

ADDENDUM NO. 3

November 9, 2022

RE: 019.23.B3 – Student Transportation Services

FROM: Purchasing Office
Howard County Public Schools
10910 Clarksville Pike
Ellicott City, MD 21042
(410) 313-6723
(410) 313-6789 fax

TO: APPROVED PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS

This addendum forms a part of the Contract Documents and modifies the Original RFP Documents as noted below. This Addendum consists of thirty (30) pages.

Questions and Answers

1. Section 1.15 – States we are to include a copy of the Solicitation Document with our submission, does this mean that you want us to include a copy of the RFP in electronic PDF file?

Answer: You do not need to include a copy of the RFP with your proposal. There are forms within the solicitation document which must be included. See Check List on page 74.

2. Pricing Pages - Just to confirm. The RFP states that the pricing page(s) should be submitted in a sealed file. Since we are submitting electronically does this simply mean that they will be in a separate file as stated later in the RFP?

Answer: Yes. The price proposal must be in a separate file.

3. Vehicle Requirements - Please provide more detail on the vehicle specifications to include passenger capacities, W/C requirements and A/C requirements as well as any other detailed info you can provide.

Answer: [HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.](#)

4. Contractor Route Numbers – Can you please provide the current number of routes that each contractor operates?

Answer: This breakdown isn't necessary. A list of the current routes have been provided in Attachment B.

5. Summer School - Who will be responsible for operating Summer School routes?

Answer: These routes are a part of the contract and must be covered by the contractor. We do not run as many buses during the summer.

6. Route Lengths - In Section 3.4 of the RFP, the District states that bidders should not consider the route data provided as reflective of the routes that will be in place at the start of the contract. Given that route length factors into both driver labor cost and maintenance costs, can the District provide detail as to how the route lengths will change next year? Has the District performed routing reflecting the bell time change?

Answer: The route data is the best available at this time, and reflects the system as currently being operated. Bell time changes are being considered for implementation in FY2024. If approved, this will effectively shorten the morning and afternoon operational window but will not greatly impact individual route lengths. Rather, existing layover time in the system will be reduced. Detailed routing that reflects the bell time changes will occur as early as possible after the bell time changes are approved, but not until CY2023.

7. Pre-Bid Attendees – Please provide a list of pre-bid attendees with contractor/company affiliation.

Answer: The pre-bid attendee list is posted on the purchasing website found here, <https://purchasing.hcpss.org/business-opportunities>.

8. Can you provide a copy of the sign-in sheets as part of info release.

Answer: The pre-bid attendee list is posted on the purchasing website found here, <https://purchasing.hcpss.org/business-opportunities>.

9. Did the district and contractor (s) negotiate outside of the contractual terms to provide payments to contractor during closure or periods of service reductions related to the pandemic? Please specify details (i.e., a reduced percentage of daily fees, flat amounts, how much was it, number of days). Did this cover to allow contractor to fund

driver wages to provide assurances of driver availability for when schools returned to in person?

Answer: Various negotiations regarding current contract arrangements did occur, but the details are unrelated to the scope of this solicitation.

10. Does the district allow drivers to bring their preschool age children along the routes?

Answer: Only children allowed to accompany the driver are those that are registered as an HCPSS student.

11. Has the district made changes to the routing structure in during the current contract period, such as changing bell times, areas serviced, etc.?

Answer: Various negotiations regarding current contract arrangements did occur, but the details are unrelated to the scope of this solicitation.

12. Beyond the changes noted in Page 19, Section 3.4, do you anticipate other building additions or significant changes and/or other programs requiring transportation during the contract term?

Answer: Please refer to attached document for information.

[https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/hcpssmd/Board.nsf/files/CJUMRX532A7A/\\$file/FINAL%20FY24_BOEPropCapBudgPgs%2030Sept22%20with%20COVER.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/hcpssmd/Board.nsf/files/CJUMRX532A7A/$file/FINAL%20FY24_BOEPropCapBudgPgs%2030Sept22%20with%20COVER.pdf) t.

13. Does the school district, the city, county, etc. Own or are party to any properties that may be suitable for the school bus operations, that they could lease or make available to operate the service?

Answer: No

14. Does the district allow any contractors to park vehicles or utilize district provided facilities?

Answer: No

15. Can you please clarify the routing software used today. Is it owned and licensed by district and district provides software for contractor access or do we need to obtain license on our own to access district data?

Answer: Versatrans is owned and licensed to HCPSS. Contractors do not have access. Routing will be completed by the District and relevant data and information will be made available to the contractors.

16. Can you please clarify the current routing staff organization of both the district and contractor. Does the district perform all routing including regular education, special education, etc.

Answer: HCPSS does all of the routing for every student.

17. Would the accept proposals for special education transportation only. Does the district currently have separate special education transportation contractors and contracts? If so, can you please clarify the arrangements and route volume.

Answer: The unspecified region is the only one that is special education only. Currently contractors have the ability to provide both regular and special education services, and each of the other regions will require that special education transportation be provided together with the regular service.

18. Would the district consider a fixed cost component, such as a minimum fee or rate to compensate the contractor to address the variability and uncertainty of school closures, especially given the history with the pandemic. With that fee to ensure payroll is made to drivers to avoid potential losses of employees that could incur without being paid?

Answer: The HCPSS will not consider this change.

19. Fuel is a large expense for the operation and given market volatility contractors will likely assume significant risk into the proposal. To alleviate this, many agencies purchase the fuel directly to alleviate contractor paid taxes and markup and often utilize intergovernmental agreements with significant purchasing power to negotiate local rates. Has the agency ever considered this or would consider a proposal or language to cap fuel prices at time of bid so added risk is not built in potentially inflating the price.

