

Vendors must have an active, approved master contract under the SITE program and be approved in the category or categories listed in the RFO document in order to respond to and RFO. Vendor is responsible for reading all addenda associated with the RFO.

IT Professional Technical Services

SITE Program

T#:14ATM

**Request for Offers (RFO) For Technology Services Issued By
Office of MN.IT Services @ Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)**

Project Title: WIC Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)/e-WIC Quality Assurance Project

Category: Quality Assurance

Business Need

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is seeking a contractor to provide Quality Assurance services for EBT implementation for the Minnesota Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program (MN WIC). MN WIC refers to this technology as e-WIC. This e-WIC system will replace the current paper check system for providing food benefits to WIC participants.

The Quality Assurance (QA) Contractor will begin support of the project approximately one month prior to the start date of the e-WIC Service Provider contract. The QA Contractor's role in the project is to provide project monitoring, independent review, and technical support services to MN WIC during the e-WIC implementation phase of the project.

The QA Contractor will be expected to provide a project team that includes a Quality Assurance Project Manager and other quality assurance resources as required to fulfil the deliverables of the project.

Background and History

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provides federal grants to states to fund the WIC Program. WIC provides supplemental healthy foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education to low income pregnant and post-partum women, infants, and children. In December 2010, the President signed into law the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act, which mandates that all states implement e-WIC by October 2020. E-WIC provides WIC Programs with the ability to issue benefits electronically to WIC participants, eliminating the need for paper WIC checks. In implementing e-WIC, MN WIC will meet this federal mandate and provide distinct benefits to the WIC Program's stakeholders including the State Agency staff administering WIC, WIC local agencies and clinics, WIC participants, and WIC authorized retailers. See Attachment A for detailed background and history.

Project Deliverables

In its proposal, each Responder must discuss its ability to perform the following quality assurance tasks. For additional reference, an e-WIC Project Contractors' Responsibility Matrix is provided in Appendix A.

1. QA Project Kickoff meeting

- Schedule an on-site project kickoff meeting with an agenda, no later than 10 days after the project start date.
- Include a review of the Quality Management Plan, Project Schedule, Deliverable List, and other documents related to the quality management plan.
- Introduce the key project personnel including the QA Project Manager.
- Meet with e-WIC Project Manager and designated MDH staff to obtain relevant documentation and information.

2. Quality Management Plan and Project Schedule:

- **Develop** a Quality Management work plan that will describe the approach and strategies the Responder will use to manage the QA for the project. Include a scope statement; a description of how and when information will be shared with the e-WIC PM and the MN WIC Executive Steering Team (ESC); a detailed breakdown of the work tasks to be accomplished; a resource table showing the role, amount of time and % Full Time Equivalent (FTE's) to be spent by the QA Project Manager and other assigned Project staff in completing the required work tasks; and the critical success factors for assessing task completion.
- Update the plan based on a schedule agreed to by the Responder and the e-WIC PM and the MN WIC ESC. All updates must be reviewed and approved by the e-WIC PM and the MN WIC ESC.

- **Quality Management Roles and Responsibilities**

Role	Quality Responsibility
State Agency	
Project Sponsors	Quality Oversight and Monitoring
Vendor Management	Deliverable Review
Operations	UAT Support
Nutrition/Policy	
e-WIC Project Manager	Quality Management Deliverable Review Schedule and Scope Monitoring Budget Maintenance UAT Support
e-WIC Service Provider	Internal Quality Assurance (QA) Processes Unit Testing Interface Testing UAT Support Retailer Certification Testing
M&O Contractor	Internal QA Processes Interface Testing UAT Support

QA Contractor	QA Management and Monitoring Deliverable Review Schedule and Scope Monitoring UAT Support / Facilitation Retailer Certification Testing
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3. Quality Assurance Risk Management and Change Plans:

- Develop a Risk Management plan that identifies potential risks associated with the implementation of the e-WIC system and include a risk mitigation analysis. The majority of the risk management planning activities will be performed by the QA contractor, e-WIC Project Manager and the ESC.
- The e-WIC Project Manager will be the owner of risk management activities and risk/issues logs. The QA contractor will be expected to take a major role in developing, maintaining and updating the risk and issues log in support of the e-WIC Project Manager.
- In coordination with the e-WIC Project Manager:
 - Establish a risk management work group
 - Establish a meeting schedule for the work group
 - Develop and update the Risk Management Plan
 - Develop the risk log with an initial list of risk
- Establish methodology to monitor all e-WIC Service Provider project objectives, milestones, critical and non-critical events and critical success factors.
- In collaboration with the e-WIC Service Provider, outline strategies to ensure that the e-WIC Processor meets critical deadlines and identify contingency strategies should critical deadlines not be met.
- Provide methodology to evaluate the e-WIC Service Provider's retail integration plans, Point of Sale (POS) specifications, retail interface and certification plans and specifications, as well as methodology to evaluate the e-WIC Processor's configuration management and change control methods.
- Include a methodology to ensure that the e-WIC system is in compliance with all applicable standards, requirements, specifications and FNS regulations, including the most current versions of the Operating Rules, technical implementation guide (TIG), and universal Interface specifications.
- Develop and maintain a plan for management and coordination of proposed changes relating to the e-WIC project for the e-WIC PM, MN WIC, MIS support and the e-WIC Service Provider. This change management plan shall define a process that ensures changes are reviewed, prioritized, and evaluated in a coordinated and timely manner.
- Regularly advise the ESC regarding potential significant risks and problems

4. Bi-Weekly Status Meetings / Reports:

- Participate in bi-weekly status meetings with the e-WIC PM, MN WIC ESC and other project staff, providing project status updates.
- Provide a monthly status report that includes the necessary metrics and project information, including but not limited to, the status, progress, issues, costs, and risks of the project and any issues that need to be resolved.

