



Shelby County Tennessee

Mark H. Luttrell, Jr., Mayor

Questions & Answers

Issued: September 29, 2016

RFP #17-009-12 Development of Promotional Examinations (Shelby County Fire Department)

TO ALL PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS:

The following questions were submitted by potential vendors. Our answers are listed in **red** below:

1. Section VII. A. (p.10) of the proposal states, “the examinations should be flexible to the extent that future changes in the job can be accommodated by making only minimal changes to the examination.” Is it the intent of the County to utilize the exams over more than one promotional cycle? If so, for how many rounds / and over how many years?
We would like the option to use this examination with minimal changes for up to 3 rounds or 54 months.
2. Section VII. A. (p.11) of the proposal lists the certification requirements needed in order to be promoted to the ranks of Driver, Lieutenant, and Battalion Chief. Can you clarify when exactly candidates are required to possess these requisite certifications? Are they required to possess them at time of exam (i.e., they must have them in order to be eligible to take the exam) or are they required to have them at time of promotion?
Candidates must possess the requisite certifications to be promoted. The candidates can sit for the exam without the certifications.
3. Section VII. A. (p.11) of the proposal states that in order to be promoted to Lieutenant, one must certify as a Fire Instructor I and Fire Officer I, but does not state whether or not candidates need to have first been promoted into the Driver position. Therefore, can you

clarify if candidates for Lieutenant are only Drivers, or if they are a mix of both Drivers and Firefighters?

There is no requirement to be a Driver prior to being promoted to Lieutenant. The department allows promotion from either Firefighter or Driver to Lieutenant. Therefore, there will be a mix of Firefighters and Drivers testing for Lieutenant.

4. Section VII. A. (p.11) of the proposal states that the last promotional exams for Driver, Lieutenant, and Battalion Chief were developed by an outside Consultant in 2013. As part of this process, did the Consultant conduct a job analysis of all three ranks? If so, are job descriptions for each of these ranks currently available and will they be shared with the selected Consultant?

A Job Analysis was conducted by the prior consultant but we were not given a copy of the results. However, we do have Job Descriptions for the ranks of Driver, Lieutenant and Battalion Chief that can be made available to the selected consultant.

5. Section VII. A. (p.11) of the proposal states that the last promotional exams for Driver, Lieutenant, and Battalion Chief were developed by an outside Consultant in 2013. Assuming that the previous Consultant supplied the County with technical reports detailing each of these processes, will the selected Consultant be provided with copies to review? We have no identified reports.

6. Section VII. A. (p.11) of the proposal refers to, “changes in the organization and its functions” as the need to develop customized exams for all three ranks. Can you elaborate on these changes and how they might impact the new exams that are to be developed?

The Shelby County Fire Department has had a complete Command Staff Change to include the appointment of a new Fire Chief, Deputy Chief and the creation and appointment of a new Division Chief. These Command level changes have impacted the organization with a new vision and purpose in serving the citizens of Shelby County as a full-service emergency services agency.

7. Section VII. C. (p. 12) of the proposal states that the selected Consultant must be prepared to begin work immediately upon receipt of a fully executed contract. Does the County have a target deadline / desired timeframe in which it wishes to be able to administer the exams?

The desired time-frame to administer the exams would be the first two weeks of December 2016 or the month of January 2017. The current promotional lists expire January 31, 2017. Our desire is to have a new roster prior to expiration.

8. Section IX. (p. 13) of the proposal states that the County prefers that promotional examinations for the Fire Department include “components which are consistent with validated promotional examinations administered to employees of other para-militaristic organizations within County Government.” Can you please clarify the types of components you are referring to?

Similar to the military, we use a Chain of Command, Uniform and Grooming standards, Standard Operating Procedures, Adherence to Order and other militaristic models. The exam needs to be sensitive to this structure and expectation.

9. Section IX. (p. 13) of the proposal states that it is the County's preference to use "validated standardized examinations" as this would require less maintenance, be less costly, and also because "additional forms are more readily available." As part of the scope of work, do you expect the selected Consultant to develop additional exam items that can be used on future exams and/or alternative forms of each exam? **No.**

10. Section IX. (p. 13) of the proposal states that it is the County's preference to use "validated standardized examinations" but that it would like the Consultant to develop "customized written multiple choice tests" for each of the three ranks. As such, can you please clarify if the County's preference is for the selected Consultant to develop exams that are more "off the shelf" in nature based off of general procedures, etc. that can sustain the passage of time; or unique, customized exams for each of the three ranks that truly reflect the new job analysis data and the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics required to be a successful Driver, Lieutenant, and Battalion Chief in 2016/17?

