

Questions and Answer
IFB # 3160006165 SNP Profile Development and Laboratory Operations for
MSFL
October 13, 2023

1. Question:

Section 2.1, Page 6: Because the MDPS is seeking to establish a contract for in-house DNA testing of forensic evidence to build a SNP profile with more than 100,000 markers, can the MDPS confirm that it requires a vendor that performs all forensic genetic genealogy services in-house (i.e. DNA extraction, development of SNP profile with 100,000+ markers, and genealogy)?

Answer: Yes

2. Question:

Section 2.2, Page 7-8: Regarding the requirement that the vendor provide Autosomal STR, Y-STR, and Mitochondrial DNA profile generation as well as Forensic Genealogy/SNP Profile Development, will the MDPS consider a multi-vendor award where one vendor performs STR/Y-STR and mitochondrial DNA profile generation and one vendor performs SNP profile development? The development of STR profiles and SNP profiles requires different laboratory processes, procedures, and personnel; separate specialization in the development of STR and SNP profiles allows vendors to provide better delivery of service.

Answer: No, DPS will only award one vendor to provide all services.

Follow up question:

If multiple vendors will not be considered (as referenced above), can the vendor provide STR/Y-STR and mitochondrial DNA profile development by subcontracting the testing to a partner laboratory?

Answer: No, subcontracting is excepted.

3. Question:

Section 2.2, Page 7: Regarding the requirement stating, “The vendor laboratory must be an accredited laboratory against testing standards ISO 17025,” can the MDPS confirm that this is only applicable to STR testing, as the Byrne JAG Program that is funding this casework specifically states that there is an exemption for forensic genealogy as that accreditation is not fully developed for more than 100,000 SNP markers (as required within this IFB)?

Answer: We are requiring our vendors to meet all specifications as we do for CEBR because of the DNA testing aspect and necessity to enter into CODIS. We want to select a single vendor for all testing (STR, mito, Y, and genealogy), the MSFL is requiring accreditation from our vendors.

4. Question:

Section 2.2, Page 7: Regarding the requirement for the use of QIAGEN EZ1/2 DNA Investigator chemistry for the extraction of DNA from skeletal evidence, will the MDPS accept alternative approaches for extraction that are validated and in use by the vendor when the vendor’s alternative approach has demonstrated better success?

Answer: We want them to use what we are trained, and proficiency tested on which is the QIAGEN EZ1/2 DNA Investigator chemistry.

5. Question:

Section 2.2, Page 7: Regarding the requirement that generation of a SNP profile (whole genome or targeted SNP) should be universally compatible with genealogical databases..., can the MDPS confirm that microarray technology is not allowable, as it is ineffective in producing a comprehensive SNP profile universally compatible with genealogical databases when working with DNA extracted from skeletal remains?

Answer: Technology used must produce a SNP profile (whole genome or targeted SNP) that is universally compatible with genealogical databases.

6. Question:

Section 2.2, Page 8: Regarding the requirement that the vendor must provide kinship comparisons of SNP profiles that do not require upload to public or online databases, can the MDPS confirm that the tools used for the comparison must be owned by the vendor, and not a third-party, to ensure the security of the data?

Answer: The comparison must be done in a manner to ensure security of the data.

7. Question:

Section 2.2, Page 8: Regarding the requirement that the vendor must provide a direct comparison forensic report between two SNP profiles that provides details of a genetic relationship, as well as an analysis of all potential relationships, can the MDPS confirm that the vendor must have previously had this report accepted by a Mississippi Medical Examiner, Coroner, or Law Enforcement Agency to confirm relationship?

Answer: The comparison of SNP profiles does not have to come from just Mississippi cases.

8. Question

Section 2.2, Page 8: Regarding the requirement that the vendor must have documented, publicly verifiable experience with providing FGG services to law enforcement offices via press conferences, news sources, and/or social media, can the MDPS confirm that the vendor must document their experience by listing publicly verifiable cases where the vendor used FGG to assist in the identification of unidentified human remains in the state of Mississippi?

