

## Request for Information (RFI)

### New York State Office of Children and Family Services NYS Commission for the Blind – Business Enterprise Program

RFI # 1075

## **Regional Vending Machine and Micro Market Services**

**Issued: 5/14/2021**

**Responses Due: 6/25/2021**

### **Purpose**

The New York State (NYS) Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), Commission for the Blind (NYSCB), Business Enterprise Program (BEP), is seeking information and collecting input from qualified parties regarding the preparation of a Request for Proposals (RFP) and statewide restructuring of the NYSCB/BEP third party vending program.

NYSCB's goals in issuing this RFI are to:

- Identify strategies for structuring and/or implementing a regional based contracting model for vending and micro market contracts.
- Identify ideas and/or recommendations on how to structure an RFP to make the transition to a regional based contracting model for vending and micro market contracts
- Identify potential challenges and/or roadblocks related to the regional based contracting model for vending and micro market contracts
- Identify regional considerations that might be relevant to the regional based contracting model for vending and micro market contracts

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes - it does not constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or an Invitation for Bid (IFB) or a promise to issue an RFP or an IFB. This RFI does not commit New York State (NYS), the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), or the NYS Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) to contract for any supply or service whatsoever. Vendors are advised that OCFS will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP or IFB, if any are issued.

## **Program Background & Proposed Restructuring**

OCFS and NYSCB are authorized under the Federal Randolph Sheppard Act of 1974, the New York State Unconsolidated Laws Section 8714-a, the New York State Social Services Law Sections 20 (3) (d) and 38, and the New York State Public Buildings Law Section 3 (13), to solicit bid proposals for automatic vending machine service for the purpose of providing income, benefits and services to legally blind New York State residents.

Currently NYSCB has a priority for all Federal and State Sites (Randolph-Sheppard Act Amendments of 1974; surface transportation act Section 111; Mini/New York State Randolph-Sheppard Act Unconsolidated Laws §8701 thru 8714-A) owned or leased buildings within the State of New York. Some of these Sites have the vending provided directly by a Business Enterprise Program (BEP) manager, and other Sites have the vending provided by third party contractors. NYSCB currently competitively bids out these third-party contracts based on “routes,” and the current contract commission structure is based on a competitively bid, fixed-fee, per machine, per month. The NYSCB is contemplating moving from the current route-based, fixed-fee contracting model to a model in which the contracts are regional with one contract per region. (See attachment 1 for possible regions). Furthermore, NYSCB is contemplating moving from the current fixed fee, per machine, per month, contract commission structure to a percentage of gross sales contract commission structure.

## **Guidance to Respondents**

NYSCB may use information obtained from responses to this RFI in making programmatic decisions and/or to develop a competitive procurement such as an RFP or IFB.

Any content that is proprietary and/or confidential must be clearly marked as such in the response. Failure to mark content as proprietary and/or confidential may result in its disclosure in the event a response is the subject of a Freedom of Information request under Public Officers Law Section 87. In any event, OCFS/NYSCB will determine, in its sole discretion, appropriate disclosure in response to any Freedom of Information Law request. All materials submitted by a respondent shall become the property of NYSCB and may or may not be returned to the respondent, at the sole discretion of NYSCB.

NYSCB may issue announcements amending this RFI in response to questions. Any revisions to the RFI will be posted to the New York State Contract Reporter website (<http://www.nyscr.ny.gov>) and to the OCFS public website funding opportunities page (<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/contracts/funding/>).

NYSCB may communicate with any and all third parties, on the subject of this RFI or otherwise, during the pendency of this RFI and/or following the receipt and consideration of RFI responses. This may be through email exchanges, phone discussions, meetings, demonstrations, and/or correspondence, and may be with an individual respondent, a subset of respondents, or all respondents. As RFI responses are reviewed, NYSCB reserves the right to send follow-up clarification questions to respondents of further interest.

**Requested Information**

Please provide the following information:

(Please return all of the requested information electronically. You may provide the requested information as a completed attachment and/or in the body of an email.)