By "standardized" we mean "of industry standard quality". Ultimately, we are looking for a quality exam for each rank that reflects the knowledge, skills, abilities and nuances of the rank. We are not married to a specific model.

11. Section IX. (p.13) of the proposal refers to the "Memorandum of Understanding with Local 2585." Does this memo, or any other documents (such as Local 2585's collective bargaining agreement / contract) contain any rules or regulations regarding testing / promotional examinations the selected Consultant should be made aware of?

Please see attached document from current Memorandum of Understanding regarding Job Progression-Promotions.

12. Pertaining to Section IX., (p.13 bottom, p.14 top), can you clarify the difference in required services between bullet points (b) and (c)?

We request that the consultant incorporate the information regarding the State Fire Commission Certifications and the International Fire Service Training Association's Training Manuals when developing the examinations.

13. Section IX., bullet point (d) (p.14) makes it clear that the selected Consultant will be responsible for developing oral interviews for the Lieutenant and Battalion Chief ranks, but there is no mention of the Consultant having to develop a practical (field) exam for the Driver rank (which was previously done in 2013). Is the selected Consultant responsible for developing a practical (field) exam for the Driver rank?

No. We no longer require a Practical Field Exam for the Driver Rank. The Shelby County Fire Department has adopted the State of Tennessee Fire Commission's Fire Apparatus Operator Certification before being promoted to the Driver Rank. This certification

requires a Practical Testing Element that the candidate must pass prior to being certified as a Fire Apparatus Operator.

14. Section IX., bullet point (f) (p. 14) states that the selected Consultant will provide a “written outline of the administration and scoring procedures for each examination.” Can you clarify if the County wishes for the selected Consultant to also administer and score each of these exams, or is the County administering the exams itself/hiring a separate vendor to do this? Regarding the scoring of exams, does the County wish for the written exams to serve as pass/fail hurdles (i.e., a cut off score would need to be determined for each), or do all candidates get a chance to participate in both written and oral exams (i.e., written and oral exams are weighted)?

The Consultant will administer and score each of the exams. Each Candidate will have a chance to participate in both the written and oral examinations. No cut-off scores.

15. Section IX., bullet point (g) (p. 14) states, “Consultant will recommend appropriate study materials for the Battalion Chief, Lieutenant, and Driver ranks.” As part of the scope of work, does the County expect the selected Consultant to create candidate study guides for each exam?

No. The department will provide the candidates with a list of Study Materials.

16. Can you clarify bullet point (h) in Section IX. (p.14)? Is the promotional assessment process the same as the oral interviews, or a separate process? How does the County wish for the selected Consultant to facilitate the recruitment of assessors? Do assessors need to meet certain requirements (e.g., be local, be out of state, located within 75 miles)? How does the County anticipate assessor fees / payments to be arranged, and is the County amenable to the selected Consultant managing these fees and billing the County for a lump sum at the conclusion of the project?

The Consultant will be responsible for recruiting assessors. The Assessors should be members of paid professional fire departments that are a comparable size of the Shelby County Fire Department or larger. The Assessors should hold the rank or a higher rank of the promotable position being tested. In the past, Assessors were selected from departments that allow their personnel to participate voluntarily and Shelby County Fire sends assessors to their department when asked to participate in their promotional process. The Assessors should be outside of the department’s general area of West Tennessee, North Mississippi and East Arkansas. Fees and expenses for assessors shall be the responsibility of the Consultant. The department will assist in the locating of assessors to reduce costs if requested.

17. Section IX., bullet point (j) (p.14) of the proposal states, “Consultant will have a validated process, free of disparate or adverse impact.” Validity and adverse impact are two separate concepts and for that reason, even a Consultant who takes all of the appropriate measures/steps to successfully validate its process and make it legally defensible, cannot ever guarantee that it will be free of disparate or adverse impact. As

such, can you clarify what the expectations are of the selected Consultant with regards to disparate / adverse impact?