Answer: [HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.](#)

20. Regarding fuel. Do you buy fuel, have fuel escalator or adjustment provisions in the contracts today?

Answer: A fuel adjustment provision is in the current contract.

21. Page 5, item 1.2. Can the district provide a summary of previous (current) bell times/tiers compared to the new times, and volume of routes by tier and the projected volume routes by bell time/tier. Further can the district provide copies of consultative reports, internal studies, recommendations, etc. and corresponding summary of final decisions with the intelligence from the studies. Can you explain the reorganization in the transportation department. What roles are changing, is the district taking on more functions with an internal team that was previously handled by contractors? Did the district implement a new routing software as part of this planned transition and can you explain changes and areas of focus for contractors as part of the transition to the new routing system layout.

Answer: Current school bell times are visible on the HCPSS website. The current planned bell times for implementation in FY2024 are outlined in a report to the Board of Education which can be found here: (add link to the October SB report, presumably on Board Docs). HCPSS will not provide consultative reports or any internal studies. Any reorganization in the transportation department is not relevant to this RFP. No new routing software has been implemented.

22. Page 5, item 1.3. notes questions are to be submitted by 10/27/22. Would the district be willing to add a second question submission and response. This could allow contractors a second opportunity to ask additional questions after they have a chance to review after the district is able to gather and release information requests and answers to questions from the pre-proposal conference and the first set of questions.

Answer: No. A sufficient amount of time between the Pre-Bid Conference and the question period was given to ask questions.

23. What are the timelines anticipated for the information to be released as a result of the 10/27 questions submission? We request a second opportunity to submit questions and allowance for time for district to prepare and respond. Typically contractors are provided at least ten business days with the final information release prior to RFP due date in order to formulate proposals.

Answer: Because of the amount of questions received, the timelines may change. If the RFP due date changes, an addendum will be posted.

24. Can you please clarify. Will the district provide all of the questions and responses submitted to/from all of the proposers who submit questions? This is typically the process whereby all proposers are offered the same questions and answers and information releases often compiled into addenda releases.

Answer: Yes, all questions and answers will be provided to all proposers.

25. Page 5, item 1.3 and page 8 item 1.14. Our legal team is reviewing the RFP sample contract and supporting documents and may not have a legal review with questions or recommendations to send until after the 10/27 deadline. We will submit these as soon as we receive and process.

Answer: This is not a question.

26. Page 8, item 1.14. Regarding exceptions. This notes that contractors are to notify HCPSS not later than 10 business days prior to RFP due date regarding exceptions. This is not something we customarily see to be submitted separately. Are you expecting contractors to ask questions separately to clarify any legal language changes or specification provisions desired?

Answer: Exceptions to the terms and conditions are separate from the questions about the RFP. Yes, contractors must notify me within 10 business days prior to the due date of the RFP of any exceptions to the terms and conditions.

27. More often we see that contractors could ask these questions during the review of the RFP and contract template as part of RFP questions and districts could provide clarification with their answers. However, sometimes they remain an issue and contractors propose what they can and these items are left to be addressed during post proposal interviews and negotiation. Are you ok with this approach or do we still need to submit open exceptions or concerns ten days prior?

Answer: Contractors must notify me within 10 business days prior to the due date of the RFP of any exceptions to the terms and conditions.

28. Page 9, item 1.20 regarding the cooperative purchasing clause. Does the HCPSS currently extend the contract and pricing to outside agencies. If so, can you provide a briefing of the arrangements, volumes, and copies of reference to intergovernmental agreements or associated contracts and related amendments, extensions, mou's, etc.

Answer: HCPSS does not currently extend this contract and pricing to outside agencies.

29. Page 16-17, 3.3.2, item 3), regarding subcontracting. Do any contractors use subcontractors today? If so, can you please provide a briefing as to the related contractors and subcontracted service and volume.

Answer: Subcontractors are not currently utilized.

30. Page 17, 3.3.2, item 5 last paragraph notes given historic driver shortages contractors shall place emphasis on methodology to ensure proper staffing. Has the district negotiated adjustments to existing contracts to address increases in wages or other labor increases to compete with market forces. If so can you provide a briefing as to the rate adjustment and any insight as to what adjustments were made.

Answer: Negotiations and adjustments have occurred but are not relevant to the scope of this solicitation.

31. Page 17, 3.3.2, item 5 Also we have seen that many districts had negotiated COVID pandemic related employee retention and attendance incentive payments to contractors to help address staffing shortfalls. Did the district negotiate any of these arrangements for a temporary period or continuing into this school year. If so, can you please provide a briefing as to the route fee rate adjustment and insight as to incentives made.

Answer: Negotiations and adjustments have occurred but are not relevant to the scope of this solicitation.

32. Page 20, item 3.4.1. Regarding Table 1. Are the vehicle counts routed vehicles and not inclusive of spare vehicles?

Answer: Correct, these are best estimates for the count of routed vehicles, exclusive of spares.

33. Page 20, item 3.4.1. Regarding Table 1. Can you please provide an update noting the number of contractor provided bus monitors per Contract Service Area.

Answer: Each special education route is required to have an attendant in addition to the driver. There is currently no expectation for bus monitors on general education routes.

34. Page 25, 3.5.3.6. This section does not indicate your expected vehicle capacities for regular education buses and special needs buses. Can you please provide a summary as to your expectations. Also there does not appear to be a vehicle maximum age or average fleet age, can you please confirm. Do you have age specs in the current contracts?

Answer: [HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.](#)

35. Page 25, 3.5.3.6, item 5). We plan to utilize push to talk using cellular service via tablets, typically the cellular clarity of coverage is far greater than two-way radio frequencies. Would this be sufficient.

Answer: No, however additional communication systems would be allowed by HCPSS.