Answer: The publicly verifiable cases can be in any state, not just the state of Mississippi.

9. Question

Section 2.2, Page 6: Please provide the estimated number of cases MSFL plans to send in connection with the Scope of Services. If an estimate is not available, can you provide past estimates under previous contracts?

Answer: 20

10. Question

Section 2.2, Page 7: Will all cases be skeletal remains/teeth or are other sample types also expected?

Answer: Only skeletal remains are expected

11. Question:

Section 2.2, Page 7: Will all samples require extraction prior to SNP generation, or will some samples be submitted as extracts?

Answer: Yes, all samples will require extraction

12. Question:

Section 2.2, Page 7: Is STR, Y-STR and mtDNA testing expected on all samples? Is this to be performed prior to SNP generation or as confirmatory testing?

Answer: Yes, all samples will require STR, Y-STR, mtDNA, and SNP generation

13. Question:

Section 2.2, Page 8: Will testimony be invoiced separately to the requesting agency? Otherwise, please consider adding a price line item for testimony to the Bid Form, page 20.

Answer: If testimony is needed, a separate quote will be requested, and purchase order submitted.

14. Question:

Section 2.3.1.1, Page 10 & Bid Form, Page 20

Section 2.3.1.1. states a unit price shall be given for each service, however, the bid form only includes one line item for SNP profile development and laboratory operations. Please consider revising the pricing form on page 20 to reflect the individual services requested in the Scope of Services starting on page 6, to include separate line items for DNA extraction/quantification, STR profile generation, Y-STR profile generation, mtDNA profile generation and forensic genealogy/SNP profile development. Otherwise, to include the cost of all services in one line item will unnecessarily inflate the total cost when all tests may not be required for each sample.

Answer: A comprehensive price is requested b/c any sample submitted will require the same type of start-to-finish testing.

15. Question:

Section 3.1, Page 11

Can Vendor provide an alternative to fidelity bond insurance?

Answer: No, there are no substitutions allowed.

16. Question:

Section 4.1.4, Page 12: Please confirm that the minimum of 3 years' experience applies to each service requested – DNA extraction of skeletal remains, quantification, STR, Y-STR, mtDNA profile development as well as SNP profile development and genealogy. How should the vendor document this experience?

Answer: Experience requirements apply to each service requested. Documentation can be provided via website, ANAB scope of accreditation, past customers, etc.

17. Question:

Attachment E, Reference Score Sheet

Does “and Laboratory Operations Services” refer to DNA extraction of skeletal remains, quantification, STR, Y-STR and mtDNA profile generation, as well as genealogy services?

Answer: Yes

18. Question: What is the expected volume of cases? **Answer: 20**

19. Question: What is the expected turnaround time to complete these cases? **Answer: 120 days**

20. Question:

Will it just be bones that we are testing? Or will there be a mix of other items? **Answer: Just bones**

21. Question:

Every lab has a unique process when it comes to testing bones, are we able to submit a brief proposal outside of the required documents that outline ours?

Answer: Yes

22. Question:

Attachment B – Pricing: In this IFB there are requests for:

1. Autosomal STR, Y-STR, and Mitochondrial DNA profile generation
2. Forensic Genealogy/ SNP Profile Development
3. DNA Database Upload and Records Research/ Genealogy

a. Kinship comparisons of SNP profiles

b. Direct comparison reports that provide details of genetic relationship as a result of FIGG research

- Question: However, the price sheet only lists 1 line option – **SNP Profile development and Lab operations**. Can you clarify what this means – Is it qualification of the extract and development of the SNP profile? Are we able to submit our own pricing that includes a more detailed breakdown of potential charges for all the other requests that are outlined?

Answer: A comprehensive price per sample is needed; each sample will require all tests to be performed.

I acknowledge and accept all terms and conditions of the Invitation for Bid, Amendments, and Questions & Answers. I hereby certify that I am authorized to sign for my company.

Signature

Date

Name (Printed)

Date