- 1.) Are you a:
  - a. Vending Service Provider
  - b. Advocate/Consumer
  - c. Interested Party, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 2.) Contact Information:
  - a. Name of individual responding
  - b. Name of company/organization
  - c. Mailing address
  - d. Email address
  - e. Phone number

If a vending service provider, please answer the following questions in Part A:

If an advocate/consumer, please answer questions in Part B:

If an interested party, please answer questions in both Part A and Part B:

**Part A:**

- 3.) What services do you provide?
  - a. Vending machine service
  - b. Micro-markets
  - c. Both
  
- 4.) What would you consider to be minimal consumer populations for the following services?
  - a. Vending machine services
  - b. Micro-market
  
- 5.) NYSCB may require vending machine placement in sub optimal locations. What percent of vending machines would you permit to be placed in sub optimal locations? Sub Optimal would be a location with less staff and expected revenue than was identified in 4(a) above.
  
- 6.) What are your thoughts of combining Micro Markets and Vending machines into one contract or separating them into two contracts? For this assume the commission percentage to be paid to OCFS can be different for micro marts and vending machines.
  
- 7.) Would you be more interested in a contract with a fixed commission or a percentage of sales commission? Explain why.

- 8.) What geographic territory does your company cover?
- 9.) Would you be interested in expanding the territory you currently cover?
- 10.) Would you have an interest in sub-contracting locations in areas you don't currently cover? If no, explain why.
- 11.) NYSCB plans to have bidders cover a minimum territory determined by geographic regions. Please comment on this approach and the minimum size of territories.
- 12.) Would the proposed six (6) region structure (see *attachment 1*) affect the amount of commission you would bid? If yes, please explain?
- 13.) Would the proposed three (3) region structure (see *attachment 1*) affect the amount of commission you would bid? If yes, please explain?
- 14.) If there is a territory geographically adjacent to one that you bid on, that did not receive any bids, would you be willing to serve that territory at a negotiated commission rate?
- 15.) Please provide us with a brief history of your company. Please include the number of years you have been in business, current number of routes, and the counties you service.
- 16.) What is your typical response time for requests for replenishment and service, including repairs, placement, and/or replacement of machines?
- 17.) What is your response to complaints from consumers regarding out of date product or lost money in machines? Include your typical timeframes in your response.
- 18.) What do you consider to be an acceptable response time to the above two questions?
- 19.) In a future RFP or IFB, should NYSCB set a minimum bid requirement for bidders based upon the percentage of sales bid?
- 20.) If the answer to 19 was yes, what would you consider an appropriate percentage?
- 21.) If the answer to 19 was no, please explain why.
- 22.) Micro markets require larger upfront investment costs to install at a given location, as contrasted to installing vending machines. Generally, how many years of operations does your organization require to recoup the upfront costs? Please explain your answer.

23.) Is there anything else you would like us to know or provide us?

**Part B:**

24.) What do you consider to be an appropriate response time for a vending machine provider to repair, place, or replace equipment?

25.) What do you consider to be an appropriate response from a vending machine provider regarding out of date product or lost money in machines?

26.) Commissions from vending machine contracts provide revenue that supports programs for the visually impaired. Do you believe NYSCB should set a minimum bid for vending machine services? Please explain.

27.) Is there anything else you would like us to know or provide us?

**Deadline for Responses**

Interested parties are requested to respond to this RFI with the information requested in the section entitled “Requested Information” no later than the deadline indicated on the first page of this announcement. Responses to this RFI must be made via email.