5. Assessment of State Readiness:

- Perform a thorough review of all State plans, policies, procedures, and activities relative to implementation of the e-WIC project.
 - a) Readiness Assessment - Review the current e-WIC project status and environment, and provide an assessment for transitioning from planning activities to implementation. The assessment shall include, at a minimum, a technology review, retailer capability assessment, and a clinic readiness assessment.
 - b) Business Rules and Methodology Assessment - Review and evaluate the established methodology, business requirements, and technical requirements for EBT systems, validate requirements against business rules, and validate e-WIC project documents.
- Provide reports of the findings of all reviews, and recommend changes, if any

6. E-WIC Service Provider Documentation Reviews:

- Review all deliverables and other materials, reports and documentation provided by the e-WIC Service Provider to ensure that the information and documentation is complete, clear, current, and consistent with FNS requirements and guidelines for EBT systems.
- Provide a written assessment for each deliverable performed by the e-WIC Provider, to include recommendations for acceptance, or needed changes or improvements. Each written assessment is due to the e-WIC Project Manager within one week of receipt of the deliverable.

E-WIC Service Provider deliverables to be reviewed shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a. e-WIC Provider Project Work Plan and Schedule
- b. Implementation Plan
- c. Vendor Enablement and Certification Plan
- d. Vendor Survey
- e. Vendor Assessment Report
- f. System Design Documents
- g. Integrated Vendor Interface Specifications and Test Scripts
- h. Test Plan and Test Scripts
- i. Stand Beside Vendor Contracts
- j. Third Party Contractor Contracts (TPP)
- k. Continuity of Business Plan
- l. Cardholder and Vendor Integrated Voice Response (IVR) Scripts.
- m. Training Plan and Materials (State, Clinic, Retailer, Train-the-Trainer and UAT, and including training methodologies, scope and schedule)
- n. Test Reports
- o. Security Plan
- p. Operations and Interface Procedures Manual
- q. Administrative Functions Manual
- r. Settlement and Reconciliation Manual
- s. Reports Manual
- t. End of Contract Transition Plan

7. E-WIC Service Provider Activity Reviews:

System Design:

- In coordination with the Project Manager, monitor the e-WIC Service Provider's activities to verify that adequate progress is being made in accordance with the approved e-WIC Service Provider work plan.
- Verify that all design and development efforts are following defined and approved process standards and requirements.
- Evaluate the processing capacity of the e-WIC system and verify that the processing capacity meets all service level requirements, in conjunction with the e-WIC Service Provider and MN WIC.

Testing:

- Evaluate the environment, tools, and procedures proposed for e-WIC system testing and for the UAT; review and assess the ability of the test process to:
 - Achieve the proposed level of test coverage;
 - Provide relevant and verifiable test results; and
 - Test the correct system configuration.
- Verify that the proposed test scripts adequately assess system technical and performance requirements of the element being tested.
 - If not, Responder shall develop and provide additional test scripts.
 - The Responder shall document their findings and recommendations resulting from this evaluation.

Note: If there is more than one UAT session, this deliverable is deemed complete after the final test reports and certification of readiness has been accepted by the e-WIC PM and MN WIC.

8. Retailer and Third Party Processor ("TPP") Certification Plan:

- Evaluate the environment, tools, and procedures proposed for use by the e-WIC Service Provider for retailer system certification.
- Review and confirm that the proposed level of test coverage for code, connectivity, and all other requirements will be verified by the proposed retailer system certification process;
- Provide written assessments upon the completion of each of the reviews described above. The assessment shall include recommendations for acceptance, changes, or improvements to the effort being reviewed.

9. Retailer Certification

- Participate in all retailer and TPP certification activities in conjunction with the e-WIC PM and designated MN WIC staff. This effort shall include coordinating with the e-WIC PM, e-WIC Processor, retailers, resellers, TPP's, and FNS on retailer certification activities, handling logistics for on-site certification testing, and coordinating the test schedule for MN WIC. This may include up to ten (10) site visits.
- Review and evaluate the outcomes of each retailer and TPP certification.
- Provide a written report of the evaluations to the Project Manager with the results, including recommendations to correct any deficiencies.

10. QA Pilot Oversight:

Pilot Readiness Assessment:

- Assist the e-WIC PM and MN WIC with pilot planning activities, including recommendations about retailer and local agency communications leading up to the pilot kick-off.
- Assist with on-site reviews at clinic pilot site(s) to ensure readiness for pilot implementation. This may include a review of the physical layout and clinic flow, equipment in place, and staff readiness.
- Provide oversight in facilitating integration of any technical challenges.
- Provide oversight to assure retailers are certified to redeem WIC benefits electronically.
- Develop an evaluation plan for assessing the progress of the pilot and determining results.
- Review the e-WIC Service Provider's plans for installation, training, help desk support and pilot operation.
- Report findings in a Pilot Test Evaluation Report to be submitted to the e-WIC Project Manager.
- Develop an e-WIC readiness checklist for clinics and retailers. The checklists are due to the e-WIC PM no later than 30 days prior to pilot implementation.
- Submit a written report to the e-WIC Project Manager and MN WIC ESC evaluating the plans and verifying the readiness of the clinics and retailers.

Pilot Support:

- Provide on-site support during the first two (2) weeks of the pilot.
- Provide at least one (1) staff member to monitor each local agency involved in the pilot. MN WIC reserves the right to extend the on-site presence should circumstances warrant.
- Monitor the pilot region, visit pilot-area WIC clinics and retailers to provide support and assess the success of the pilot.
- Provide a written report to the e-WIC Project Manager of findings that require improvement and recommendations on how to improve. The report is due within ten days of the completion of the on-site support.

Pilot Evaluation

- Utilize the evaluation plan developed to review and assess that an appropriate level of coverage was achieved by the pilot process, that pilot results are verified and satisfactory, and that the pilot results are appropriately documented.
- Review the outcomes of pilot operations and make recommendations for any changes to the plan for implementation.
- Deliver a written report to the e-WIC Project Manager and MN WIC ESC verifying the results of the pilot, illustrating areas that need improvement, and making recommendations for full implementation. This report shall serve, after approval by the State, as the official Pilot Evaluation required by and submitted to FNS.
- These evaluations shall be due not later than ten days after pilot completion, or as indicated in the approved e-WIC project work plan. It is anticipated that this effort will begin prior to the end of the pilot and do not anticipate delivery of evaluation impacting the start of rollout.

