VENTURA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS & EVENT CENTER

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Memo

Date: 10/14/26
To: All RFP #26-002 Recipients
From: Heidi Ortiz, CEO – 31st District Agricultural Association
Subject: Addendum #2 RFP #26-002 - RFP Questions Clarification Addendum

The purpose of this addendum is to respond to questions with clarifying answers that were asked regarding RFP #26-002 Master Food & Beverage Concessionaire Services.

1. **Sections 1.2, Request for Proposal – Primary Method; 6.3, Financial Proposal Evaluation; and 7, Financial Proposal Form:** Please explain how the Base Capital Improvement Offer will be incorporated into the 100-point financial evaluation, including its weighting relative to commission revenue, whether option-year investments are included, and whether proposed capital dollars are credited dollar-for-dollar toward the total financial benefit to the District.

Capital improvement investments will be treated as a dollar-for-dollar credit against commission revenue. Option-year investments are included in the evaluation of the financial proposal.

2. **Section 3.8, Proposal Submission Instructions:** Please clarify the signature requirements for the three copies of each proposal volume. Must all forms and documents requiring signatures bear original wet-ink signatures in all three copies, or may we submit one original signed set and two photocopies? Please also confirm whether electronic signatures, such as DocuSign, are acceptable on any required documents and identify any documents that must be signed in wet ink.

We will accept original, wet-ink signatures or legally valid electronic signatures, such as DocuSign, from an authorized representative on any document where it requires a signature.

Section 3.8, Proposal Submission Instructions: The RFP prohibits coil or spiral binding and states that expensive bindings, color displays, and promotional materials are neither necessary nor desired. Please clarify which binding methods are acceptable and whether proposals should use plain, functional packaging only, or if branded presentation boxes or other creative packaging are permitted, provided all sealing and labeling requirements are met.

Acceptable binding methods include standard three-ring binders, report covers, or other functional binding methods that allow the proposal to be reviewed easily. Plain, professional packaging is preferred, however, branded presentation boxes, elaborate packaging, promotional materials, and other nonessential presentation elements are acceptable as long as they are sealed and labeled according to the requirements.

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3. **Sections 3.3, Minimum Qualifications and Requirements; and 8.2.1, Industry Experience in Food & Beverage Service:** The RFP's minimum qualifications require the Bidder to demonstrate adequate experienced staff and personnel who work/worked in the food and beverage industry, but do not identify a minimum number of years, event size, attendance level, or comparable contract experience. Can the District clarify the minimum level of organizational experience required to be considered a qualified/responsive Bidder?

The District will evaluate organizational experience in accordance with Sections 3.3 and 8.2.1. The RFP does not establish a separate minimum number of years in business, minimum event attendance, or minimum sales volume beyond the stated requirements. Bidders should demonstrate relevant food and beverage industry experience, qualified personnel, operational capacity, and the ability to perform the services described in the Scope of Work. The District will weigh the experience as part of the overall technical score.

4. **Sections 4.1(1), Annual Ventura County Fair and/or Self-Produced Events; 6.1(3), Past Experience, Letters of Recommendation, and Ability to Perform; and 8.2.1, Industry Experience in Food & Beverage Service:** Does the District require the Bidder to demonstrate prior experience operating food and/or alcoholic beverage concessions at an event of comparable size and complexity to the Ventura County Fair, which attracts approximately 265,000 attendees over 12 days? If so, please identify the minimum attendance, duration, and/or sales volume threshold.

The District has not established a separate minimum attendance, event duration, or sales-volume threshold beyond the requirements stated in the RFP. Bidders should provide examples of relevant food and beverage concession operations, including the size and complexity of the events served, the scope of services provided, and their ability to manage operations comparable to the Ventura County Fair. This information will be evaluated in accordance with the published evaluation criteria.

5. **Sections 4.1(1), Annual Ventura County Fair and/or Self-Produced Events; 4.1(7), Alcohol Operations Requirements; and 8.2.1, Industry Experience in Food & Beverage Service:** Given that the SOW places significant responsibility on the successful Bidder for operating all alcohol service areas during the Fair, including temporary bars, beer booths, carts, VIP areas, and grandstand locations, does the District require demonstrated prior experience operating high-volume alcoholic beverage concessions? If so, what minimum level of experience is required?

Bidders should demonstrate the ability to safely and effectively manage alcoholic beverage service operations appropriate to the scale and complexity of the Ventura County Fair. Relevant experience may include temporary bars, beer booths, mobile carts, VIP areas, grandstand locations, staffing, inventory controls, and compliance with applicable licensing and alcohol-service requirements. The RFP does not establish a separate minimum alcohol-sales volume or event-attendance threshold beyond its stated requirements.