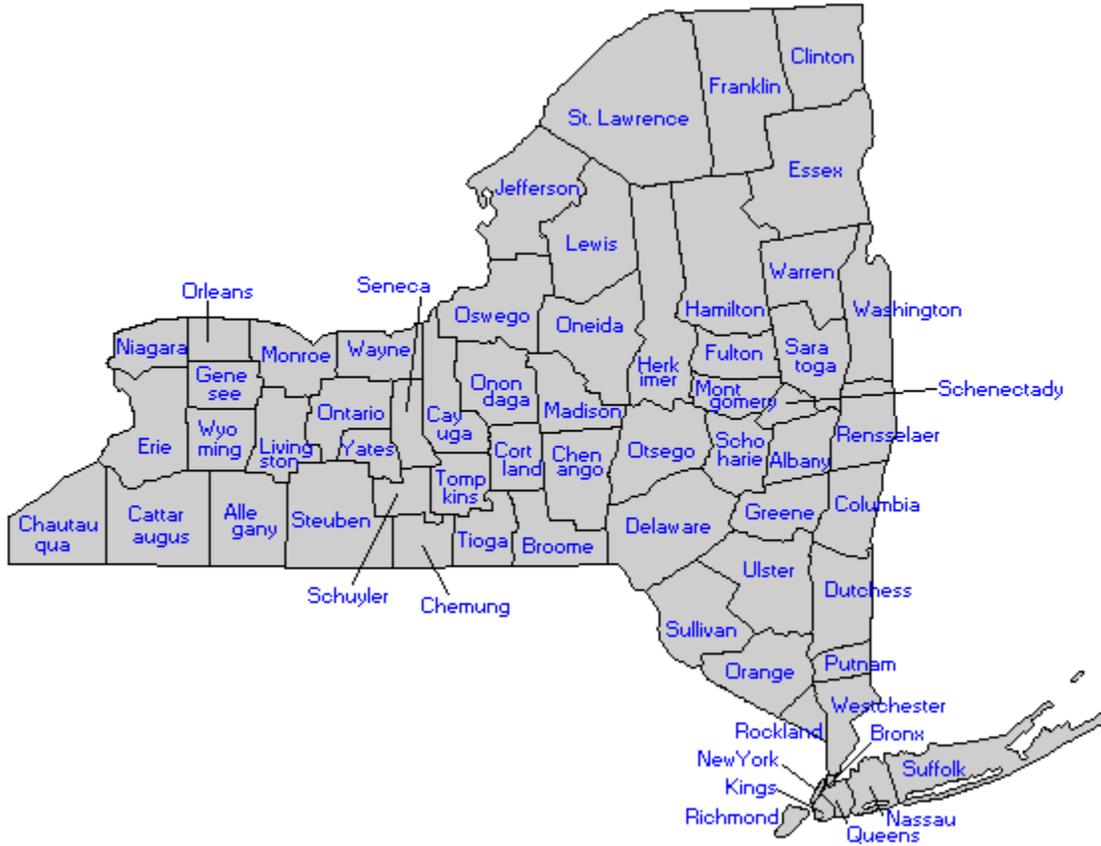
Delivery Method:	Address to:	Subject Line:
Email	<a href="mailto:RFP@OCFS.NY.GOV">RFP@OCFS.NY.GOV</a>	<b>RFI # 1075 Regional Vending and Micro Markets</b>

**Questions**

Questions regarding this RFI should be submitted via email to the OCFS Procurement Unit at: [RFP@OCFS.NY.GOV](mailto:RFP@OCFS.NY.GOV) prior to the due date and time noted above. Please submit your question with adequate time for response. OCFS recommends allowing at least five (5) business days. Be sure to put “**RFI # 1075 Regional Vending and Micro Markets**” in the subject line. Late questions may not be addressed. Questions should not contain proprietary or classified information.

## Attachment #1

### Regions and Counties



<b>Six (6) Region Structure</b>	
<b>Six (6) Regions</b>	<b>Counties Covered</b>
<b>Region- One</b>	Niagara, Orleans, Erie, Genesee, Wyoming, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegany
<b>Region -Two</b>	Monroe, Wayne, Livingston, Ontario, Seneca, Yates, Steuben, Schuyler and Chemung
<b>Region -Three</b>	St. Lawrence, Jefferson, Lewis, Herkimer, Oswego, Oneida, Cayuga, Onondaga, Madison, Tompkins, Cortland, Chenango, Tioga and Broome
<b>Region- Four</b>	Franklin, Clinton, Essex, Hamilton, Warren, Washington, Fulton, Saratoga, Montgomery, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Otsego, Schoharie, Albany, Delaware, Greene and Columbia
<b>Region -Five</b>	Sullivan, Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Westchester
<b>Region- Six</b>	Suffolk, Nassau, New York (Manhattan), Bronx, Richmond, Kings and Queens

<b>Three (3) Region Structure</b>	
<b>Three (3) Regions</b>	<b>Counties Covered</b>
<b>Region- Western Region</b>	Allegany, Broome, Cattaraugus, Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Cortland, Erie, Genesee, Jefferson, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Onondaga, Ontario, Orleans, Oswego, Schuylar, Seneca, St. Lawrence, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
<b>Region – Central Region</b>	Albany, Chenango, Clinton, Columbia, Delaware, Dutchess, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Lewis, Madison, Montgomery, Oneida, Orange, Otsego, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Sullivan, Tioga, Ulster, Warren, Washington
<b>Region – Southern Region</b>	Bronx, Kings, Nassau, New York (Manhattan), Putnam, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, Suffolk, Westchester