Listed below are vendor questions that were received prior to the requested deadline and the corresponding answers for RFB# AA17-RH-5159 – Travel Arrangements to the Rose Bowl Parade per the following specifications or approved equal.

The University will be answering all vendor questions in their entirety on Wednesday, January 18, 2017.

The original bid opening date was scheduled for January 19, 2017 @ 1:00 pm EDT

To give vendors ample time to complete their bid responses after receiving answers to these questions the Bid Opening Date has been REVISED to: Tuesday, January 24, 2017 @ 1:00 EDT.

Question #1: Can the bid be mailed in or does it have to be done by Bid Express?

Answer #1: Per the terms and conditions set forth in the RFB, all bid responses are to be submitted electronically directly to Bid Express. Here is a copy of the information regarding Bid Express for easy reference.

Introducing Bid Express

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is accepting electronic bids via www.bidexpress.com website. All bidders must first register on the bidexpress.com website and create an Info Tech Digital ID. Registration and Digital ID creation are free. It can take up to five (5) business days to process your Digital ID and it is highly recommended that a Digital ID be enabled 48 hours in advance of submitting an electronic bid.

Please plan accordingly.

Exceptions to submitting thru Bid Express will only be made in extenuating circumstances as deemed appropriate by the Director of Procurement and Campus Services, John O. Martin (413-545-0361 or via e-Mail: procurement@umass.edu). Note that failure of the vendor to allow enough time to register, get a digital I.D. or meet other required steps will NOT be considered as an extenuating circumstance.

A fee of $25 will be incurred for those who wish to bid electronically on a pay-per solicitation basis; alternatively, you may subscribe for $50 per month to have access to bid on all solicitations and email notifications. Learn more in this vendor overview

For additional guidance, please contact the Bid Express team at toll free (888) 352-2439 (select option 1) or at support@bidexpress.com

Question #2: I would like to make a general statement concerning the length of the trip. Reference Section 1.2.2 – Travel Dates – A standard Rose Parade experience usually features five (5) nights (28Dec to 2Jan) allowing for the inclusion of many unique venues across Southern California. A three night / four-day program will afford the band with an equally enjoyable opportunity to experience Pasadena and Los Angeles area at the Pasadena Rose Parade.

Answer #2:
Question #3: Reference Section 1.2.4 – Air Carrier Services / Charter Plane Flights – Will it be acceptable to estimate the airfare for commercial air services in light of previous years’ experience since the current prices and schedules from these air carriers is not made available until 3334 days prior to the “return” travel date? Charter air pricing is not subject to the same rules and will be available.

Answer #3:

Question #4: Reference Section 1.2.6 – Other Transportation – Groups of your size customarily utilize a semi-tractor trailer 53’. The use of the semi allows the band to load and ship band equipment of all sizes and luggage (reducing checked baggage fees on the commercial air carriers). The use of a cross-country semi or shipper also reduces damage to valuable musical instruments and equipment. In addition, the expenses associated with Items A, B or C will be reduced or eliminated if the Semi is used.

PLEASE ADVISE IF THE BAND WILL CONSIDER USING A SEMI FOR TRANSPORT.

While we could consider adding this as a feature to the Rose Parade bid, in our experience your group will receive a lower cost and better service from the shipper/trucker when negotiating with shipping and trucking vendors in your local community.

Answer #4:

Question #5: Reference Section 1.2.8 – Meal Options – We would ask for clarification on Item B subset 4. Is it the intention for us to include three (3) dinners 12/29; 12/30 and 12/31?

Answer #5:

Question #6: Reference Section 1.2.8 – Meal Options – We would ask for clarification on Item D – is this in addition to the included meals? Is the goal to have the option to bring in extra food during the rehearsal(s)?

Answer #6:

Question #7: Reference Section 1.2.8 – Meal Options – We would ask for clarification on Item E – if dinners are include on all evenings, what is the need or goal for providing meal options and prices for sit-down dinners if all three (3) are already included? On a group or individual basis? Is the goal to identify dining venues within walking distance of the hotels offered?

Answer #7:

Question #8: Reference Section 1.2.10 – Events – If the pricing model for the band is to include all services, how are these events different than the Band Itinerary? Is the goal to offer some options on 12/30 or 12/31 around the Band’s main scheduled activities?

Answer #8:
Question #9: Reference Section 1.2.10 - Events – Item 5 – performances at Disneyland or Universal would customarily involve the entire group. Are we free to choose either venue or is one preferred? Are we to include the admission to the venue? If attendance at Disneyland or Universal is to be included, please indicate if meal vouchers for lunch and/or dinner are to be included and at what value?

Answer # 9:

Question #10: Reference Section 1.2.12 – Taxes, Gratuities and Parking Fees – in reference to “hotel staff” does this refer to front office staff, banquet staff and room maids? While tipping of room maids is often left to the individual traveler it would be our suggestion that we (the tour operator) be instructed to include this expense to offer an appropriate reflection to the room cleaning maids of the respect UMass has for their service. Please advise.

Answer # 10:

Question #11: Reference Section 1.2.13 – Tour Escorts – is staffing at the “designated airport” mean departure in the Massachusetts area airports as well as the Los Angeles airport arrivals? If so, will this staff also be needed at the Massachusetts airports on the return?

Answer # 11:

Question #12: Reference Part II – Terms and Conditions – Section 2.2 – Payment – last paragraph – A travel experience of this size usually has incremental prepayments for accommodations, transportation, venue admission, meals and airfares. All of these vendors will require prepayment before the trip. How will this be handled in light of the bolded last sentence about payments being made in arrears?

Answer # 12:

Tim, this is a decision that you can make in agreement with the Chancellor. The terms and conditions in the RFB are standard University terms and conditions where we normally do not pay in advance for goods and services – however, exceptions have been known to happen. Since the CFS for this venture is likely to be over $100,000 it will need to go through legal. If you have written support for advance payment from the Chancellor, it will help to move this through quicker – then being rejected and volleying back and forth, etc. You know what I mean, jelly-bean? FYI, Rosemary