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7. **Section 6.1(4), Financial Capability:** Can the District clarify the minimum financial capability required to satisfy the financial qualification requirement? For example, is the District seeking a specific minimum annual revenue, net worth, liquidity, working capital, bonding capacity, or other financial benchmark?

Bidders must demonstrate sufficient financial capability to perform the contract obligations described in the RFP. Financial information submitted under Section 6.1(4) should establish the bidder's ability to support staffing, inventory, equipment, operating expenses, and other financial commitments associated with the Fair's food and beverage operations. The District has not established a separate minimum annual revenue, net worth, liquidity, working capital, or bonding threshold beyond the requirements stated in the RFP. Financial capability will be evaluated in accordance with the published criteria.

8. **Sections 3.3(4), Minimum Qualifications and Requirements; and 8.2, Bidder Minimum Qualification Requirements:** Please clarify whether the Bidder is required to currently possess a California ABC license appropriate for the services contemplated by this RFP at the time of proposal submission, or whether demonstrating the ability to obtain and maintain the required license prior to commencement of operations will satisfy the minimum qualification.

A bidder is not required to hold a California ABC license for the contemplated operations at the time of proposal submission if the required license is not yet applicable or obtainable at that stage. However, the successful bidder must obtain and maintain all licenses and permits required for its assigned operations before commencing any activity requiring such authorization. The successful bidder will be responsible for complying with all applicable ABC requirements and the licensing provisions of the agreement. Any license required by the RFP as a condition of proposal submission remains subject to that requirement.

9. **Sections 3.3(3), Minimum Qualifications and Requirements; and 8.2.1, Industry Experience in Food & Beverage Service:** Does the District intend to establish a minimum number of years that the bidding organization must have operated food and beverage concession services, or is there no minimum organizational tenure requirement?

The RFP does not establish a separate minimum number of years that the bidding organization must have operated food and beverage concession services beyond the stated minimum qualification requirements. The District will evaluate the bidder's relevant experience, personnel qualifications, demonstrated operational capabilities, and ability to perform the required services in accordance with Sections 3.3 and 8.2.1.

10. **Sections 3.3(3), Minimum Qualifications and Requirements; 8.2.1, Industry Experience in Food & Beverage Service; and 6.1(3), Past Experience, Letters of Recommendation, and Ability to Perform:** Can the experience of proposed key personnel, parent/affiliate companies, joint

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venture partners, or approved subcontractors be used to satisfy the Bidder's minimum experience requirements, or must the bidding entity itself demonstrate all required experience?

Bidders may identify the relevant experience of proposed key personnel, parent or affiliated companies, joint venture partners, and proposed subcontractors as supporting evidence of their ability to perform the contract. However, the bidding entity must satisfy the minimum qualification requirements applicable to the bidder under the RFP and remains responsible for its obligations. Experience attributable to other entities will be considered only to the extent permitted by the RFP and supported by a clearly defined role, commitment, and scope of responsibility in the proposed team. The District retains the right to evaluate the bidder's overall ability to perform the contract.

11. **Section 6.3, Financial Proposal Evaluation:** Please clarify the revenue basis used to calculate financial scores. Will the District apply each Bidder's proposed commission percentages to a common Fairgrounds revenue baseline, or use each Bidder's projected revenues? If a common baseline will be used, please provide the revenue amounts by category and year, including option years.

The supplemental information provided on pages 46 and 47 of the RFP, shows the gross sales from prior years 2024 and 2025 and will be the revenue baseline used to calculate the financial scores for all years including option years.

12. Award Methodology and "Lowest-Cost Responsible Bidder"
Reference: Page 5, Section 1.2 — Request for Proposal, Primary Method

The RFP states that the contract must be awarded to the "lowest-cost responsible Bidder." Since the financial proposal appears to be based on the percentage of gross sales payable to the District, could the District clarify how "lowest-cost" will be determined? Does this refer to the lowest percentage or financial obligation offered by the Bidder, or will proposals be evaluated based on the highest projected financial return to the District? Please also clarify how this award language relates to the Level 2 high-bid evaluation process.

The proposals will be evaluated based on the highest projected financial return to the District.

13. Capital Commitments and Equipment Ownership
Reference: Page 21, Section 3.24 — Grounds for Rejection of Proposal

Section 3.24 states that a proposal may be rejected if it requires the District to purchase software, equipment, unused devices, POS systems, or incur additional fees or costs not specifically identified in the RFP. Could the District confirm whether equipment and other assets provided by the Bidder as part of a proposed capital commitment are permitted under this provision, particularly when those assets will become District property at the end of the contract, as applicable, without any obligation for the District to reimburse the Bidder? Please also clarify whether there are specific requirements for approving, documenting, and transferring ownership of such equipment or capital improvements.

