

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

RFP NO.:  
12PSX0184

**Jill Belisle**  
Buyer Name

**PROCUREMENT DIVISION**  
**165 Capitol Avenue, Room 5<sup>th</sup> Floor South**  
**HARTFORD, CT 06106-1659**

Proposal Due Date:  
19 December 2012  
Date Addendum Issued:  
19 November 2012

**(860)713-5149**  
Buyer Phone Number

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**This document has been marked as “Returnable”. Electronic submittal of this document indicates that your company has read and accepted any modifications to the RFP that are contained in this Addendum.**

**RFP ADDENDUM #1**

DESCRIPTION: **Office Supplies, Toner and Cut Sheet Paper**

FOR:  
**All Using State Agencies and Political Subdivisions**

**PROPOSERS NOTE:**

- Q1:** From Page 3 of 14: RFP Overview, Paragraph 1 states that “the contract may be extended for the original term of the contract or parts thereof at the sole discretion of the State”. Is this to say that the State has the sole option of extending the Contract for up to an additional five years, meaning that there is the potential for this contract to run for ten years?
- A1:** **Yes, the State may extend this Contract in its sole discretion, prior to Termination or expiration, one or more times for a combined total period not to exceed the complete length of the original term.**
- Q2:** From Page 4 of 14 of the RFP document: Please clarify the breakdown of sales for Paper and Toner are included in the total purchases number and not additional. For example, Staples total spend for state agencies was 1,803,256.89. Does this include the \$638,823.53 paper breakdown and the \$592,422.16 toner breakdown or are these 2 categories in addition to the total specified spend.
- A2:** **Yes, the total spend includes the breakdown for paper and toner.**
- Q3:** **From Page 6 of 14:** It is our understanding that United has discontinued the publishing of hardbound Dealer Net Pricers, instead publishing only an electronic version in Excel. What would be the preferred State’s protocol in the event that hardbound United Net Pricers are no longer available?
- A3:** **The State will except the electronic or CD version in excel.**

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**Q4: From Page 6 of 14:** Section IV. (Solicitation Submission) states that “At the time of proposal submittal, the only hard copy to be submitted under separate cover is the current published office supply catalog and current United Stationers Dealer Net Pricer Book”. Please confirm that the “current published office supply catalog” required is the United Stationers General Line Catalog or specify in detail if or what other catalogs are being referenced in this section.

If other catalogs besides the United General Line catalog are acceptable, how will the State verify that a proprietary item, such as a private label brand binder, is available to the State at the same price as an equivalent generic binder or lowest price available binder that has a net price derivative of the catalog minus discount from the United Net Price list?

**A4: Please provide the following under separate cover: contractor’s current published office supply catalog at the time of submittal. The United Net Pricer may be uploaded under “other documents” with proposal response or under separate cover along with the contractor’s current published office supply catalog.**

**Q5: REGARDING PRICE SCHEDULE:** From page 6 of 10 of Exhibit A It is understood that proposers are to provide trade names as specified on the fixed item price lists unless a trade name is not specified. Can alternative private label and other lower cost equivalent products be provided for all items with the bid submission as an alternative response?

**A5: If a trade name is not specified, please provide an equivalent trade name OEM for that item only. Contractors shall provide all OEM PRODUCTS SPECIFIED PER THE PRICE SCHEDULE. Note: Please provide only alternative OEM products for the 10 estimated products that are not OEM items listed on the price sheet.**

**If selected for negotiation, the successful contractor(s) will have the ability to offer alternate products (i.e. private label products, equivalent oem products, etc.) for consideration to DAS/Procurement Services for additional cost savings or replacement. However, it is understood that Procurement Services has the sole right to accept or deny such requests.**

**Q6: GENERAL OFFICE SUPPLIES:** Can fixed price items have a net price that is lower than that resulting from the discount off of end column quoted?

**A6: All Fixed Price Items must always be less than the United Stationers Dealer Net Pricer end column less discount.**

**Q7: TONER:** Does the State receive from either Hewlett-Packard, Lexmark, Xerox, or any combination therein any sort of additional discounting such as Hewlett-Packard Big Deal? If so, please provide written consent for all bidders to be added to any such program.

**A7: The State is currently receiving the Hewlett-Packard “Big Deal”. The State will accept the “Big Deal” from all manufacturers but will not be signing additional agreements beyond the state’s terms and conditions.**

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**Q8:** CUT SHEET PAPER: Will alternatives to the brands specified be considered or will the State only accept pricing for the brands specified?