36. Page 25, 3.5.3.6, item 6). Notes a GPS system is required. What system (s) are in use today and do you have a preferred system to be provided?

Answer: The current system is provided by BusPatrol. The HCPSS does not currently have a preferred system, but contractors should be aware of a parallel effort to enhance the HCPSS transportation technology platform that may affect requirements in the future. The HCPSS recognizes the need to consider contract changes should these future technology changes have a material impact on contractor costs.

37. This notes the GPS system is to interface with HCPSS systems and transfer data to HCPSS. Can you explain what systems the GPS must communicate with and what data is transferred from contractor provided GPS systems?

Answer: Currently, the HCPSS utilizes the Versatrans suite of software, including Versatrans RP for routing and Onscreen for data visualization. This is the system that the contractor's GPS must communicate, for the purpose of this solicitation and any resulting contract. However, contractors should be aware of a parallel effort to enhance the HCPSS transportation technology platform that may affect requirements in the future. The HCPSS recognizes the need to consider contract changes should these future technology changes have a material impact on contractor costs.

38. Do you use GPS to interface with computerized routing software? If so, what software and functionality is GPS data used for?

Answer: Currently, the HCPSS utilizes the Versatrans suite of software, including Versatrans RP for routing and Onscreen for data visualization. This is the system that the contractor's GPS must communicate, for the purpose of this solicitation and any resulting contract. However, contractors should be aware of a parallel effort to enhance the HCPSS transportation technology platform that may affect requirements in the future. The HCPSS recognizes the need to consider contract changes should these future technology changes have a material impact on contractor costs.

39. Do you use GPS to interface with a district provided smart phone app to communicate with parents about bus route status, location, etc.?

40. If so what system?

Answer: Currently, the HCPSS utilizes the Versatrans suite of software, including Versatrans RP for routing and the My Stop app. However, the My Stop app is not

currently active nor fully implemented. Contractors should be aware of a parallel effort to enhance the HCPSS transportation technology platform that may affect requirements in the future. The HCPSS recognizes the need to consider contract changes should these future technology changes have a material impact on contractor costs.

41. If no app, would the district be interested in a smart phone app provided by the contractor for its respective zones as part of the proposal?

Answer: An alternative to the current My Stop app is not a requirement of this solicitation and is not suggested. Contractors should be aware of a parallel effort to enhance the HCPSS transportation technology platform that may affect requirements in the future. The HCPSS recognizes the need to consider contract changes should these future technology changes have a material impact on contractor costs.

42. Page 26, 3.5.3.6, item 7). This notes each vehicle is to be equipped with digital video cameras. However, does not note the number of cameras to be provided and locations of cameras. Can you please clarify if you have a quantity of cameras per vehicle type (large bus, small bus, mini-van (car) that you expect and the camera location.

Answer: Camera system is currently provided by BusPatrol and includes internal and external cameras on all buses. For vehicles other than buses it would be the responsibility of contractor to provide audio and video system to provide coverage based on the size of the vehicle.

43. Page 26, 3.5.3.7, the footnote indicates there is also a concurrent RFI for technology. Can you please explain. What software or other technology is the district evaluating and considering to be used? Is the district considering providing its own GPS system and airtime for contractors to install and use on the vehicles?

Answer: Contractors should be aware of a parallel effort to enhance the HCPSS transportation technology platform that may affect requirements in the future. The HCPSS recognizes the need to consider contract changes should these future technology changes have a material impact on contractor costs

44. Page 26, 3.5.3.7, item 1) c. Notes contractors are to provide access to view and store data from video cameras. Can you please clarify your expectations here. Is this just to provide video clips segments retrieved from cameras on a hard disk jump drive or file transfer portal. Or are you expecting the contractor to provide online access to all

video data that is downloaded and stored to a local server for access or stores to a cloud based server for access?

Answer: Expectation is to access and archive select video data as needed. It is not an expectation that vendors download and archive all bus video footage on a regular basis.

45. Page 27, item 3.5.4.2 and 3.5.4.3. Regarding minimum standards and liquidated damages, such as “no more than 2% of all routes are delayed”. This section speaks of minimums that no more than 2% of all routes can be delayed otherwise a penalty would be applied. Would the district be willing to provide a performance incentive for contractors who achieve no more than 2% of all routes being delayed in a month as an example such as a 2% increase to the contractor daily rates for the month. Incentives just like penalties can help promote better performance.

Answer: The HCPSS is not currently able to provide a performance incentive due to budgetary limitations.

46. Page 27, 3.5.4.2, items 4) and 5). Note that vehicles are late when delayed more than 5 minutes. In the industry across the nation, we typically see this key performance indicator of late be greater than 10 minutes for both classification of being late and notification for delays. Would the district be open to amending the provisions to be late when greater than 10 minutes to be more realistic with delay tracking as being required to track and report for five minute windows could increase resources for communication and puts focus to be on delays rather than collaborating to find efficiencies to system with many moving parts and variables.

Answer: No changes to the requirements will be considered. For clarification, the definition of late for the purpose of performance measurement is to be applied on an average basis across each week of service. The manner of tracking and reporting against this standard will be a joint responsibility of the HCPSS and contractor, with the objective to define an approach that minimizes the administrative burden to both parties. The separate operational requirement to report delays as they occur is a 15 minute standard, as measured from the time of occurrence.

47. Page 28, 3.5.4.3., item 1) b. notes a penalty is applied for item 3.5.4.2, 2). We do not understand the standard of measure for item 2) and how this penalty would be applied. Can you please elaborate or correct.

Answer: [HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.](#)

48. Page 28, 3.5.4.3., item 1) c. notes a penalty may be applied for item 3.5.4.2., 5). Why is the penalty multiplied by 5 times for each instance. This penalty seems unreasonable to require being penalized 5 times 75% of the daily rate for the impacted routes. Would the district consider amending the liquidated damage specifications for late vehicles to remove the multiplier of 5 times?

