

THIS IS NOT A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Request for Information

The Iowa Department of Public Health is seeking information from vendors on options for the development of a Business and Financial Plan for Iowa e-Health.

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SECTION 1 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Background Information for the Project.

Health information technology (health IT), which includes electronic health records (EHRs) and health information exchange (HIE), has increasingly been recognized by public and private sector leaders as a key tool to support health reform across the nation. The benefits of health IT will impact practitioners, patients, and the population as a whole. Real-time clinical information helps practitioners make the best health care decisions, provides patients with continuity of care regardless of the provider the patient visits, and enhances population health through use and analysis of the data collected and maintained throughout the system.

Iowa e-Health is a collaborative, public-private, multi-stakeholder initiative that works to advance health IT in the state of Iowa. With the help of the Iowa Electronic Health Information Executive Committee and Advisory Council, volunteer workgroups and the Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa e-Health prepared the Iowa Health Information Technology Plan (the Plan) and delivered it to the state legislature in July 2009. The Plan serves as a statewide strategic plan outlining the activities necessary to advance health IT, and in particular, promotion of HIE. Goal six of the Plan is to develop a framework for implementation and sustainability of health IT - including development of business and financial models, as well as a financial sustainability plan. This goal and related e-Health activities can be found at www.idph.state.ia.us/hcr_committees/electronic_health_info.asp.

With the passage of the HITECH Act in February 2009, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), funds for the State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement became available through the Office of National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC). More information regarding ONC and the HITECH Act is available at <http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt>.

Iowa e-Health submitted a proposal to ONC in October 2009 to obtain HIE planning and implementation funding, which we anticipate will begin in February 2010. Excerpts from the Iowa HIE application are available on the IDPH website at www.idph.state.ia.us/hcr_committees/electronic_health_info.asp.

While ARRA funds will provide \$8,375,000 over four years to help construct the Iowa HIE, original estimates were that nearly three times as much funding would be necessary to enable comprehensive, statewide HIE. Funding strategies used by other states include grants, contributions, subscription fees for HIE users, transaction fees for users, health insurance claim tax, bed tax, or state budget line items. Although existing state HIEs have all struggled to find sustainable business models, a fundamental aim of ONC and Iowa e-Health is to ensure long-term sustainability of the Iowa HIE.

The business and financial sustainability plan will provide necessary information as Iowa e-Health determines:

- start-up costs for the initial clinical exchange services to be offered (i.e., continuity of care document, immunizations, e-prescribing, and lab results)
- market opportunities for offering additional HIE services
- ongoing operational costs for the HIE
- cost/benefit for providers to participate in the HIE
- strategies and options for financing and sustaining operations
- the value of the exchange to different constituents / stakeholders (e.g., health care providers, consumers, payors, employers / purchasers, and public health)
- return on investment (ROI) or cost-avoidance
- financial metrics which should be tracked to assist with overall program evaluation

The Iowa e-Health Business and Financial Plan will need to:

1. determine ongoing operational financing and budgeting needs (e.g., a pro forma statement) for a period of at least 5 years or longer, depending on the timeline of estimated financial sustainability
2. identify funding models and sources of funding to sustain operations, and to contribute to a capital fund for service enhancements (financial models and financial plan - allocation of costs to beneficiaries of the system)
3. assess the potential for undesirable consequences if certain funding decisions are enacted (e.g., the appropriate boundaries or limits for some of the financing options), and particularly how the Iowa health care marketplace and local circumstances might affect the recommended financing options
4. make recommendations regarding service portfolio options which would provide value in the Iowa health care market
5. provide the Department with an easy-to-use (and transparent) electronic tool to test different parameters and assumptions for the financial model(s)

Additional resources include:

- State Level HIE Consensus Project (SLHIE): <http://slhie.org/>
- eHealth Initiative: <http://www.ehealthinitiative.org/business-plan.html>
- The Iowa HIE will eventually be able to interface with the Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN). There are a variety of resources available to describe the operations and potential value of this type of a system. Please refer to the NHIN business plan and evaluation plan section of this link: http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=1194&parentname=CommunityPage&parentid=1&mode=2&in_hi_userid=10741&cached=true

1.2 Information Sought.

The Iowa Department of Public Health, hereafter known as the Department, is seeking **information** from vendors who are interested in developing a business and financial sustainability plan in accordance with but not limited to the above objectives 1-5

(should reference these for specifics) for the statewide health information exchange (HIE).