11. Rollout Assessment

Rollout Plans

- Evaluate the preparations (clinic, retailer, etc.) for the rollout, including assessments of staff preparation and training, data conversion (transfer of data from the MIS to the EBT host), on-site activities, and installation of software and hardware, as appropriate.
- Make recommendations for improvements/changes, based on the Pilot Evaluation.
- Provide a written report to the e-WIC Project Manager and MN ESC evaluating the readiness, and include recommendations for changes necessary in light of lessons learned from the pilot.

Rollout Activities

- Assess and provide oversight throughout the full rollout
- Provide on-site support during the first week of the first rollout.
- Provide at least one (1) staff member to monitor each rollout on site. MN WIC reserves the right to increase and/or extend the on-site presence should circumstances warrant.
- Provide a written report to the e-WIC Project Manager and MN ESC of findings that require improvement and recommendations on how to improve. The report is due within ten days of the completion of the on-site support.
- Participate in periodic calls with the e-WIC Project Manager, ESC and FNS to provide status updates throughout rollout.

12. Additional Services

- At the direction of the State, the Responder shall be available to participate in any other activities related to implementation of the e-WIC project. If such request is made, the Responder shall provide an estimate of anticipated costs prior to commencing any effort. Efforts, and associated costs, performed under this task shall be documented via an amendment. Work must not begin until after the amendment is signed by all parties.
- The Responder shall include an hourly rate for these Additional Services.

Project Milestones and Schedule

Project Milestones and High Level Project Schedule summarizes anticipated key dates. These dates are subject to change.

Milestone/Activity	Start	Completion
Procurement activities	November 2016	May 2017
Implementation Planning, Testing, and Readiness	May 2017	March 2018
Pilot / Pilot Evaluation	March 2018	July 2018
Statewide Rollout Phases / Support of Rollout	July 2018	February 2019
Completion of Participant Conversion to e-WIC	February 2019	April 2019
Implementation Project Closeout	April 2019	May 2019

MN WIC anticipates the QA Contractor to begin work approximately one month prior to start of the e-WIC Service Provider contract. After the completion of the Participant Conversion to e-WIC, the Quality Assurance contract will end. The following table provides estimated start and end dates for the contractors procured for this project. Please note that start date is estimated and will be impacted by a variety of factors including approvals, contract negotiations, and other factors. However, we expect it to start within two months of the estimated dates.

	Estimated Start Date	Estimated End Date
Quality Assurance Contractor	05/2017	04/2019
e-WIC Project Manager	1/2017	04/2019
e-WIC Processor	05/2017	04/2019

Project Environment

The project will use the expertise of the contracted staff and the knowledge and experience of the MN WIC staff. The project will be overseen by the e-WIC Project Manager and an Executive Steering Committee (ECS) and supported by various program staff as needed based on their area of specialty. The ESC will consist of the WIC Director and the Operations and Food Delivery unit supervisors as the project sponsors. They will work together with the Project Manager to insure that decisions are made promptly and will monitor e-WIC progress, ensure state resources are made available as needed and address issues as they arise. MN.IT staff will support procurement activities, and provide project and contract oversight as well as support in the invoicing and payment of contractors.

The project will be managed by a dedicated and contracted Project Manager. Contracted support will also include the e-WIC Service Provider and the Quality Assurance Contractor, as well as support from the existing HuBERT Maintenance and Operations (M&O) Contractor. Changes to SPIRIT e-WIC functionality to meet the needs of MN WIC will be addressed through the SPIRIT User Group (SUG) and completed by the SUG Maintenance and Enhancement (M&E) Contractor.

Note: Responders can be awarded only one contract related to the Minnesota e-WIC implementation project.

Project Requirements

- The project must comply with applicable industry and agency standards including the Project Management Institute (PMI) Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK)
- All duties performed by the successful Responder must be in accordance with applicable Minnesota and federal law.

All written deliverables must be submitted in an electronic format such as WORD or PDF. The successful Responder shall be responsible for providing the necessary staffing and expertise to complete the various tasks and activities outlined in Project Deliverables and Tasks section of this RFO. All Responder's project personnel shall be available during normal Minnesota business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Central Time). Availability may be satisfied by telephone communications, aside from the tasks that require physical attendance.

Responder's project personnel may not be added, reassigned, or replaced during the project without the prior consent of the MN WIC ESC. Should a key staff position be vacated, the Responder shall provide for continuity of the position's responsibilities with a qualified replacement made available within ten (10) business days, subject to the review and approval of the MN WIC ESC.

MDH reserves the right to request alternative staff, and require a change in the Responder's project personnel. MDH reserves the right to approve all Responder staff assigned to this project.

Responsibilities Expected of the Selected Vendor

- Quality assurance monitoring and reporting
- Participation in project meetings and conference calls
- Risk and issues management and assessment
- Deliverable review
- Monitoring of vendor enablement activities
- Facilitation of vendor certification testing
- Support to MN WIC in stakeholder outreach
- Guidance on clinic readiness, training and work flow changes
- Support of UAT planning and preparation
- Facilitation of UAT and development of a UAT report
- Review of training activities
- Support of go/no go decisions
- Assistance in vendor live testing
- Onsite support to clinics and vendors during pilot
- Evaluation of pilot and development of a pilot evaluation report
- Onsite support to clinics and vendors during rollout
- Development of a final report summarizing lessons learned and best practices
- After the rollout phase activity is complete, the QA contract will end.

Mandatory Qualifications

(To be initially scored as pass/fail. Thereafter, proposed resource(s) that meet the Mandatory Qualifications will be scored in part on the extent to which the resource exceeds these mandatory minimums. See RFO Evaluation Process, below.)