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The Bidder may identify proposed equipment or capital investments in its proposal, provided they do not require the District to incur additional costs or obligations not identified in the RFP. All proposed equipment, associated costs, and ownership terms must be clearly disclosed. Any arrangement for equipment or capital improvements to become District property must be reviewed and expressly approved by the District and documented in the resulting agreement.

14. Menu Pricing, Consumer Affordability, and Bid Evaluation
Reference: Page 35, Section 6.1 — Technical Proposal Evaluation, Section 2, Food & Beverage Service Descriptions

Section 6.1 requests a description of the Bidder's food and beverage services, including menus, processes, food and alcoholic beverages, quality, presentation, and service. However, there does not appear to be an explicit requirement to submit proposed menu prices or a defined criterion for evaluating consumer affordability.

Could the District clarify whether proposed menu pricing is required as part of the proposal?
Yes, it is required.

Additionally, is the reference to "process" intended to read "pricing," or is it referring to operational processes? It is referring to operational processes.

Without defined menu pricing requirements or consumer-affordability criteria, it appears that a Bidder offering a higher percentage of gross sales to the District could potentially offset that commitment by charging higher prices to consumers. Consequently, a Bidder committed to more consumer-friendly pricing could be placed at a competitive disadvantage.

We understand that Bidders scoring at least 75 points in the technical evaluation may qualify for the Level 2 high-bid process. If multiple Bidders meet that threshold, could the District clarify the following:

1. Whether proposed menu prices must be submitted and will be evaluated as part of the proposal. Yes, and they will be evaluated as part of the Technical Proposal.
2. Whether consumer affordability, value, or reasonable pricing will be considered in the Financial Level 2 evaluation, and whether a Bidder can receive additional consideration for offering lower consumer prices. It will not be considered in the Financial Level 2 evaluation. The menu pricing will be subject to District approval in all cases.
3. Whether the successful Bidder will have discretion to establish menu prices and increase them during the contract term, or whether District approval or pricing restrictions will apply. The successful Bidder will be able to establish the menu prices subject to approval by the District.

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4. How the Level 2 high-bid process will balance capital commitments and the percentage of gross sales offered to the District against consumer pricing, affordability, and the overall guest experience.
The Level 2 high-bid process will prioritize the financial offers outlined in the RFP, including capital commitments and the percentage of gross sales offered to the District and consumer pricing and affordability will not be evaluated as part of Level 2.

15. Collection of Gross Sales, Payment Process, and Cashless Requirements
Reference: Page 26, Section 4.2 — Manner of Payment, Record Keeping, Reporting and Right to Examine Records

Section 4.2 states, "The Fairgrounds will pay weekly gross sales minus commissions to master concessionaire."

Could the District clarify whether this means **all gross sales revenue must be collected by the Fairgrounds and deposited directly into Fairgrounds-controlled merchant accounts (MID) and bank accounts**, with the Master Concessionaire invoicing the Fairgrounds for payment of gross sales less the applicable commissions?

Yes, all gross sales revenue must be collected by the Fairgrounds and deposited directly into Fairgrounds-controlled merchant accounts (MID) and bank accounts, with the Master Concessionaire invoicing the Fairgrounds for payment of gross sales less the applicable commissions.

Additionally, if all transactions must be processed through the Fairgrounds' merchant accounts and POS system, does this require the Master Concessionaire to operate on a **100% cashless basis**, or will cash transactions be permitted?

The Master Concessionaire is to operate on a 100% cashless basis.

16. Internet Connectivity and POS Infrastructure
Reference: Page 30, Section 4.10 — Use of Premises, Utilities and Maintenance

Section 4.10 requires the Bidder, at its own cost and expense, to furnish and maintain telephone, internet, and television services as required for operations.

Could the District clarify whether the internet requirement applies only to general office and administrative connectivity or also includes connectivity necessary to support concession operations, including POS terminals, payment processing, inventory management, and reporting systems?

Please also confirm whether the Fairgrounds currently provides reliable internet connectivity at concession stands, kitchens, bars, and catering locations.

Section 4.10 requires the Bidder to provide and maintain telephone and internet services necessary for its operations, at its own cost and expense. The District does not guarantee internet availability or

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coverage at all concession, kitchen, bar, or catering locations. The Bidder is responsible for ensuring adequate connectivity for its POS terminals, payment processing, inventory management, and reporting systems. Any proposed network equipment or installation must be coordinated with and approved by the District.

If connectivity is available, please identify any associated costs, coverage limitations, and responsibility for technical support. If the Bidder must provide its own connectivity, are there any restrictions on third-party providers, network equipment, or installation?

The current service provider is Spectrum who provides a 5G fiber connection. The current Master Concessionaire pays roughly 40% of the monthly invoice. There are known and unknown connectivity limitations that will require evaluation by the successful Bidder. The Bidder may work with a third party or add additional connectivity equipment while still using the 5G network.