The business and financial sustainability plan will be used by Iowa e-Health to make a business case for the Iowa HIE. The plan will inform policy recommendations regarding sustainable financing of the HIE. It will also be used to guide business and operational decision-making by Iowa e-Health. Please see Section 2 (General Requirements) for detailed information sought through this RFI.

This process is to provide the background information for the preparation of a Request for Proposals (RFP). The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to allow all interested vendors to present business and financial sustainability plans that are currently available and preview plans that are under development to assist the Department in preparation of a Request for Proposals (RFP).

The Department is releasing this RFI in anticipation of receiving grant funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in February 2010.

1.3 Relevant Dates

<i>Event</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Issue RFI	January 19, 2010
RFI Responses Due	February 16, 2010
Issue RFP/RFB (Tentative date)	April 2010

IDPH reserves the right to invite vendors for demonstrations.

1.4 Submission of Response

This request requires any interested party wishing to submit information to respond to this Request for Information (RFI) by 4:00 p.m., Central Time, on **February 16, 2010**.

The interested party's response may be hand-delivered, faxed, e-mailed, or mailed to the Department. Responses will not be accepted over the telephone. If a printed response is hand-delivered, faxed, or mailed, please also include an electronic copy of the response.

1.5 Contact Information

The contact at the Department for technical questions and submission of responses will be:

Kory Schnoor	E-mail	kschnoor@idph.state.ia.us
Lucas State Office Building		
321 E. 12 th Street	FAX	(515) 281-4535
Des Moines, IA 50319-0075		

1.6 Administrative Matters

1.6.1 This RFI is designed to provide interested parties with the information necessary for the preparation of an appropriate response. It is not intended to be comprehensive, and each interest party is responsible for determining all factors necessary for submission of a comprehensive response.

1.6.2 The Department reserves the right to modify this RFI at any time.

1.6.3 Responses should be based on the material contained in this RFI or any other relevant information the interested party thinks is appropriate.

1.6.4 By submitting a response each interested party agrees that it will not bring any claim or have any cause of action against the Department, the State of Iowa, or any employee of the Department or the State, based on any misunderstanding concerning the information provided or concerning the Department's failure, negligent or otherwise, to provide the interested party with pertinent information as intended by this RFI.

1.7 Review and Rejection of RFI Responses

1.7.1 The Department reserves the right to reject any and all responses, in whole and in part, received in response to this RFI at any time.

1.7.2 An RFI response may be rejected outright and not reviewed for failure of the interested party to deliver the response by the due date. Therefore interested parties are asked to make every effort to meet the RFI timelines and to include the requested information.

1.7.3 An RFI response will not be subject to a RFP type of evaluation but only a review of information in the RFI.

1.8 Public Records and Requests for Confidentiality

1.8.1 The release of information by the Department to the public is subject to Iowa Code Chapter 22 and other applicable provisions of law relating to the release of records in the possession of a State agency. Interested parties are encouraged to familiarize themselves with these provisions prior to submitting a RFI response. All information submitted by a interested party may be treated as public information by the Department unless the interested party properly requests that information be treated as confidential at the time of submitting the response.

1.8.2 Any requests for confidential treatment of information must be included in a cover letter with the interested party's RFI response and must enumerate the specific grounds in Iowa Code Chapter 22 or other legal reasons which support treatment of the material as confidential and must indicate why disclosure is not

in the best interests of the public. The request must also include the name, address and telephone number of the person authorized by the interested party to respond to any inquiries by IDPH concerning the confidential status of the materials.

1.8.3 Any documents submitted which contain confidential information must be marked on the outside as containing confidential information, and each page upon which confidential information appears must be marked as containing confidential information. The confidential information must be clearly identifiable to the reader wherever it appears. All copies of the proposal submitted, as well as the original proposal, must be marked in this manner.

1.8.4 In addition to marking the material as confidential material where it appears, the interested party must submit one copy of the RFI response from which the confidential information has been excised. The confidential material must be excised in such a way as to allow the public to determine the general nature of the material removed and to retain as much of the document as possible. These pages must be submitted with the cover letter and will be made available for public inspection.

1.8.5 The interested party's failure to request in the RFI response confidential treatment of material pursuant to this Section and the relevant laws and administrative rules will be deemed by IDPH as a waiver of any right to confidentiality which the interested party may have had.