Answer: This is an error. The corrected language will remove the words “multiplied by five (5)” from section 3.5.4.3., item 1) b. and c.

49. Page 34, item 5.3. Would the district consider waiving this for instances of providing vehicles for sale or lease. Such as an affiliate company bus dealership that responds to a solicitation to provide vehicles to the district or the contractor.

Answer: Clause 5.3 would not apply to instances of providing vehicles for sale or lease.

50. Page 35, item 5.7, second paragraph. Notes that the contractor is to hold the district harmless and last line indicates except for the losses otherwise excluded by the board. Can you please provide clarification on the specific losses that are “excluded by the board” or would you be willing to remove this reference as it is overly broad in nature.

Answer: This clause cannot be removed. “except those losses otherwise specifically excluded by the Board” are on a case by case basis.

51. Page 36, item 5. Regarding termination for convenience. This clause one sided on behalf of district leaves little assurance for contractors as the contract could be terminated any time. Contractors are asked to procure fleet and other capital equipment as part of the service contract. Would the district be amenable to making this provision mutual or eliminating completely providing longer term assurances to contractors. Given that performance issues and other concerns are addressed through the contract performance management program, liquidated damage penalties, and other default mechanisms in the contract.

Answer: HCPSS will not remove or revise the Termination for Convenience clause.

52. Page 37, item 5.15. Would the district be willing to make this provision mutual whereby the district also agrees not to hire employees of the contractor including key management employees or front line operational support. As this type of hiring practices could be of detriment to the contractor and in turn cause potential performance issues to the district.

Answer: This paragraph states that no employee or official involved in any part of this contract, during the term of the contract, become or be an employee of the contractor or

subcontractor. The District can't refuse employment from employees of contractors who choose to leave.

53. Page 38, item 5.17. This clause on its face has similar implications to the termination for convenience section. If the board does not appropriate funds then the contract would be terminated for convenience by the district. Leaving decision to rest with the district to potentially not appropriate funds and exit the contract. Would the district consider amending this to change from "if the board does not appropriate" to something like if the state or other funding source for district specifically related to the provision of transportation, changes reimbursement funding formula or specific criteria in the calculation of reimbursement for contracted transportation services, or significantly reduces or cancels funding.

Answer: HCPSS will not remove or revise the Multi-Year Contracts Contingent Upon Appropriations clause.

54. Page 39, item 5.21. Requires compliance with district policies. Can you please provide the applicable transportation policies for our review as part of the information release.

Answer: Available on the HCPSS website, <https://policy.hcpss.org/5000/5200/>.

55. Page 42, item 5.37. Can you explain the reference that the district will only consider labor cost changes upon changes to federal minimum wages. This is unrealistic as local market conditions, supply, demand, and other competitive forces such as expansion in other industries like Amazon hiring drivers for home delivery causes impact to the local wage conditions and needed adjustments to be competitive and assure supply of drivers.

Answer: The CPI is broken down to regions, which takes into account local market conditions. This will be based upon the Baltimore Region.

56. Page 42, item 5.37. Regarding the cap on CPI increases. Would the district accept a revision to this to align with at least by the change in CPI over the period. As you know inflation has been much greater than 5% during the past year. By allowing this, contractors are not building additional risk into our pricing up front that would be compounded over the term.

Answer: HCPSS will continue to follow the Price Adjustments clause as stated.

57. Page 42, item 5.37. Regarding the CPI increase formula multiplier of .75 or 75%. Can you explain. Essentially is this only providing 75% of the effective percentage change in CPI as the option for a rate increase?

This further limits contractors if we are to further reduce the inflation adjustment, again causing contractors to build additional risk into our pricing up front for the uncertainty of this provision.

Answer: This sentence shall not apply, and is to be removed. "The percentage of change will then be multiplied by .75 to obtain the adjustment to be applied to the current prices."

59. Page 47. Regarding the NOTE at bottom. This indicates that amendments can occur with less than 24 hours notice prior to the proposal due date. This clause is unrealistic and we request the district consider amending this service provider RFP to allow contractors time with information released in order to formulate adjustments to their proposal.

Typically contractors are provided at least ten and no later than 5 business days with the final information release prior to RFP due date in order to incorporate the info into their proposals. This is a reasonable request and provides consideration to the other parties' business operations and schedules to allow time for thoughtful consideration of the changes.

Though we would anticipate the district would ensure timely release of information to avoid last minute material changes, this clause is open ended.

Answer: If an Amendment with a substantial change is made to the RFP HCPSS would adjust the due date.

62. Page 48, Price Proposal Form. This notes the district would tabulate using the volumes as noted in table 1. However this form notes varying vehicle types and there is not corresponding volume by vehicle type on the table 1. Specifically there is pricing for vans, type As, and type Bs, which are likely applicable to the special education routes. Are you able to provide a breakdown as to the seating capacity and if a wheelchair vehicle type and counts of vehicles by type for the special education. As example vans are a lower cost to operate vs a type A cutaway mini-bus and the district would benefit by providing more certainty around the vehicle types needed.

Answer: [HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.](#)

63. Page 48, Price Proposal Form. How are midday routes and late activity routes handled that are not contiguous to an AM/PM route. Is there a minimum daily hours for a midday or late run, we typically see these at least one hour.

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

64. Page 48, Price Proposal Form. Regarding supplemental rates. Is there a minimum amount of live hours or wait hours applicable to trips or are contractors to expect solely to receive a 15 minute increment if a trip occurs for 15 minutes or less?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

65. Page 48, Price Proposal Form. We do not see a line item for a contractor bus monitor daily rate and excess hourly rate. Can you please update the forms to include.

