

- 1.Q. What is the statewide funding amount for this initiative?
- 1.A. Total funding for the EITC Outreach / Free Tax Assistance initiative for the 2009-2010 program year is \$840,000, or roughly \$93,000 per region.**
- 2.Q. How will the contract amount for each regional contract be determined?
- 2.A. The amount of each regional contract will depend on availability of funds; the funding request relative to prior year benchmarks for the region (dollars allocated and qualifying tax returns prepared in the region); and whether the regional proposer's budget is composed of reasonable and justifiable costs.**
- 3.Q. Can applicants submit a proposal if they neither possess 501(c)(3) status or are not a government entity?
- 3.A. Yes – individuals and organizations can apply regardless of their legal structure.**
- 4.Q. For volunteer recognition, is the purchase of gift cards an allowable expense?
- 4.A. No. Funding from these contracts cannot be used for donations and gifts (including cash, property, and services). Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such activities (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) are also unallowable.**
- 5.Q. Are VITA sites required to have a laser printer?
- 5.A. The Internal Revenue Service Tax Specialist who serves as the VITA liaison for your area will advise you of minimum computer system and office equipment requirements for your VITA site. Contact information for IRS representatives in each region is found in Appendix B (page 20) of the Solicitation for Proposals.**
- 6.Q. How can a program invoice for activities such as speaking to groups on EITC, or publicizing the service at a community event?
- 6.A. These are considered Outreach activities, and salary and supply costs related to these activities should be included in the Outreach (Cost Reimbursement) section of the proposer's budget.**
- 7.Q. How many contracts will be awarded?
- 7.A. The maximum number of contracts to be awarded by DSS/OFS is nine – one for each of the Department's nine regions of the state (see Program Background on page 4 of the Solicitation for Proposals).**
- 8.Q. How will the agency obtain the DSS logo? Will the agency be allowed to put the EITC information on its website?

- 8.A. If your organization is selected as a contractor, you will be provided with the DSS logo by DSS program staff. The contractor will be instructed to send any press releases and marketing and publicity materials to a DSS Public Information Officer via fax or email for approval. These items are usually reviewed and approved within two business days. Contractors are encouraged to promote their free tax preparation services on their organization's websites.**
- 9.Q. Will contractors be paid for preparing any returns?
- 9.A. Contractors will be reimbursed on a per-unit basis only for preparing qualifying returns, defined as returns for EITC filers with children. Please see p. 6 of the Solicitation for Proposals, "Program Requirements and Definitions," for complete information on qualifying returns.**
- 10.Q. Should the agency retain a copy of TANF eligibility for record-keeping purposes?
- 10.A. The contractor must document EITC returns for filers with children using the TANF Declaration form shown in Appendix I, p. 32 of the Solicitation for Proposals. A "needy family" eligible for this TANF-funded service is defined as an EITC-eligible family that includes a minor child / children. For the months of the filing season, the contractor must send in copies of Declaration forms along with monthly invoices to receive per-unit reimbursement for preparation of qualifying tax returns.**
- 11.Q. Regarding the salary computation, are we to use the actual organization's salaries of the employees working in the VITA program as the basis for the unit cost calculation?
- 11.A. For a budget to be approved and included in a contract, all expenses (including salaries) must be reasonable, related to the provision of the service, and justified in a budget narrative. Actual salaries paid by the contracting organizations are the most common method for deriving the salary amounts requested in these budgets.**
- 12.Q. Are administrative costs allowable within the cost reimbursement and unit cost portions of the budget?
- 12.A. Administrative costs and indirect costs are allowable within the cost reimbursement and unit cost budgets. The costs must be reasonable and follow the guidelines provided in Appendix F, page 27 of the Solicitation for Proposals.**
- 13.Q. Can this grant be awarded in addition to the IRS VITA Grant?
- 13.A. Yes.**
- 14.Q. As a regional provider will I be responsible for the media outreach?
- 14.A. Yes – a regional contractor may choose to undertake media activity as part of the regional program's outreach.**

15.Q. As a subcontractor, should we only fill out Appendix D with a budget?

15.A. Subcontractors must each enter into an agreement with the regional provider stating the details of the service to be provided, along with the cost of the service in the form of an itemized budget. The agreement can be in any form that is acceptable to both subcontractor and regional provider. A sample agreement between a subcontractor and a regional provider is included as Appendix D, page 24 of the Solicitation for Proposals.

16.Q. What are the subcontractors supposed to be doing for November and December (other than two days of training with IRS) if the regional contractor is now responsible for marketing and outreach? How do we justify getting paid for those two months?

16.A. A subcontractor should not request any salary amounts for the months of November and December if that organization's staff will not be performing work related to development of a VITA site for the 2010 filing season. Any staff activities to be undertaken in November and December that are directly related to the provision of a VITA service will be considered. However, as with all cost items, these salary amounts should be reasonable and justifiable. Justification should be provided in the form of a description of staff members' November and December VITA-related activities.

17.Q. What are the subcontractors' specific responsibilities to the regional contractor?

17.A. These responsibilities are subject to agreement of both parties (subcontractor and regional provider). At a minimum, subcontractors should submit to regional providers documentation of expenditures for Cost Reimbursement items; and should submit to regional providers Declaration forms as documentation of services provided to the eligible population.