- Propose hourly rates at or below the vendor's Max Hourly Rate for the category.
- Demonstrate that the company within the last five (5) years, has successfully provided quality assurance management of the implementation of an EBT or e-WIC system.
- Demonstrate that the Quality Assurance PM has provided quality assurance services for at least one previous e-WIC Implementation.
- Demonstrate the company's knowledge of and experience with the USDA FNS standards, testing, and certification processes.
- Demonstrate the QA PM's knowledge of and experience with the USDA FNS standards, testing, and certification processes
- Provide a QA Project Manager with at least two (2) years of e-WIC quality assurance experience.

Process Schedule

Process Milestone	Due Dates
Deadline for Questions	11/14/2016, 4:00PM CT
Anticipated Posted Response to Question	11/18/2016
Proposals due	1/9/2017, 4:00PM CT
Anticipated proposal evaluation complete	02/13/2017
Anticipated work order start	05/01/2017

Questions

Any questions regarding this Request for Offers should be submitted via e-mail according to the date and time listed in the process schedule to:

Name: Roleen C. Marchetti

Organization: Office of MN.IT Services

Email Address: mnitcontracts@state.mn.us

Questions and answers will be posted via an addendum to the RFO on the Office of MN.IT Services [website](#) according to the process schedule above.

Other persons ARE NOT authorized to discuss this RFO or its requirements with anyone throughout the selection process and responders should not rely on information obtained from non-authorized individuals. If it is discovered a Responder contacted other State staff other than the individual above, the responder's proposal may be removed from further consideration.

RFO Evaluation Process

An evaluation committee will review accepted proposals. The proposal must consist of all the items outlined in the Response Requirements section. A 100-point scale will be used to create the final evaluation recommendation. The factors and weighting on which proposals will be scored are:

- Resource Qualifications and Experience *30 points*
- Company Qualifications and Experience *10 points*
- Work Plan: *30 points*
- Cost Proposal and Detail: *30 points*

MN WIC may require a Responder to clarify their submission documents or to make a presentation in MDH's St. Paul offices, at the expense of the Responder.

The WIC Program reserves the right to amend the RFO prior to the closing of the solicitation. The state is not liable for costs incurred by any respondent prior to the issuance of any contract. Amendments, clarifications, and updates will be posted on the Office of MN.IT Services [website](#). It is the responsibility of the Respondent to monitor and obtain any amendments prior to the submittal of any proposal.

This Request for Offers does not obligate the state to award a work order or complete the assignment, and the state reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. The Organization reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.

Submission Format

At a minimum, successful responses will include the following:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Company Overview**
 - **Company history, growth**
 - **Current financial data (if publicly available)**
 - **Services provided by the organization**
3. **QA Manager/Project Team Personnel Qualifications and Experience**
4. **Project Description and Work plan**

Complete the Response Matrix, including organizations and dates where the resource has demonstrated the required qualifications as previously noted. If pass/fail requirements are not met, further scoring of the proposal will be discontinued.

RESPONSE MATRIX		
Mandatory QUALIFICATIONS:	Pass/ Fail	Provide Dates and Organization where the resource has demonstrated the qualification
Company demonstrates within the last five (5) years the successful quality assurance management of an implementation of an EBT or e-WIC system		
Demonstrate that the QA PM has provided quality assurance for at least one previous e-WIC Implementation.		
Company demonstrates knowledge of and experience with the USDA FNS standards, testing, and certification processes.		
QA PM demonstrates knowledge of and experience with the USDA FNS standards, testing, and certification processes.		
Provide a QA Project Manager with at least two (2) years of e-WIC quality assurance experience.		

- Provide three (3) narrative descriptions of recent similar or relevant projects the company has completed. Project descriptions must include the client's name, project manager, period of performance, contract amount, and description of services provided. Include the reference name, reference email, reference phone number along with the project descriptions. Project descriptions should demonstrate the Responders knowledge and understanding of the WIC Program and e-WIC. If the Responder wishes to present more than three (3) project descriptions, additional project descriptions should be submitted in an appendix.
- Provide an organizational chart that indicates the names and titles of the QA Project Manager and other project team personnel for the project. Indicate the percent time (% FTE) the QA Project Manager and the other project team personnel who will be assigned to the Minnesota project as well as percent time assigned to any concurrent projects.
- List any subcontractors who will participate in the project if any, detailing their qualifications, credentials, training, work experience with e-WIC systems and planning activities.
- Resumes must be included for all proposed staff. Resumes must include all relevant project experience (include period of performance), relevant education and training, and a professional summary. Resumes should not, if possible, contain personal telephone numbers, home addresses or home email addresses. If it is necessary to include personal contact information, please clearly indicate in the proposal that personal contact information is being provided.

5. Project Description and Work Plan

- The statement of objectives, goals and tasks to show or demonstrate the Responder's view of the nature of this project.
- A detailed work plan including a description of tasks and deliverables to be accomplished and to be used as a scheduling and managing tool.
- Confirmation of intent to comply with the proposed schedule of the timeline of deliverables or propose modifications to the timeline with submission of the work plan.
- Communication methods to be used to document progress, such as status reports and technical bulletins.
- Contract and change management procedures.
- Identification of the level of the MDH's participation in the project, as well as any other services to be provided by the MDH.

6. Cost Proposal

- A cost proposal that references the deliverables and tasks outlined in the matrix below will be used as the basis for the cost evaluation.
- Please provide costs per deliverable/task using the chart below. Break out must include the proposed resources, estimated number of hours for the deliverable/task and the proposed hourly rate for evaluation purposes.
- The cost proposal must provide a firm, fixed price for each deliverable, and must be sent as a separate document.
- The cost proposal must contain an hourly rate for additional services not listed in this RFO.