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

66. Page 65, item 1.10. Does this item apply to contractors operation on district property?

Answer: This applies to HCPSS or any property.

67. Page 65, item 2, vii. Can you explain the need for this clause or can it be removed? We do not understand the need for the coverage as it relates to the scope of work of this contract to provide student transportation services as we are not doing work underground on district property. This coverage would likely require additional endorsements and cost to bus companies to meet the requirement.

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

68. Attachment B. Does this include the mileage and time in-between routes for example the miles and time between first and second tier route? If not, please provide a revised version to include the inter-route miles.

Answer: No, the current information is live time only. The HCPSS considers this to be the best available information. The prospective bell time changes for FY2024, plus the regionalization of the contracts pursued as part of this solicitation will greatly impact route linkages, layover, and deadhead times. Any information provided in this regard for the current system would be an inaccurate representation of expectations for FY2024.

69. Please provide a scan of the transportation invoices for any and all contracted transportation services including all line item billing details and backup spreadsheets. Please provide invoices from October 2020, October 2021, and May 2022.

Answer: The HCPSS does not consider this request to be relevant to this solicitation.

70. If summer ran a typical volume during 2022 can you please provide a scan of the transportation invoices for any and all contracted transportation including all line item billing details and backup spreadsheets for summer school transportation. Please provide invoices from June 2022, July 2022, and August 2022. If summer did not run a typical volume during 2021 or 2020, can you please provide the invoices from June 2019, July 2019, and August 2019 if that was a typical summer.

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

71. Can you provide a summary like table 1 of the RFP for the summer school routes by Contract Service Area?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

72. Can you please provide a short briefing on the summer school needs over the past few years. Do you expect volume similar year over year for 22-23 compared to 21-22, etc.?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

73. Please provide a summary of the non-performance or liquidated damages charged/incurred to the contractor (s) for the 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 20-22 fiscal year.

Answer: The HCPSS does not consider this request to be relevant to this solicitation.

74. Are contractors required to provide special equipment needs such as car seats, harnesses, etc.? If so can you please provide an estimate based on the contracted service areas in Table 1.

Answer: These items are supplied by HCPSS.

75. Can you please provide a briefing of the shuttle needs, volume of routes, number of days, hours, time, miles.

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

76. Do you expect contractors to provide community-based instruction trips for special needs on a regular recurring basis? If so, can you please clarify the schedules, number of days, days of week, vehicle types needed, etc. and if any of these are assigned to a regular daily route vehicle. Please note contractors assigned, special equipment, pick up and drop off addresses, and any special instructions, etc.

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

77. Please provide a copy of the labor agreement, any amendments, or memorandums of understanding for current transportation contractor(s) and any district employed transportation employees and any amendment letters, memorandums of understanding, or modifications thereto. If no agreement, please provide wage rates, wage scale, paid time off, and a summary of benefits, etc. for the current contracted and any district employed transportation employees.

Answer: The HCPSS does not consider this request to be relevant to this solicitation.

78. Please provide the worksheets used to calculate the state transportation claim and reimbursement information for contracted type transportation for the past three school years, including mileage, etc.

Answer: The HCPSS does not consider this request to be relevant to this solicitation.

79. Please provide the total cost spent with current contractor (s) for the past three school years.

Answer: This information is available in the HCPSS approved budgets for these years, which can be accessed here: <https://www.hcpss.org/about-us/budgets/budget-archive/>

80. Can you provide the transportation line item budgets for the current and past three school years. Do the field trips and athletic trips reside in transportation budget or individual school budgets? If separated can you provide the trip expense budget information as well.

Answer: See answer to question 79.

81. Do the current contractor (s) provide homeless transportation or low incident transportation through these contracts or is this provided by different vendors and contracts?

Answer: These types of transportation are provided through our current contractors whenever possible. Cabs / van services are used when it is impractical to use contracted services.

82. Are there any subcontractor relationships today. If so, can you provide a briefing as to contractor/subcontractor, number of routes, etc.

Answer: There are no current subcontractor relationships.

83. Can you please provide the current listing of vehicles provided by the current contractor(s). Please include the vehicle age, seating capacity, configuration of any wheelchair buses (seated and wheelchair capacity), if they require air-conditioning or any other special equipment, etc.

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

84. Can you please provide the Attachment B_Current Routes in Microsoft excel format.

Answer: This attachment had been uploaded in Excel format.

85. Can you please provide a spreadsheet listing of all current contractor routes assigned by bus, please provide the live start and end times by route/shift, live miles by route/shift, garage departure times, garage/deadhead miles, etc. Please include for all services midday routes, lunch runs, work runs, shuttles, late runs, etc. Please include current count of monitors by shift, AM, MD, and PM for the route listing.

Answer: The HCPSS considers the information in Attachment B to be the best available. The prospective bell time changes for FY2024, plus the regionalization of the contracts pursued as part of this solicitation will greatly impact route linkages, layover, and deadhead times. Any information provided in this regard for the current system would be an inaccurate representation of expectations for FY2024.

86. If using Versatrans routing software, please provide a copy of the Bus Metrics sorted by bus exported to Microsoft Excel. This report shows total time and miles by bus. You can obtain by going to Versatrans, Reports, Vehicle Reports, Bus Metrics Report Choose Routing Scheme, Routes. Select Day of Week.

Filter 1, Vehicle No., equal to, highlight all buses. Choose Print, then Print to file, and select Type, Print to Excel File and save on your computer so you can forward via email.

