**Q&A Session for RFP# 2024-002VF – Provide Personal Care Level 1/Housekeeping & Level 2 Services for the Department of Senior Services – Tuesday January 16th, 2024**

**\*Any additional written questions can be submitted by Friday January 19th, 2024 by 4PM EST**

**Department Staff**: **Ryan Gadzo, Melissa Dentice, Kae Savar, Amanda Bender, Angela Marinucci, Justin Kilonsky**

**Attendees: Shonda Brock, Josh Aranoff, Kalie Mackenna - Venture Forthe, Jennifer Gunia & Val Nowak –CarePanion, Maryann, Jolie**

**Q. 1: Do we need to turn in the RFP in person?**

**A:** Erie County is requesting one original hard written copy of the proposal to be mailed or handed in as a signed copy to our department. We also ask that a secondary electronic copy be sent to Erin Mahony (erin.mahony@erie.gov) and/or Angela Marinucci (angela.schnell@erie.gov).

* We understand that due to the recent weather, there may be delays in proposals arriving on time. As long as the original proposal is postmarked by the due date, we will accept it.

**Q. 2: If you have an existing contract, will you be given preference in keeping your current clients?**

**A:** The RFP process is open to *everyone* who is proposing. No previous or existing contracts do not guarantee your entity becoming a chosen provider. Erie County does not anticipate moving clients around should previous or current contract holders be chosen again. However, Erie County reserves the right to offer up clients to lower cost providers or any providers that may be more beneficial to their certain circumstance.

**Q. 3: How would we know our score currently?**

**A:** Each entity starts with a score of 0 until the time a committee can meet to evaluate and grade each proposal. All RFPs are scored out of 100 points, all points are based on the answers written in the proposal. More information on evaluation can be found on page 6 of the RFP.

**Q. 4: For what reason are we putting out this bid again?**

**A:** Many of our previous contracts were up to a 3-year term with the possibility of typically a few one-year extensions. Once we get to the end of the term of the contract and any extensions, our department, and the purchasing department review entities through the RFP process so that no entity or possibility is overlooked. It is a New York state policy and state law so that no preference is given to any one or group of entities. This process does not mean dissatisfaction with our current providers, this is how our contract scheduling works for us, and it is our professional obligation that it remains this way.

**Q. 5: Is there a sample RFP response available?**

**A:** You may refer to pages 6-13 of the RFP for proposal requirements. Therein details note about cover pages and intricate proposal requirements such as any organizational charts and agency and cost proposal worksheets. If you follow those pages, that is the order in which to write your proposal. The proposal document will also help you follow a specific order of how to write your proposal.

**Q. 6: Could you clarify Appendix c. pg. 28?**

**A:** We ask that you denote the number of staff that are assigned to PCA 1/Housekeeping or PCA 2 as well as how many clients in total you serve and how many (if any) are Erie County clients. We ask this as a way to forecast budgeting and capacity. We are also asking for the total number of clients your agency can serve overall.

**Q. 7: Can you share how many senior clients go unserved due to their location?**

**A:** Unfortunately, there are many reasons why a client may or may not be picked up by a provider and not all the reasoning is recorded so we do not know for sure if or how many clients are unserved based on location alone.

**Q. 8: We’re not a licensed agency, do we still need to do the background checks?**

**A:** Please reference page 8 section ii. Any proposer, if they are providing in-home services, shall complete a criminal history check on all in-home services workers and applicants. So, yes, some type of criminal history check is needed regardless of being a licensed agency or not.

**Q. 9: Are proposals for consumer-directed services eligible under this RFP, or does Erie County plan to issue a separate RFP for providers of consumer-directed services?**

**A.** The current RFP is specific to Personal Care and Housekeeping Services.  Erie County Department of Senior Services does contract with vendors for consumer-directed care.  We anticipate releasing an RFP for consumer-directed care around the end of 2024 or early 2025 for an April 1, 2025, new contract start date.

**Q. 10: Are proposals to provide Personal Care Services (Level I & Level II) under the consumer-directed model eligible under RFP #2024-002VF?**

**A.** Please refer back to Question number 10.

**Q. 11: There are components of this RFP that are not applicable to the regulatory structure of the consumer-directed model for service delivery. If consumer directed service providers are eligible to apply for the provision of Personal Care Services (Level I & Level II) under RFP #2024-002VF, will Erie County allow for flexibility with the listed proposal requirements that are not applicable to consumer-directed service delivery as needed?**

**A.** Please refer back to Question number 10.

**Q. 12: If services under the consumer-directed model are not eligible for proposal under RFP #2024-002V, does Erie County plan to issue a separate RFP for providers of consumer directed services? What would be the expected timeline for the issuance and award of this separate RFP?**

**A.** Please refer back to Question number 10.

**Q. 13: Please clarify/explain this, it is confusing- what are “essential errands” and payment of bills, are they to write checks, balance checkbooks etc.; Under PCA I/Housekeeping?:**

**A.** In the department, typically aides will NOT write out checks or balance checkbooks.  They do, however, have been given money by a client, if the client is comfortable, to perform errands such as shopping.  Per the NYCRRs, though, the aides are ALLOWED to do such things as writing out checks and balancing checkbooks, if needed.