**A8:** **No, please provide brands specified.**

**If selected for negotiation, the successful contractor(s) will have the ability to offer alternate products (i.e. private label products, equivalent oem products, etc.) for consideration to DAS/Procurement Services for additional cost savings or replacement. However, it is understood that Procurement Services has the sole right to accept or deny such requests.**

**Q9a:** Are you allowing the quotation of alternate/generic items on this RFP?

**A9a:** **No, please provide all OEM brands that are listed on the price schedule. If selected for negotiation, the successful contractor(s) will have the ability to offer alternate products (i.e. private label products, equivalent oem products, etc.) for consideration to DAS/Procurement Services for additional cost savings or replacement. However, it is understood that Procurement Services has the sole right to accept or deny such requests.**

**Q9b:** The note in cell B6 of the General Office Supplies tab of the spreadsheet named "Copy of price\_schedule\_0184\_Office\_Supplies.xlsx" asks that an OEM part number be provided where an OEM number isn't listed.

All numbers are OEM with the exception of ten wholesaler (SPR) numbers. Are these the lines being referred to in the above statement?

**A9b:** **Yes, these are the lines that are being referred to in the above statement.**

**Q9c:** On the same spreadsheet, do Columns I through M call for OEM products only?

**A9c:** **Please refer to answer #5**

**Q10:** What is meant by "special promotional pricing" in Exhibit A, section F?

**A10:** **Special promotional pricing such as sales, overstock, obsolete and reduction on items at which agencies would be invoiced at that price.**

**Q11:** In regards to rebates, could a single payment go to DAS, or would they be paid to each individual agency?

**A11:** **Yes, a single payment made out to the State of Connecticut, Office of State Treasurer.**

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**Q12:** Section 7 of the Proposal Requirements discusses the use of brand names, and the option for vendors to offer an alternate that is equal in quality and function. Also, the section explains that if the proposer does not indicate the article offered is OTHER THAN the OEM (or brand name), it will be understood that that price is for that individual OEM specified item.

Does this mean that if we choose to offer an alternative item equal in quality and function, in place of the branded OEM item listed, that we should NOT put a price in for the branded item specified in the RFP but enter the alternative item being offered and price in the alternate column?

If this is not the case, and proposers must enter a price for the OEM, but also include an alternative item, if available, and the alternative items price, which price will be used for the pricing evaluation?

**A12: Please refer to Answer #5.**

**Q13:** In regards to bid submittals, the only hard copies being requested are our current catalog as well as United's printed net pricer book. The net pricer books are no longer being printed. See the attached email notification sent out earlier this year. Do you want an excel file of the items with the net price items?

**A13: Please see answer #3.**

**Q14:** Will The State consider making all extensions to the contract by mutual agreement?

**A14: Please see answer #1.**

**Q15:** If there is conflict with statements, directions, provisions etc in the documents provided, what is the order of precedent? For example the Contract indicates that all pricing is to be held for a year and Exhibit A indicates that Paper prices will be held for six months. Please clarify.

**A15: Fixed price office supplies and toner pricing shall be held for one year; only exception fixed price paper is every six months.**

**Q16:** Could the State please indicate what percent of the total general office supplies, toner and cut sheet paper spend is represented by the fixed price list? For example; does the fixed price file represents 80% of the total office supplies spend and 20% comes from the catalog based on 2011 usage. Please provide the anticipate split in percent and or total dollars spend for each.

**A16: No, the State does not have that information.**

**Q17a:** Regarding Deliveries: Could the State please provide

A list of all the 650+ locations for state agencies including zip-codes

**A17a: This will be provided to the awarded contractor(s).**

**Q17b:** How much of the total spend comes from the major cities such as Hartford, Waterbury, New London, New Haven, Bridgeport, Stamford, Etc?

**A17b: The State does not have that information.**

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**Q17c:** What percent of the offices require desk top delivery?

**A17c:** Please assume 100% are desk-top deliveries.

**Q18:** Could the State please provide the average order size for 2011?

**A18:** The average order size in 2010 for Staples was approximately \$276.00.

**Q19:** Throughout the "Description of Goods and Services" Exhibit A – the State uses the term "awarded contractor(s)" indicating the State may award more than one vendor or a single vendor. Understanding that the state will award to small business as well please answer the following questions.

Could the State please clarify under what circumstances and or criteria would the State award to more than one major vendor?

**A19:** The State reserves the right to award this Contract in a manner deemed to be in the best interest of the State and may include, but not be limited to:  
**A. by item, group of items, or in it's entirety**  
**B. geographic location to adequately service the entire State of Connecticut in the best possible manner**  
**C. Multiple Vendor Award**

**Q20:** Would the awards be a split award for only a category or only multiple awards? Please clarify

**A20:** Please see answer A19.

**Q21a:** Pg 6 of the RFP Template, Section III Set aside - regarding the SBE/MBE participation -

Please explain how the State will meet this objective?

**A21a:** It is the intention of the State of Connecticut to award fifty (50%) of this contract to Connecticut Small and/or Minority Business Enterprises that are currently certified through Department of Administrative Services Supplier Diversity Program.

**Q21b:** Are the major vendors required to partner with SBE/MBE to qualify for this contract and to accomplish in part of or all of the 50 percent set aside?