Deliverable/Task	Cost (this must include a breakout of the resources, estimated number of hours and proposed hourly rate for the resource for evaluation purposes)
Project Kickoff meeting	
Quality Management Plan and Schedule	
Quality Assurance Risk Management and Change Plans	
Bi-weekly status meeting and Reports	
Assessment of State Readiness	
E-WIC Processor documentation Reviews	
E-WIC Processor Activity Reviews	
Retailer and Third Party Processor (TPP) Certification Plan	
Retailer Certification	
QA Pilot Oversight	
Rollout Assessment	
TOTAL	
Additional Services: hourly rate	

7. Additional Statement and forms:

1. Conflict of interest statement as it relates to this project
2. [Affirmative Action Certificate of Compliance](#) (required if vendor proposal exceeds \$100,000, including extension options)
3. [Equal Pay Certificate](#) (required if vendor proposal exceeds \$500,000, including extension options)
4. [Affidavit of non-collusion](#)
5. [Certification Regarding Lobbying](#) (required if vendor proposal exceeds \$100,000, including extension options)

The STATE reserves the right to determine if further information is needed to better understand the information presented. This may include a request for a presentation.

Proposal Submission Instructions

Each Responder is limited to submission of one (1) proposal in response to this Request for Offers.

Proposals must be submitted via email to:

Roleen Marchetti, MNIT Contract Manager

mnitcontracts@state.mn.us

E-mail subject line must read: [vendor name]-e-WIC Quality Assurance RFO [#153] Response

- Proposal documents must be submitted in PDF format. The email in the proposal submitted must not exceed 25 MB in size or it may be rejected by the State e-mail system.
- Submissions are due according to the process schedule previously listed.
- All responses are time and date stamped by the State's email system when they are received. Responses received after Proposals Due Date above will not be considered. The State shall not be responsible for any errors or delays caused by technology-related issues, even if they are caused by the State.
- Vendor must copy MNIT.SITE@state.mn.us on any responses submitted for this RFO. Vendors that do not intend to submit a proposal must send an email notification of a no-bid on the request to MNIT.SITE@state.mn.us. Failure to do either of these tasks will count against your program activity and may result in removal from the program.

General Requirements

Proposal Contents

By submission of a proposal, Responder warrants that the information provided is true, correct and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential award of this work order. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the award as well as subject the responder to suspension or debarment proceedings as well as other remedies available by law.

Liability - Indemnification

In the performance of this contract by Contractor, or Contractor's agents or employees, the contractor must indemnify, save, and hold harmless the State, its agents, and employees, from any claims or causes of action, including attorney's fees incurred by the state, to the extent caused by Contractor's:

- 1) Intentional, willful, or negligent acts or omissions; or
- 2) Actions that give rise to strict liability; or
- 3) Breach of contract or warranty.

The indemnification obligations of this section do not apply in the event the claim or cause of action is the result of the State's sole negligence. This clause will not be construed to bar any legal remedies the Contractor may have for the State's failure to fulfill its obligation under this contract.

Disposition of Responses

All materials submitted in response to this RFO will become property of the State and will become public record in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 13.591, after the evaluation process is

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completed. Pursuant to the statute, completion of the evaluation process occurs when the government entity has completed negotiating the contract with the selected vendor. If the Responder submits information in response to this RFO that it believes to be trade secret materials, as defined by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. § 13.37, the Responder must: clearly mark all trade secret materials in its response at the time the response is submitted, include a statement with its response justifying the trade secret designation for each item, and defend any action seeking release of the materials it believes to be trade secret, and indemnify and hold harmless the State, its agents and employees, from any judgments or damages awarded against the State in favor of the party requesting the materials, and any and all costs connected with that defense. This indemnification survives the State's award of a contract. In submitting a response to this RFO, the Responder agrees that this indemnification survives as long as the trade secret materials are in possession of the State.

The State will not consider the prices submitted by the Responder to be proprietary or trade secret materials.

Conflicts of Interest

Responder must provide a list of all entities with which it has relationships that create, or appear to create, a conflict of interest with the work that is contemplated in this request for proposals. The list should indicate the name of the entity, the relationship, and a discussion of the conflict.

The responder warrants that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, and except as otherwise disclosed, there are no relevant facts or circumstances which could give rise to organizational conflicts of interest. An organizational conflict of interest exists when, because of existing or planned activities or because of relationships with other persons, a vendor is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the State, or the vendor's objectivity in performing the contract work is or might be otherwise impaired, or the vendor has an unfair competitive advantage. The responder agrees that, if after award, an organizational conflict of interest is discovered, an immediate and full disclosure in writing must be made to the Assistant Director of the Department of Administration's Materials Management Division ("MMD") which must include a description of the action which the contractor has taken or proposes to take to avoid or mitigate such conflicts. If an organization conflict of interest is determined to exist, the State may, at its discretion, cancel the contract. In the event the responder was aware of an organizational conflict of interest prior to the award of the contract and did not disclose the conflict to MMD, the State may terminate the contract for default. The provisions of this clause must be included in all subcontracts for work to be performed similar to the service provided by the prime contractor, and the terms "contract," "contractor," and "contracting officer" modified appropriately to preserve the State's rights.

IT Accessibility Standards

All documents and other work products delivered by the vendor must be accessible in order to conform with the State Accessibility Standard. Information about the Standard can be found at <http://mn.gov/mnit/programs/policies/accessibility/>.

Veteran-Owned Small Business Preference

Unless a greater preference is applicable and allowed by law, in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 16C.16, subd. 6a, the Commissioner of Administration will award a 6% preference in the amount bid on state procurement to certified small businesses that are majority owned and operated by veterans.

A small business qualifies for the veteran-owned preference when it meets one of the following requirements. 1) The business has been certified by the Department of Administration/Materials Management Division as being a veteran-owned or service-disabled veteran-owned small business. 2) The principal place of business is in Minnesota AND the United States Department of Veterans Affairs verifies the business as being a veteran-owned or service-disabled veteran-owned small business under Public Law 109-461 and Code of Federal Regulations, title 38, part 74 (Supported By Documentation). See Minn. Stat. § 16C.19(d).

Statutory requirements and certification must be met by the solicitation response due date and time to be awarded the preference.

Foreign Outsourcing of Work Prohibited

All services under this contract shall be performed within the borders of the United States. All storage and processing of information shall be performed within the borders of the United States. This provision also applies to work performed by subcontractors at all tiers.