- a. We request that the district provide turn by turn direction as part of your information response in order for non-incumbent contractors to understand operating conditions and to formulate hypothetical routes for the bid response.
- b. Can you please provide a copy of the turn-by-turn directions including garage departure and return times and miles for all current routes, regular education, special education, etc.
- c. Please provide the turn by turn route directions with stops, stop times, garage leave and return times, etc., sorted by bus, for all routes from the district routing software. These should include garage leave and return times. You should be able to print to PDF for these.

Answer: The HCPSS considers the information in Attachment B to be the best available. The prospective bell time changes for FY2024, plus the regionalization of the contracts pursued as part of this solicitation will greatly impact route directions, route linkages, layover, and deadhead times. Any information provided in this regard for the current system would be an inaccurate representation of expectations for FY2024.

87. Regarding supplemental trips. Can you please clarify the typical demand for trips that conflict with the AM and PM daily bus routes and the peak demand days. This will be needed to determine the pool of spare buses and drivers.

Answer: [HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.](#)

88. Regarding supplemental trips. Can you provide a spreadsheet with a detailed summary of the number of contracted type field trips and athletic trips operated, the date, times of service, the number of hours for each trip, the number of miles for each trip, contractor assigned, any special equipment, etc. Please provide for the 2020-21 school year and the 2019-20 school year. You may have something similar in this format. Ultimately looking for the scheduled needs and the historical experience for billing volume in hours and/or miles. This is requested in order for contractors to adequately plan for your trip needs which may require additional vehicles and drivers to fulfil.

Answer: [HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.](#)

89. Can you clarify does the district have a set minimum number of days it must operate in person? How many remote learning days in lieu of in-person learning can the district allow or expend during the school year before needing to make up in person days?

Answer: This is subject to requirements of MSDE.

90. Page 25- 3.5.3.5 - Since HCPSS can mandate a change in the contractors management. Does the contractor have the same authority to remove students that are creating an unsafe environment on the bus if HCPSS has been unsuccessful to remove them?

Answer: No

91. Page 27- 3.5.4.2 #3 - What makes HCPSS believe that the bus driver shortage will be over in the next 9 months to implement a zero- tolerance standard of performance?

Answer: The HCPSS expects contractor proposals to reflect how they will ensure the required staffing is available. If the contractor considers this to be an impossibility, they should consider this in their response.

92. 3. Page 28 - 3.5.4.3 - Does HCPSS believe that the liquidated damages are in any way in line with industry standards considering the driver shortage which is out of everyone's control at this point?

Answer: The HCPSS expects contractor proposals to reflect how they will ensure the required staffing is available. If the contractor considers this to be an impossibility, they should consider this in their response.

93. Page 29- 3.5.5.3 - Would HCPSS consider weekly invoicing since it could take 40 to 50 days (with discrepancies) to receive payment every time the contractor sends an invoice?

Answer: No

94. Is HCPSS aware that insurance companies typically require 2 years experience for drivers which could eliminate any new drivers?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

95. Are there any fuel adjustments?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

96. Are there any guaranteed CPI adjustments or COLA?

Answer: No

97. Page 37 - 5.15 - Does this include drivers and/or aides of HCPSS?

Answer: Yes

98. Are we allowed to use buses that we are already using on Howard county contracts for this RFP?

Answer: Yes provided they satisfy age restrictions.

99. Who will be doing the routing? Confirming District

Answer: HCPSS

100. What routing software is used by the District? Confirming Versatrans RP

Answer: Versatrans RP

101. Who will pay for the routing software? Confirming District

Answer: HCPSS

102. Please provide routing files detailing route hours and miles that First Student would be expected to operate.

Answer: The HCPSS considers the information in Attachment B to be the best available. The prospective bell time changes for FY2024, plus the regionalization of the contracts pursued as part of this solicitation will greatly impact route directions, route linkages, layover, and deadhead times. Any information provided in this regard for the current system would be an inaccurate representation of expectations for FY2024.

103. Please provide the geography that these routes would be located in.

Answer: See maps included in Attachment B.

104. Please provide the breakdown of routes covered by each current contractor, by area.

Answer: HCPSS does not consider this to be relevant to the current solicitation.

105. Are the routes based on live time, gate-to-gate time, or payroll time? Confirming First pick up and last drop off

Answer: First pick up and last drop off.

106. How many days of service are there for the school year?

Answer: 180 days not including summer school

107. Please provide a list detailing the bus type and vehicle capacity requested for home to school routes, as well as any dedicated trip or McKinney Vento fleet.

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

108. Please confirm the number of spares needed - Confirming 10%

Answer: 10%

109. Is there a maximum age per bus?

Answer: 12 years unless approved in writing by HCPSS and MSDE

110. Is there an average fleet age required?

Answer: No.

111. How many cameras are required per vehicle?

Answer: Camera system is currently provided by BusPatrol and includes internal and external cameras on all buses. For vehicles other than buses it would be the responsibility of contractor to provide audio and video system to provide coverage based on the size of the vehicle.

112. Is there any specific configuration for the bus cameras?

Answer: Camera system is currently provided by BusPatrol and includes internal and external cameras on all buses. For vehicles other than buses it would be the responsibility of contractor to provide audio and video system to provide coverage based on the size of the vehicle.

113. What staffing expectations need to be met by the contractor, if any?

Answer: It is the expectation of HCPSS that the contractor will propose staffing sufficient to meet or exceed all requirements of the agreement.

114. Please provide the current starting wage rate for CDL drivers paid by the contractors.

Answer: Unknown

115. Please provide the current wage rate for any van drivers (non-CDL) paid by the contractors.

Answer: Unknown

116. Are drivers currently receiving any employer paid health benefits?

Answer: Unknown

117. If so, what is the employee/employer contribution rate

Answer: Unknown

118. Is there a union? If so, is there a current CBA?

Answer: Unknown

119. Please detail which routes currently use monitors today and the current number of monitors used daily, if any.

Answer: All special needs routes are required to have an attendant. Monitors not required for general education routes. Specific special needs routes could require a second attendant.