We ask that the process be legally defensible, able to withstand a rigorous challenge if issued. We understand that the word “guarantee” may be impractical.

18. Page 8 - Is it a requirement that we work with local suppliers or contractors? Is it possible to be an eligible vendor for this project without having local suppliers or contractors?

No and Yes

19. Page 13 – Would you please specify the examinations that you would prefer to be “validated standardized examinations”, as these seem separate from the written multiple choice tests as described under the Scope of the Project and Services Desired sections but do not appear under the Deliverables section?

All examinations should be validated. Ultimately, this means that all exams must be legally defensible, able to withstand a rigorous challenge if issued.

20. Page 14 (j) – Is it a requirement that the assessments will result in no adverse impact with regard to specific demographic groups or is the requirement that there must be a validated process in order to help defend the assessment if adverse impact results?

We prefer both.

21. Are existing promotional examinations currently under litigation? No.

22. Can we be sent a copy of the old examination(s) and/or descriptions of past typical testing processes (e.g., steps, time, etc.)?

We have no copies of the past exam nor processes.

23. Is the County, including the Shelby County Fire Department, currently operating under consent decree? No.

24. Do you anticipate the bargaining unit having involvement in this project?

Yes, but minimal

25. What dates (estimated or specific) do you anticipate administering the promotional assessment process?

It is not possible to provide specific dates as there are many variables which are not predictable. We would prefer to have the testing during the first two weeks of December 2016. The current promotional roster expires January 31, 2017.

26. Does the County expect that the Consultant provide the personnel to deliver the promotional assessment process?

Yes. The Consultant will be responsible for recruiting assessors. The Assessors should be members of paid professional fire departments that are a comparable size of the Shelby

County Fire Department or larger. The Assessors should hold the rank or a higher rank of the promotable position being tested. In the past, Assessors were selected from departments that allow their personnel to participate voluntarily and Shelby County Fire sends assessors to their department when asked to participate in their promotional process. The Assessors should be outside of the department's general area of West Tennessee, North Mississippi and East Arkansas. Fees and expenses for assessors shall be the responsibility of the Consultant. The department will assist in the locating of assessors to reduce costs if requested.

27. Is there a preference for paper-and-pencil or online administration for the multiple choice tests? **No preference.**
28. When was the last Job Analysis on these jobs and will we have access to the related documentation? If so, what level of details are included?
In 2013 with last consultant but we do not have the analysis. We can provide job descriptions and other information.
29. Can you provide additional details about the organizational changes that led to this RFP?
The Shelby County Fire Department has had a complete Command Staff Change to include the appointment of a new Fire Chief, Deputy Chief and the creation and appointment of a new Division Chief. These Command level changes have impacted the organization with a new vision and purpose in serving the citizens of Shelby County as a full-service emergency services agency.
30. Are there bargaining unit guidelines or other rules specifying the type, length, etc. of the assessments? **No.**
31. What is the percentage of set aside money for RFP 17-009-12?
There is no set aside money for this RFP.
32. If an LOSB certified vendor partners with another vendor, will they still get the benefit of their LOSB certification?
Yes, if they are submitting the proposal for a potential award to their firm.

ARTICLE XIX

JOB PROGRESSION - PROMOTIONS

Sec. 19.01 The parties to this Agreement have adopted a program of training and advancement of all persons employed in the classifications of Recruit through Firefighter I and II as set forth by the Tennessee Firefighting Commission. The Classification of Firefighter III is set forth by the Shelby County Fire Department and a written test based on Firefighter II criteria administered by the Department Training Division.

Sec. 19.02 (A) The Program referred to above, Section 19.01 includes procedures for training, testing and advancement of employees working in the named classifications subject to satisfactory completion of the prescribed course for each classification. Upon completion within the specified time limits, employees will advance to the next higher grade and salary level through Firefighter III as set forth in **Article XXIV**, wages.

(B) Employees failing to qualify under the prescribed Tennessee Firefighting Commission conditions as Firefighter I, II, or Shelby County Firefighter III will be subject to termination. Employees may file an appeal under the Grievance Procedure, **Article XV**, in the event of such termination.

Sec. 19.03 Promotional Procedure - Firefighter IV: Employees are eligible for possible advancement to Firefighter IV, classification as Driver, pursuant to a competitive promotional test administered by the Department.