**A21b:** No, the major vendors are not required to partner with SBE/MBE.

**Q21c:** How will that impact the awarded vendor(s)? What responsibility do we have?

**A21c:** No impact. You do not have any responsibility.

**Q21d:** What are the mandates placed on the agency buyers to purchase 50 % of their needs from MBE/WBE's?

**A21d:** None, the agencies are not mandated to purchase 50% of their needs from MBE/WBE's.

**Q21e:** If major vendors are to work with SBE/WBE vendors with a stated or claimed spend goal, how will that be monitored and enforced?

**A21e:** Does not apply.

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**Q22:** Is the 50% SBE/MBE requirement only for State agencies and will not be required for other political subdivisions? Or is it based on total contract spend regardless of the customer mix?

**A22:** **Please see answer A21a.**

**Q23:** Pg 4 of Exhibit A –Number 4 Requisition/Ordering form - The state requested a form with all items listed on the fixed price file,

Which consist of around 675 items Plus a section for catalog items with complete descriptions And all the header information.

At 50 items per page with very small print, this form would need to be at least 15 pages long. This form would not be - easy to use, environmentally friendly and not very well received by the buyers. Since the average order only includes a limited number of items we recommend that this requirement be withdrawn. We can provide forms tailored to the requested buyers based on the items they purchase. They can also create shopping list online for their choice of frequently used items.

**A23:** **Please provide solutions that would clearly identify fixed price items in an on-line and hard-copy format for contract customers.**

**Q24:** Pg 9 of Exhibit A -Section 15 -P-Card – It states “Contractor shall be equipped to receive orders issued from this Contract using the purchasing card. **The Contractor shall be responsible for the credit card user- handling fee associated with credit card purchases.** The Contractor shall only charge to the State’s MasterCard upon delivery of goods or rendering of services.” Vendors pick up the cost of the P-card transaction fee on their end of the transaction?

Could the State please explain what it means by the highlighted section?

**A24:** **Will be answered on Addendum #2.**

**Q25:** Pg 6 of Exhibit A – Pricing section a Fixed Pricing –Paragraph 3 – it states Obsolete – Would the State please consider making the selection and acceptance of a new item to replace an item that becomes discontinued or Obsolete by mutual agreement by the State and the vendor?

**A25:** **Yes, if an item becomes obsolete, the state requires a replacement. The item shall have the same, fit, form and function and priced as the obsolete item.**

**Q26:** Also we would request that if no mutual agreement is made that the item is removed from the fixed price list. Will that be acceptable?

**A26:** **Yes, but at the State’s discretion.**

**Q27:** Pg 9 of the RFP Template - Pricing- Section XI. Stability of Proposed Prices – it states “Any price offerings from proposers must be valid for a period of 180 days from the due date of the proposals.” There are 194 days between the due date of the RFP and the Start of the contract.

**A27:** **We expect to have a contract in place prior to the 180 days. The 180 days refers only to the time from proposal opening date to the date that the contract is awarded, which should be prior to the commencement date of the contract.**

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- Q28:** Will vendors be able to update their prices with the appropriate number of days notice prior to the contract start date by using the United Stationers Q3 list and net pricing book and reflective list price changes for items unique to the Vendors catalog or cost increase letters from manufacturers? This will allow vendors to bid more aggressively to start with.
- A28:** **No, contractor(s) will not be allowed to update their prices using the United Stationers Q3 list. The only exception would be for new or obsolete items not previously listed in the Q2 list.**
- Q29:** Pg 6 and 8 of Exhibit A concerning the use of the United Stationer's catalog as the basis for pricing and product evaluating the RFP. What information will the State need from a vendor for all the unique items they offer not stocked by United Stationers, for both the fixed price list and the catalog? This includes other brand names, private label items and the same products stocked and sold by United but with different unit of measure?
- A29:** **Will be answered on Addendum #2**
- Q30:** Could the State please clarify what they mean regarding our "willingness to modify" our catalog and order forms?
- A30:** **The State is looking for a label to be provide on each catalog or price list that clearly identify the name, address, telephone and fax number of the awarded contractor. The cover sheet of the catalog must also clearly state the contract award number. Awarded contractors must also include instructions for ordering, customer service, and contract restrictions (where appropriate).**
- Q31:** Page 19 – Contract - section 32 (b) 5 (e & h) – Regarding Subcontractors –We request that, for the purpose of this RFP the term "subcontractor" does not include those parties involved in the day to day business operations of the Contractor, including, but not limited to third party logistics vendors, delivery carriers and customer service providers. In the future if we decide to employ a subcontractor specifically for the purpose of supporting this contract we would provide the requested language within their subsequent contract and notify the State of our intent to employ said subcontractor. Will this be acceptable? Additionally, we would requests the removal of the requirement to include the provisions of this section in purchase orders from its vendors and manufacturers for the same reasons that they are not specifically contracted for this contract but integral to the entirety of our business.
- A31:** **The contract document is to form and approved by our Attorney General's Office which no changes can be made.**