120. Will monitors be district or contractor provided?

Answer: Contractor

121. Is there a district facility that could be used?

Answer: No

122. Can a contractor limit the acceptance of the number of contract areas awarded?

Answer: The HCPSS will allow contractors to identify in their proposal a maximum number of contract areas for which they wish to be considered for award but reserves the right to determine the specific areas to be awarded. Contractors must still expressly

identify and provide pricing proposals for each contract area in which they want to be considered for award, and must abide by the award decisions of the HCPSS subject only to the self-identified maximum number of areas as indicated by the contractor.

123. Example: If contractor is awarded 2, can the contractor opt to

Answer: The HCPSS will allow contractors to identify in their proposal a maximum number of contract areas for which they wish to be considered for award but reserves the right to determine the specific areas to be awarded. Contractors must still expressly identify and provide pricing proposals for each contract area in which they want to be considered for award, and must abide by the award decisions of the HCPSS subject only to the self-identified maximum number of areas as indicated by the contractor.

124. Is fuel provided by the district or contractor? (District provided fuel saves the taxes.)

Answer: The Contractor.

125. Can the liability insurance requirement be continued through MABE? We have found that private insurance companies will disallow many of our current drivers due to lack of experience (under 2 years). This will not only reduce the number of routes we would be able to cover this fall, but will also greatly reduce our ability to train and hire drivers in the future to keep our work force at the level required to fulfill our contract. Additionally, one costly accident would likely price a contractor out of the market. Both scenarios would cause a worsening driver shortage resulting in a severe lack of reliability and longevity in the student transportation system.

Answer: [HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.](#)

126. Can the bidder pre-determine how many areas they can be awarded? In order to possibly be awarded an area, can they bid on two or three in an effort to get a single area or do they run the risk of being award the total number they may bid?

Answer: The HCPSS will allow contractors to identify in their proposal a maximum number of contract areas for which they wish to be considered for award but reserves the right to determine the specific areas to be awarded. Contractors must still expressly identify and provide pricing proposals for each contract area in which they want to be considered for award, and must abide by the award decisions of the HCPSS subject only to the self-identified maximum number of areas as indicated by the contractor.

127. Will the current Bus Patrol / Zonar systems currently installed in county buses meet the requirements for AVL/GPS and digital video? In addition, if requirement is met, will the systems remain on current buses without need to reinstall?

Answer: Yes / Yes

128. Can a fuel adjustment be made? Fuel costs are a major component to operating a school bus fleet and prices have become very volatile recently and could get worse if war / worsening supply issues become a reality. A fuel adjustment would allow a properly priced bid without the need to speculate future prices.

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

129. Regarding the tiering and service volume in any particular service area, it looks like there will be 3 tiers of school times? And for example, regarding service area 1, with 50 regular ed buses being used for tier one, 40 in tier two and 43 in tier three. Can I assume that 7 of those buses will only be used for tier one and not needed for tier two or three schools?

Answer: That is a correct interpretation based on the currently available best estimates. However, HCPSS will, at its sole discretion, determine how to deploy each asset within the constraints described by the contract requirements. The contractors are cautioned not to rely on the estimates provided in Attachment B as being wholly reflective of the system as it will operate in FY2024.

130. Please clarify the need to limit these contracts to three years with only a two-year extension.

Answer: The HCPSS has determined this contract term to be in the best interest of the HCPSS.

131. Can you please clarify what is included in scheduled route service as compared to supplemental service? Please include After School Programs, Field trips, Sports Trips, Mid-Day transportation. In addition, is there a minimum hourly pay for these trips?

Answer: Scheduled route service includes all regularly scheduled home-to-school, school-to-home, and intra-day shuttle services. This includes regularly scheduled late bus services and midday services but excludes all athletic and co-curricular trips and any other services provided on a per-request basis.

132. What are the names of the companies that currently service the Howard County Public School System?

Answer: See Attachment C to the RFP.

133. Please provide a copy of the contract for each of your current vendors?

Answer: Currently, each route receives a unique contract. These may be requested following regular channels for public information requests.

134. How many School Days is service required in the 2022-2023 school year?

Answer: 180, not including summer school.

135. What was the total annual dollars spent for transportation service each one of the last three school years? (i.e. 2021/2022, 2020/2021, 2019/2020)

Answer: This information is available in the HCPSS approved budgets for these years, which can be accessed here: <https://www.hcpss.org/about-us/budgets/budget-archive/>.

136. Please estimate the total cost of transportation services for extra-curricular activities and field trips for the 2021-22 school year?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

137. Approximately, how many Special Needs and McKinney Vento students does Howard County transport each day?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

138. How many routes were required to transport Special Needs and McKinney Vento students during the 2022 -23 school year?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

139. Does each Special Needs and McKinney Vento student require an AM pick-up and PM drop-off?

Answer: Yes

140. Approximately, how many vehicles were used to service Special Needs and McKinney Vento routes during the 2022-23 school year?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

141. Of the total vehicles used to service the Special Needs and McKinney Vento students, how many are:

a. Yellow Buses?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

b. Vehicles that have a passenger capacity of 10 Passengers or less?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

c. Vehicles that have a passenger capacity of 7 passengers or less?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

d. Wheelchair vehicles?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

142. Are Specialized Service vehicles considered vehicles with 10 passenger or less?

Answer: No

143. Please provide a breakdown of the number of 10 passenger or less vehicles for each service area?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

144. Is the city interested in its contractors utilizing electric vehicles?

Answer: See answer to question 145.

145. Are there any incentives for using electric vehicles?

Answer: State law specifies all new school buses 2025 and beyond be electric. Thus, no additional incentive offered from the district for their use.

