all required reports and payment invoices.

Section 7: EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Evaluation Criteria. The following elements will be the primary considerations in evaluating all proposals submitted in response to this RFP:

- Completion of all required proposal elements
- Experience with similar projects and quality of work samples
- Overall cost of the vendor’s proposal
Selection Process. Following the initial screening of proposal, CAFCA reserves the right to require, and each applicant must be prepared to conduct, oral presentations and other discussions (written or verbal) on the content of its proposal. If CAFCA determines that interviews or presentations are required, selected applicants will be notified in writing of the date, place, time and format of the interview or presentation. Respondents will be responsible for all costs related to the interview, which will occur via teleconference. Failure to participate in such interviews or presentations may result in an applicant’s disqualification from further consideration.

CAFCA may award to the bidder offering best value without discussions. However, we reserve the right to seek bidder clarifications and to negotiate with those bidders deemed to be within a competitive range.

CAFCA may, at its discretion and without explanation, choose to discontinue this RFP without obligation to any prospective respondents or respondents, and/or make multiple awards under this RFP.

Preparation Expenses.

1. CAFCA shall not assume any liability for expenses incurred by a respondent in preparing, submitting, or clarifying any proposal submitted in response to this RFP.
2. Exclusion of Taxes. CAFCA is exempt from the payment of excise and sales taxes imposed by the federal government and the State.
3. Proposed Costs. No cost submissions that are contingent upon a State action will be accepted. All proposed costs must be fixed through the entire term of the contract.
4. Changes to Proposal. No additions or changes to the original proposal will be allowed after submission. CAFCA may request and authorize respondents to submit written clarification of their proposals.
5. Supplemental Information. Supplemental information will not be considered after the deadline submission of proposals, unless specifically requested by CAFCA. CAFCA may ask a respondent to give demonstrations, interviews, oral presentations or further explanations to clarify information contained in a proposal.
6. Presentation of Supporting Evidence. If requested by CAFCA, a respondent must be prepared to present evidence of experience, ability, data reporting capabilities, financial standing, or other information necessary to satisfactorily meet the requirements set forth or implied in this RFP. The CAFCA may make onsite visits to an operational facility or facilities of a respondent to evaluate further the respondent’s capability to perform the duties required by this RFP. At its discretion, the CAFCA may also check or contact any reference provided by the respondent.
7. RFP Is Not An Offer. Neither this RFP nor any subsequent discussions shall give rise to any commitment on the part of CAFCA or confer any rights on any respondent unless and until a contract is fully executed by the necessary parties. The contract document will represent the entire agreement between the respondent and the CAFCA and will supersede all prior negotiations, representations or agreements, alleged or made, between the parties. There shall be no liability for costs incurred by the respondent or for payment of services under the terms of the contract until the successful respondent is notified that the contract has been accepted and approved by CAFCA.

Questions regarding this RFP should be sent to RFP@cafca.org.