Work Force Certification

For all contracts estimated to be in excess of \$100,000, responders are required to complete the Affirmative Action Certificate of Compliance and return it with the response. As required by Minnesota Rule 5000.3600, "It is hereby agreed between the parties that Minnesota Statute § 363A.36 and Minnesota Rule 5000.3400 - 5000.3600 are incorporated into any contract between these parties based upon this specification or any modification of it. A copy of Minnesota Statute § 363A.36 and Minnesota Rule 5000.3400 - 5000.3600 are available upon request from the contracting agency."

Equal Pay Certification

If the Response to this solicitation could be in excess of \$500,000, the Responder must obtain an Equal Pay Certificate from the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) or claim an exemption prior to contract execution. A responder is exempt if it has not employed more than 40 full-time employees on any single working day in one state during the previous 12 months. Please contact MDHR with questions at: 651-539-1095 (metro), 1-800-657-3704 (toll free), 711 or 1-800-627-3529 (MN Relay) or at compliance.MDHR@state.mn.us.

Federal Procurement Requirements

The responder must be in compliance with the following federal contract procurement requirements:

Equal Employment Opportunity

Executive Order 11246, entitled "Equal Employment Opportunity", as amended by Executive Order 11375, and as supplemented by the Department of Labor Regulations (41 CFR Part 60): The Executive Order prohibits federal contractors and federally-assisted construction contractors and subcontractors who do over \$10,000 in Government business in one year from discriminating in employment decisions on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The Executive Order also requires

Government contractors to take affirmative action to ensure that equal opportunity is provided in all aspects of their employment.

Clean Air Act

The Clean Air Act, Section 306 stipulates:

a. No Federal agency may enter into any contract with any person who is convicted of any offense under section 113(c) for the procurement of goods, materials, and services to perform such contract at any facility at which the violation which gave rise to such conviction occurred if such facility is owned, leased, or supervised by such person. The prohibition in the preceding sentence shall continue until the Administrator certifies that the condition giving rise to such a conviction has been corrected. For convictions arising under section 113(c)(2), the condition giving rise to the conviction also shall be considered to include any substantive violation of this Act associated with the violation of 113(c)(2). The Administrator may extend this prohibition to other facilities owned or operated by the convicted person.

b. The Administrator shall establish procedures to provide all Federal agencies with the notification necessary for the purposes of subsection (a).

c. In order to implement the purposes and policy of this Act to protect and enhance the quality of the Nation's air, the President shall, not more than 180 days after enactment of the Clean Air Amendments of 1970 cause to be issued an order (1) requiring each Federal agency authorized to enter into contracts and each Federal agency which is empowered to extend Federal assistance by way of grant, loan, or contract to effectuate the purpose and policy of this Act in such contracting or assistance activities, and (2) setting forth procedures, sanctions, penalties, and such other provisions, as the President determines necessary to carry out such requirement.

d. The President may exempt any contract, loan, or grant from all or part of the provisions of this section where he determines such exemption is necessary in the paramount interest of the United States and he shall notify the Congress of such exemption. The President shall annually report to the Congress on measures taken toward implementing the purpose and intent of this section, including but not limited to the progress and problems associated with implementation of this section. [42 U.S.C. 7606]

e. The President shall annually report to the Congress on measures taken toward implementing the purpose and intent of this section, including but not limited to the progress and problems associated with implementation of this section. [42 U.S.C. 7606]

Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act, Section 309 stipulates:

a. No Federal agency may enter into any contract with any person who has been convicted of any offense under Section 309(c) of this Act for the procurement of goods, materials, and services if such contract is to be performed at any facility at which the violation which gave rise to such conviction occurred, and if such facility is owned, leased, or supervised by such person. The prohibition in preceding sentence shall continue until the Administrator certifies that the condition giving rise to such conviction has been corrected.

The Administrator shall establish procedures to provide all Federal agencies with the notification necessary for the purposes of subsection (a) of this section.

In order to implement the purposes and policy of this Act to protect and enhance the quality of the Nation's water, the President shall, not more than 180 days after the enactment of this Act, cause to be issued an order:

1. requiring each Federal agency authorized to enter into contracts and each Federal agency which is empowered to extend Federal assistance by way of grant, loan, or contract to effectuate the purpose and policy of this Act in such contracting or assistance activities, and
2. setting forth procedures, sanctions, penalties, and such other provisions, as the President determines necessary to carry out such requirement.

The President may exempt any contract, loan, or grant from all or part of the provisions of this section where he determines such exemption is necessary in the paramount interest of the United States and he shall notify the Congress of such exemption.

The President shall annually report to the Congress on measures taken in compliance with the purpose and intent of this section, including, but not limited to, the progress and problems associated with such compliance.

(1) No certification by a contractor, and no contract clause, may be required in the case of a contract for the acquisition of commercial items in order to implement a prohibition or requirement of this section or a prohibition or requirement issued in the implementation of this section.

(2) In paragraph (1), the term "commercial item" has the meaning given such term in section 4(12) of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 U.S.C. 403(12)).

Anti-Lobbying Act

The Anti-Lobbying Act prohibits the recipients of Federal contracts, grants, and loans from using appropriated funds for lobbying the Executive or Legislative branches of the Federal government in connection with a specific contract, grant, or loan. As required by Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code and implemented at 34 CFR Part 82 for persons entering into a grant or cooperative agreement over \$100,000, as defined at 34 CFR Part 82, Section 82.105 and 82.110, the applicant certifies that:

- a. No federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the making of any federal grant, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any federal grant or cooperative agreement;
- b. If any funds other than federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this federal grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form – LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;

c. The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be include in the award documents for all sub-awards at all tiers (including sub-grants, contracts under grants and cooperative agreements, and subcontracts) and that all sub-recipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

Americans with Disabilities Act

This Act (28 CFR Part 35, Title II, Subtitle A) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all services, programs, and activities provided to the public and State and local governments, except public transportation services.

