Guidance on Contact with Potential Behavioral Health Collaborative Bidders

Behavioral Health Planning Council members and others have reported that they are being contacted by potential bidders for the Behavioral Health Collaborative contract. These guidance notes are intended to assist you in responding to those contacts.

General Principles
1. No one, except certain designated state staff, is required to talk to potential bidders.
2. Once the RFP is released in July 2008, there will be a complete ‘black-out’ while the procurement process proceeds. That means that no one who is a Collaborative member, state staff, Behavioral Health Planning Council member, or contractor may meet or communicate with potential bidders.
   a. If you are unsure whether this applies to a contact you’ve received, ask the person: “Are you or your organization a potential bidder for the Collaborative contract?”
   b. If the answer is ‘yes’, simply explain that a public procurement process has begun and that any contact outside of that process could jeopardize the bidder’s ability to submit a proposal.
   c. If you are unsure whether you are included in the ‘black-out’, contact the Procurement Manager, Bill Belzner at bill.belzner@state.nm.us
3. Access to information about the RFP or the procurement process is channeled through the Procurement Manager so that all potential bidders are given the same access and information.
4. The current contractor continues business and is treated in the same manner as before the RFP was issued, but their actions and access are limited to the scope of the current contract.

Behavioral Health Planning Council Members
⇒ Pre-Release of RFP: Even before the ‘black-out’ period, you may want to limit your own contact with potential bidders if you might be involved in reviewing proposals.
⇒ Do not disclose either confidential or official information that is not generally available to the public or is acquired by virtue of your appointment to the BHPC. If you have any questions, email Letty Rutledge at leticia.rutledge@state.nm.us and she will relay those questions to the Procurement Manager.

Local Collaborative Members
⇒ We encourage bidders to understand our system, the hopes and concerns of consumers and family members, the perspectives of different groups of people or areas of New Mexico. They may wish to listen to your meetings.
⇒ You are not required or expected to offer time on your meeting agendas to potential bidders.

State Staff & Contractors
⇒ Do not disclose either confidential or official information that is not generally available to the public or is acquired by virtue of your employment or contract with a Collaborative agency. Review your department’s Code of Conduct carefully. For example, HSD’s Code of Conduct is found on the HSD website.
⇒ Before having any contact with potential bidders, ensure that you have approval of your department or agency Behavioral Health RFP lead.

Everyone
⇒ Be careful in giving very specific answers about our behavioral health system or in answering outside your direct experience or responsibility. There will be an opportunity for bidders to ask questions and a single response can then be received by all potential vendors.
⇒ Ask ahead. If you do have contact with potential vendors, ask ahead of time what specific questions they may ask. That will help you prepare to give useful responses and may lead you to involve someone else in the conversation or meeting.