**Q. 14: Please clarify and explain the Supervisor Section on pg. 10 and 11 as it has PCA 1 and PCA 2 together. What would your definition of a supervisor be? There are confusing statements regarding the specific requirements and what is sufficient for PCA Level 1 services such as: Is an LPN sufficient instead of an RN? Would an associate degree and 2 years’ experience in the field sufficient? Can nursing home/assisted living experience count for PCA Level 1 applications?**

**A.** The requirements for a Supervisor are the same, regardless of the level of services being provided.  PCA I/Housekeeping and PCA II services all require a Supervisor that meets the qualifications as specified.

The Supervisor that attends the first supervisory visit and the subsequent visits every six months in the home of each client should meet the qualifications of a Supervisor per the RFP.  Between these visits, the Supervisor would be permitted to sign off on work overseen by another manager, if needed.  Only the Supervisory visits require onsite visitation by a qualified Supervisor.

Each requirement clause for qualification as a Supervisor stands alone as sufficient qualification. Meaning that meeting any one of the five qualifications for a supervisor is sufficient to qualify a person as a Supervisor for a PCA I/Housekeeping and PCA II service provider.  As such, a Supervisor will be qualified if they are a licensed RN.  A Supervisor would also be qualified if they have five years of related experience, or if they meet any of the other three definitions.  Generally, one year of education is equivalent to three years of work experience when qualifying under a combination of both.  Therefore, an LPN with one year of home health care experience would qualify as having “a combination of education and experience equivalent to at least two years of satisfactory experience with at least one year of home health care experience. Nursing Home and/or Assisted Living experience will qualify for the purposes of this RFP.

**Q. 15. Can you clarify each section of Appendix C with what you are looking for?**

**A.** 1) Current number of staff means the total number of aides that are working for your agency at time of proposal, regardless of which program(s) they are working for. 2) Total number of clients being served would be the total number of ANY type of client being served and under any program, by your agency at the time of proposal. 3) Total number of ECDSrS clients being served would be the total number of clients that your agency is serving for the Department of Senior Services (if applicable) at the time of proposal. 4) Maximum number of clients that can be served would be the total number of clients that your current staff could possibly serve at your agency if every staff member had a full caseload according to their employment status, i.e., full time vs. part time.

**Q. 16. Can you clarify the budget request for all program costs?**

**A.** 1) The minimum pay rate to worker is the lowest amount per hour your aides are paid. 2) All other costs could include such things as portions of: fringe benefits paid to the aides, milage, maintenance and organizational costs your agency would charge per aide to run the program. 3) Total cost per hour of service would be the amount per hour, per aide that you would charge the Department of Senior Services if your agency was chosen. The two rates should add up to this total cost per hour of service. There is a spot to delineate from PCA 1 and PCA 2.

**Q. 17. What is the amount of funding available to Erie County for the provision of the services outlined within the RFP for the award period?**

**A.** The Department of Senior Services funding varies year to year and is dependent on what amount is awarded through New York State funds. Typically, new funding doesn’t start until April 1st, so it is hard to say how much funding there will be.

**Q. 18. What is the approximate number of individuals to be served under the in-home services outlined within the RFP?**

**A.** The number of individuals to be served under the RFP will be determined by the needs of the community at any given time. That number will vary depending on those needs.

**Q. 19. How many hours of service were provided under the services listed within this RFP for the program year 2023? How many individuals were served through these programs within the same time period (program year 2023).**

**A.** Since the program year 2023 is not finished yet, there cannot be an accurate number for either the number of hours of service provided or the number of individuals served through these programs. The program year ends April 1st, so until then an answer cannot be given. The numbers of both will vary year to year, but currently our funding is enough to service more individuals through the current program year.

**\*The Department of Senior Services would like all potential responders to pay close attention to requirements, specifically including requirements for supervision which require that each in-home services worker shall have or a supervisor who shall:**

* 1. be a licensed registered professional nurse who is licensed and currently certified to practice as a registered professional nurse in New York State, meets the health requirements specified in subdivision (l) of this section and either has at least two years satisfactory recent home health care experience or has a combination of education and experience equivalent to at least two years of satisfactory experience with at least one year of home health care experience; **OR**
	2. acts under the direction of a registered professional nurse who has at least two years satisfactory recent home health care experience; **OR**
	3. has a combination of education and experience equivalent to at least two years of satisfactory experience with at least one year of home health care experience; **OR**
	4. possess a bachelor’s degree with a major in social work, psychology, counseling, or related field and one year of experience in the health or social services field; **OR**
	5. has five years of related experience.

\*Please review the proposal form as it shows what responses go where. The proposal itself is limited to 10 pages; attachments will not count toward those 10 pages.

\*Please make sure you are clarifying if you are bidding for **PCA 1/Housekeeping, PCA 2 or both PCA 1/Housekeeping & PCA 2** and delineating notable differences in your answers when applicable.