Drug-Free Workplace Statement

The Federal government implemented the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988 in an attempt to address the problems of drug abuse on the job. It is a fact that employees who use drugs have less productivity, a lower quality of work, and a higher absenteeism, and are more likely to misappropriate funds or services. From this perspective, the drug abuser may endanger other employees, the public at large, or themselves. Damage to property, whether owned by this entity or not, could result from drug abuse on the job. All these actions might undermine public confidence in the services this entity provides. Therefore, in order to remain a responsible source for government contracts, the following guidelines have been adopted:

- a. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the work place.
- b. Violators may be terminated or requested to seek counseling from an approved rehabilitation service.
- c. Employees must notify their employer of any conviction of a criminal drug statue no later than five days after such conviction.
- d. Contractors of federal agencies are required to certify that they will provide drug-free workplaces for their employees.

Transactions subject to the suspension/debarment rules (covered transactions) include grants, subgrants, cooperative agreements, and prime contracts under such awards. Subcontracts are not included. Also, the dollar threshold for covered procurement contracts is \$25,000. Contracts for Federally required audit services are covered regardless of dollar amount.

Debarment and Suspension

As required by Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 85, for prospective participants in primary covered transactions, as defined at 34 CFR Part 85, Sections 85.105 and 85.110.

The applicant certifies that it and its principals:

1. Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any federal department or agency;
2. Have not within a three-year period preceding this application been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state, or local) transaction or contract

under a public transaction; violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;

3. Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state, or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1)(b) of this certification; and

4. Have not within a three-year period preceding this application had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default.

Where the applicant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, he or she shall attach an explanation to this application.

Royalty-Free Rights to Use Software or Documentation Developed

The federal government reserves a royalty-free, non-exclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for federal government purposes, the copyright in any work developed under a grant, sub-grant, or contract under a grant or sub-grant or any rights of copyright to which a contractor purchases ownership.

Attachment A

Background and History

MN WIC has been preparing for e-WIC for several years. These efforts have included:

- Transfer and Implementation of a new WIC information system (MIS) in 2011 that includes e-WIC functionality. Ongoing operations and maintenance of the MIS is provided through a contract. The system is a State Agency Model (SAM).
- Development of a comprehensive Universal Product Code (UPC) database of WIC foods.
- Completion of a cost and alternatives analysis as well as a determination of a technical solution (smart card or on-line). **MN WIC determined that an on-line solution is the most cost efficient and cost-effective option.**
- Initial stakeholder engagement activities.
- Completion of an IAPD approved by USDA FNS.

Minnesota WIC Program Information

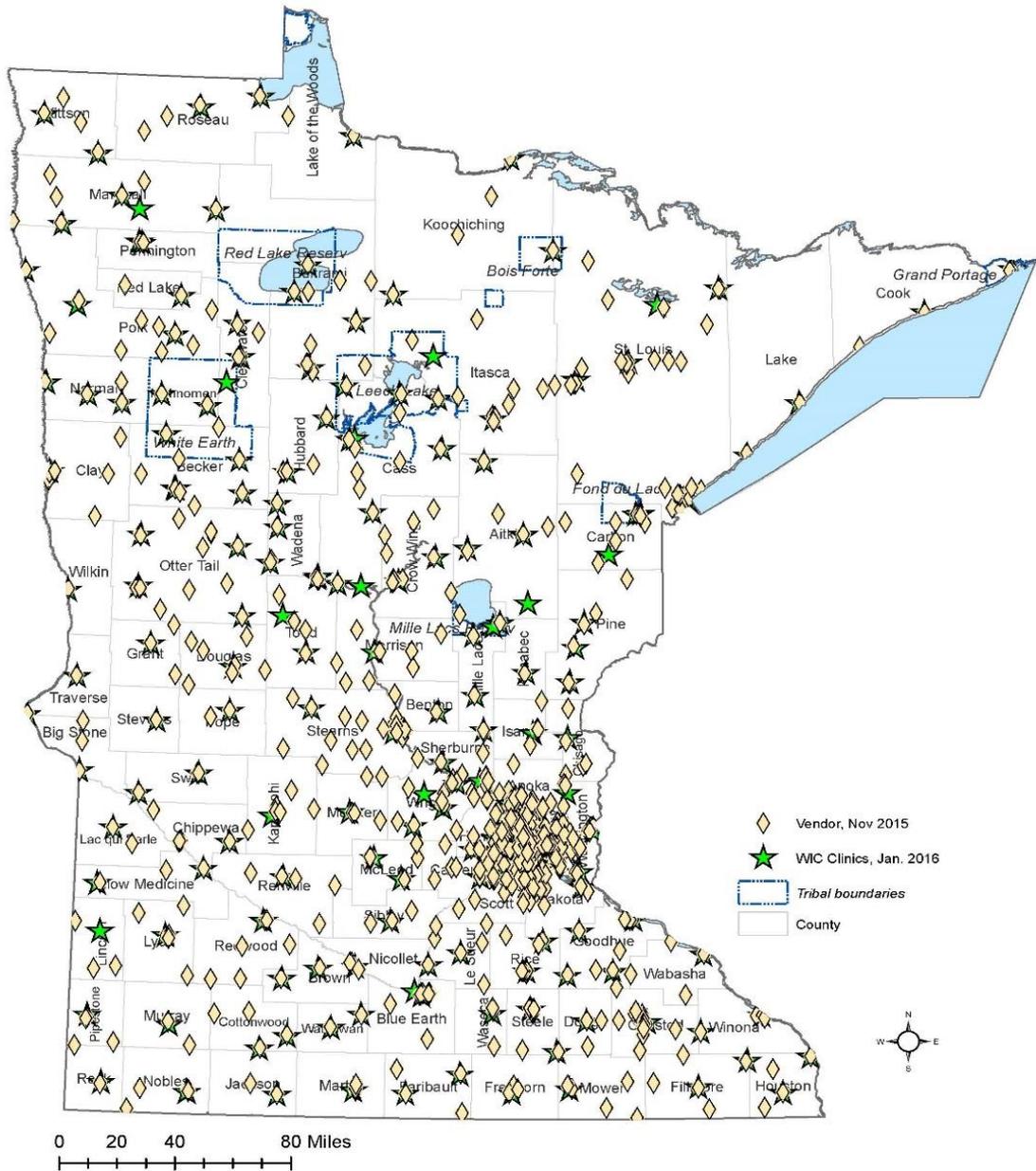
The following sections provide information about the MN WIC Program and activities related to e-WIC.