1.9 Copyrights

By submitting a response the interested party agrees that the Department may copy the response for purposes of facilitating the evaluation or to respond to requests for public records. The interested party represents that such copying will not violate any copyrights in the materials submitted.

1.10 Restrictions on Gifts and Activities

Iowa Code chapter 68B contains laws which restrict gifts which may be given or received by state employees and requires certain individuals to disclose information concerning their activities with state government. Interested parties are responsible for determining the applicability of this chapter to their activities and for complying with these requirements. In addition, Iowa Code chapter 722.1 provides that it is a felony offense to bribe a public official.

1.11 Cost to Interested Party

The Department is not responsible for any costs incurred by an interested party which are related to the preparation or delivery of the response, any on-site inspection that may be required, or any other activities related to this RFI.

1.12 Responses Property of Department

All printed information used in the interested party's response becomes the property of the Department. The Department will have the right to use ideas or adaptations of ideas that are presented in the responses.

1.13 Sources of Information Used by the Department in Addition to the Responses

The Department reserves the right to contact interested parties after the submission of responses for the purpose of clarification and to ensure mutual understanding.

1.14 No Obligation to Issue Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Bid (RFB)

The issuance of this RFI in no way constitutes a commitment by the Department to issue a RFP, RFB or contract for the project described in this RFI.

1.15 Interested Party Responses Identifying Information

1.15.1 State the name and principal place of business or residence of the interested party.

1.15.2 Identify the interested party's type of business organization/entity such as a corporation, partnership or educational institution.

1.15.3 State the interested party's place of incorporation, if applicable

1.15.4 State the name, address, email address, telephone number and FAX number of the interested party representative to contact regarding all technical matters concerning this RFI.

1.16 Interested Party References

List all jurisdictions for which the vendor has provided for the development and use of a business and financial plan. Please include:

1.16.1 The company/client for which the plan was developed.

1.16.2 A brief description of the plan developed or provided, including dates the contract began and ended.

1.16.3 An excerpt or outline of the plan developed.

1.16.4 A sample of the document(s) developed as part of the business and financial plan, if available.

1.16.5 Applicable references, including contact name, phone number, mailing and email addresses.

SECTION 2 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Please provide the following information based upon the services or products offered by your organization:

1. What is the essential information to collect, aggregate, and analyze at different stages of a technology project, such as an HIE (i.e., pilot testing, implementation, and on-going operations)? Please explain the types and nature of the business and financial information we must consider during these stages.
2. Explain the types of tools, applications, or products that would assist a project in testing different assumptions for the financial models. We would like the ability to change the values for parameters in the model as our business progresses and the health care environment changes; for example, if we are experiencing greater use of the HIE than anticipated, we would like to see how this impacts our assumptions or estimated financial needs.
3. Describe the scope of services your organization could provide within (a) a one year time frame, and (b) a two year time frame, given a budget of:
 - i. \$100,000
 - ii. \$150,000
 - iii. \$200,000
4. Describe the coordination of efforts with project staff, and vendors performing program evaluation and/or assessment of project activities.
5. Explain effective approaches to identify and delineate costs/expenses in which a project will incur during the different stages of a technology project (i.e., pilot testing, implementation, and on-going operations).
6. Describe how additional funding sources / strategies for a project such as an HIE would be identified; how the strategies might change over the lifetime of Iowa e-Health; and your process for identifying options which might be uniquely available in Iowa.
7. Describe the approach for understanding the local (Iowa) health care market and values of potential funders and stakeholders within the state to make a business case for the Iowa HIE. How would insights be incorporated regarding local circumstances when assessing advantages of different funding options, and whether these options might affect buy-in and participation in an HIE. For example, charging providers too much to use the system could reduce provider participation in the HIE. How might you mitigate some of the potential unintended consequences?
8. What approach(s) would best be used to identify those who may financially benefit from a project such as an HIE?

9. Describe the methods to leverage existing resources developed by other states and/or the federal government; please describe coordination of activities between states and/or the federal government.
10. Please describe additional components that should be considered for this type of business and financial sustainability plan.

We encourage vendors to provide examples of similar business and financial plans they have previously developed.

SECTION 3. OTHER FEATURES

Is there any other feature, service or option you believe the Department should be aware of in preparation of an RFP? If so, please describe the feature, service product or option and explain how it would improve the program served as identified in this RFI.