146. There are contradictions on how we should organize our proposal between pages 15-17 Section III: SCOPE OF WORK AND SPECIFICATIONS of the RFP and pages 44-46 Section VI: TECHNICAL PROPOSAL FORMAT of the RFP. Which format should we follow? Or, as long as we include all of the requested information, may we group like areas together? For example, combining the following sections into one tab?

- Page 15 A. Offeror Qualifications and Experience
- Page 15B. Company Profile
- Page 45 - 6.6 Experience and Qualifications of Proposed Staff
(Submit under TAB F)
- Page 46 - 2.OFFEROR’S QUALIFICATIONS AND CAPABILITIES
(Submit under Tab F)

Answer: Responses shall be submitted as per the below outline.

Executive Summary (**TAB A**, see page 44)

Title Page and Table of Contents (**TAB B**, see page 44)

Transmittal Letter (**Tab C**, see page 44)

An original copy of the RFP is not required, however the forms within the RFP, including any addenda is required. (**Tab D**, see page 45)

Offeror Response to RFP Requirements and Proposed Work Plan (TAB F, see page 45)

- Include **Offeror Qualifications and Experience** (see page 15)
- Include **Contract Areas for Consideration** (see page 16)
- Include **Partnering Plan** (see page 15-16)
- Include **Methodology and Approach** (see page 17)

Experience and Qualifications of Proposed Staff (**TAB F**, see page 45)

- Include **Company Profile**, which must also include **Identifying Information** (See pages 15 and 16)

- Include Qualifications, Experience, and References (see page 17)

Conflict of Interest (**Tab I**, see page 45)

Offeror's Qualifications and Capabilities (Include in **Tab F**, see page 46)

Price Proposal – Attachment A (Must be in a separate file from Technical Proposal, and labeled **Price Proposal**)

147. On page 32 of the RFP, in Section 4.3.3, it states that the Functional Requirements are worth 45 evaluation points and the Technical Requirements are worth 35 points. On page 47 in Section VII, it states they are worth 40 and 30 respectively. Will you please confirm the weight assigned to each of the evaluation criteria?

Answer: Page 32 is correct. The Functional Requirements are worth 45 points and the Technical Requirements are worth 35 points.

148. On pages 44-46 of the RFP, in Section VI, the RFP lists the Technical Proposal Format. It skips from Tab F to Tab I. Is there a Tab G or Tab H? If so, can you please provide information on them?

Answer: This was an oversight. There is no Tab G or Tab H.

149. If the District would prefer we follow the instructions on page 44-46 in Section VI, will you please clarify the following? On Page 46, in Section VI, it requests proposers to submit information for "2.OFFEROR'S QUALIFICATIONS AND CAPABILITIES (Submit under Tab F)" However, there is already a Tab F on the previous page (Experience and Qualifications of Proposed Staff (Submit under TAB F)). May we combine these two Tab Fs and answer the questions together? Or should we answer in the order of the RFP and label the second Tab F, Tab J instead?

Answer: See answer to question 146.

150. Please advise where we should include our completed bid/proposal affidavit in our proposal response.

Answer: Proposal Affidavit does not need to be under a Tab. It just must be within your proposal.

151. Please advise where we should include our financial statements in our response?

Answer: Financial Statements do not need to be under a Tab. They just must be within your proposal.

152. Are the “Service Volume Estimates” on pages 50 - 57 meant to indicate the amount of round-trip daily service routes for the regular school year? Is there any detail available on how many of these routes would be used in summer school as well?

Answer: Yes, and summer school estimates are being provided in response to other question.

153. For the “Contract Service Area” for each of the “Service Volume Estimates” would the district most likely award routes to a vendor within just one Contract Service Area or across multiple Contract Service Areas?

Answer: It is the intent of the HCPSS to make awards to more than one contractor, but individual contractors can be awarded across multiple service areas.

154. Regarding Special Ed routes, is there a specific count of wheelchair lift vehicles required or estimate of wheelchair required routes? Or are all special ed routes expected to be wheelchair lift equipped buses?

Answer: Specialized service must be able to meet the needs of students. Not all routes have wheelchair students, however if one was to be added it would be need to be accommodated. All special ed routes are expected to be completed with W/C accessible buses

155. For the pricing chart submissions, can we submit a different price for regular ed vs special ed?

Answer: This will be addressed on the updated form for vehicle types and monitors.

156. What is the budgeted amount for transportation for the 23-24 School Year?

Answer: This information is available in the HCPSS approved budgets for these years, which can be accessed here: <https://www.hcpss.org/about-us/budgets/budget-archive/>.

157. Would you please provide the most current contracts, pricing and any addendums?

Answer: Currently, each route receives a unique contract. These may be requested following regular channels for public information requests.

158. For vendors listed on pages 59-60 How many mid day field trips do you anticipate in the 23-24 SY within each service area?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

159. Please estimate the sum of Liquid Damages levied upon the current contractors for SY22-23?

Answer: The HCPSS does not consider this request to be relevant to this solicitation.

160. Define Van within table on Attachment A. Is this a standard minivan? What is the capacity?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

161. Please outline Capacity Maximums for vehicles (van, A, C, D) listed within table on Attachment A. Or is this up to the vendor?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.

162. On page 27 (3.5.4.2). states zero tolerance for failure to have a driver or monitor to cover the route. Is there currently a driver/monitor shortage?

Answer: Yes

163. Can you please specify which vehicles will be allowed to service the contract? Are there any additional vehicle requirements specified by HCPSS? Or will any vehicles (buses) that meet the Code of Maryland Regulations be allowed to service the contract?

Answer: HCPSS is working on providing an answer to this question as soon as possible. Another Addendum will be posted with the answer.