MN WIC Program Statistics

The MN WIC Program serves approximately 68,815 households each year, and there are approximately 1100 retail food and pharmacy locations throughout the State of Minnesota where participants can redeem their benefits. The MN WIC Program also contracts with approximately 700 farmers that participate in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program. Participants can currently redeem their fruit and vegetable WIC vouchers at these sites during the summer months.

Exhibit 1: WIC Clinics and Vendor Locations illustrates the locations of WIC clinics and vendors throughout the State of Minnesota.

WIC Clinics and Vendors in Minnesota, 2016



Date: 1/22/2016

Exhibit 1: WIC Clinics and Vendor Locations

Exhibit 2: WIC Program Statistics provides statistical information about the MN WIC program. Participant/household figures in this table represent the averages for the months of October 2015- June 2016.

Program Data	Figures
Number of WIC Participants	116,177
Average Number of Participants/Family	1.69
Number of WIC Families	68,815
Average Number of New Participants/Month	4225
Number of Local Grantees	53
Number of Clinic Locations	198
Number of Disconnected Clinics	0
Number of WIC Vendors (retail food and pharmacy)	1090
Number of WIC Neighborhood and/or Convenience Stores (1-2 registers)	386
Number of Independently-Owned Supermarkets (3+ cash registers)	203
Number of Chain-Owned Supermarkets (3+ cash registers)	217
Number of Pharmacies	155
Number of Warehouse-Type Stores	129
Number of Farmers at Farmers' Markets	709

Exhibit 2: WIC Program Statistics

WIC Information System

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) completed implementation of its WIC Management Information System (MIS) in 2011. Custom software for the MN WIC MIS was developed by a consortium of states, known as the Successful Partners in Reaching Innovative Technology (SPIRIT) Users Group (SUG). MN WIC refers to its MIS as the Health Benefits Real Time (HuBERT) system. HuBERT is considered a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) State Agency Model (SAM).

HuBERT is a centralized information system. Servers are used to host the database and the web services needed to access the database. To access the data and application, the HuBERT client is installed on computers used in WIC clinics and any computer that requires access to WIC information. The system is currently hosted by Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC), the MN WIC Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Contractor. In addition, to hosting and maintaining the system, the O&M contractor also handles the management, maintenance and support of clinic hardware; provides help desk services; supports software testing; conducts one-to-one reconciliation of benefits including investigation and reporting of discrepancies; and collects, tallies, and analyzes the results of periodic vendor price surveys.

SPIRIT is currently on line e-WIC operational in the Chickasaw Nation. Development is underway to add smart card e-WIC functionality, and bring the SPIRIT e-WIC interface up-to-date with the FNS WIC's Universal MIS-EBT Interface. It is anticipated that these changes will be completed prior to the start of the e-WIC service provider contract execution. MN WIC has been actively participating in SUG activities related to this effort, including the Change Control Work Group (CCWG), the Executive Steering Committee (ESC), and various task forces.

MN WIC Mobile App

CSC has also developed a smart phone application that is currently in use by MN WIC Program participants called the Minnesota WIC My Food Finder app. At this time, the app assists participants with the identification of WIC-approved foods at authorized WIC vendor locations. MN WIC has collected Universal Product Codes (UPCs), and created an Approved Products List (APL) that is used by the app when UPCs are scanned or entered into the app in the store. As MN WIC moves to e-WIC, MN WIC plans to expand the app's functionality to allow cardholders to access balance information and transaction history. MN WIC also plans to refine the UPC scanning capability so that the card balance can be used to determine what items are eligible to be purchased by the cardholder.

Appendix A: e-WIC Project Contractors' Responsibility Matrix

The following table outlines the responsibilities for areas of the project where contractors will have involvement. State staff will also be involved in the majority of the tasks and activities listed. A plan for state staff involvement will be developed after the PM and e-WIC Service Provider contracts are awarded. Any task/activity in which a contractor is not designated as the lead/facilitator, a state staff member will have the primary responsibility for the task. The following codes have been used to designate the level of participation

L=Lead/Facilitate

P=Participate

M=Monitor

I=Informed of Task/Activity

Blank=No involvement

Project Task/Activity	Project Manger	Quality Assurance Contractor	e-WIC Service Provider	HubERT M&O Contractor
Coordination of State Tasks	L	I	I	I
Coordination of Stakeholder Engagement	L	P	P	
Contractor Performance Monitoring	L	I	I	
e-WIC Deliverable Reviews	L	P	I	
QA Deliverable Reviews	L	I		
Maintain Project Document Repository	L	P	P	P
Change Management	L	P	P	P
Risk/Issue Management	P	L	P	P
Requirements Validation Activities	P	P	L	P
MIS-EBT Interface Development	M	M	L	P
MIS Configuration Changes	M	M	I	L
Updates to the WIC Food Finder App	M	M	I	L
Establish Connectivity	P	M	L	P
Vendor Enablement	P	P	L	
Vendor Certification/Testing (Level I/II)	M	P	L	

Project Task/Activity	Project Manger	Quality Assurance Contractor	e-WIC Service Provider	HuBERT M&O Contractor
Stand-Beside POS Deployment and Training	I	M	L	
Clinic Readiness	L	P	P	I
Clinic Staff Training	M	M	I	I
UPC Collection	M	M	M	I
User Acceptance Testing	P	L	P	P
e-WIC System Operation	M	M	L	I
Live Testing/Level III Certifications	P	P	L	M
Onsite Support - Pilot	L	P	P	I
Pilot Operations	M	M	L	M
Pilot Evaluation	P	L	P	I
Onsite Support - Rollout	L	P	I	I
Rollout Operations	M	M	L	M