



Metro 4/SESARM
Southeastern Air Pollution Control Agencies

Request for Proposals

for preparing and delivering multiple training events over a 2-year period for both in-person classroom and online instructor-led settings for the following course:

AMBM 208 - Quality Assurance for Air Pollution Measurement Systems
(Formerly APTI 470)

March 3, 2023

I. Submittal Information for Proposals, Inquiries, and Requests

Proposals, inquiries, and requests for clarification and other information should be directed to:

Name: Scott Hodges
Title: Agency Support Specialist
Phone: (601) 540-3703 (cell)
Email: shodges@metro4-sesarm.org
Website: www.metro4-sesarm.org

Signed proposals shall be submitted to the Metro 4/SESARM email address specified above in Portable Document Format (PDF).

II. Training Course Details

The following contains specific information about the course, format(s) and locations where applicable:

A. Background

This basic course is designed for regulatory personnel who operate and oversee ambient air monitoring data. This class is intended for quality assurance coordinators or managers, field or laboratory supervisors, and technicians involved with quality assurance of monitoring system data. It is expected to be approximately 18 contact hours in length.

B. Learning Objectives

Those completing this course will gain a basic understanding of the information associated with the management of air quality monitoring systems required under the Clean Air Act and state and local regulations. Attendees will be able to apply the following topics in establishing a measurement system:

- Basic concepts of statistical control charts
- Regression analysis and control charges for calibration data
- Identification and treatment of outliers
- Quality assurance for SLAMS and PSD
- Performance and system audits
- Measurement
- Intra-laboratory testing

- Procurement quality control
- Data validation
- Quality costs

C. Course Description

This course presents a broad overview of the quality assurance required for air pollution monitoring systems. Lectures present the basic quality management principles and techniques applicable to air pollution monitoring systems. It covers the four principal areas of management, measurement, systems, and statistics.

D. Course Location and Dates

The course will be presented as a “live” webinar or in-person classroom format potentially at locations in the 10-state Metro 4 /SESARM area (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV). Presentation(s) of the course will be given during the contract period which will be for a two-year period beginning on the date of a signed contract agreement between Metro 4/SESARM and the contractor. The number of times the course is delivered, actual dates, and methods of delivery of the courses will be determined by Metro 4/SESARM with input from the contractor selected; however, the instructor is expected to be available for a minimum of one online or in-person training event per year.

E. Course Attendance

As a general rule, bidders shall assume that course attendance will not exceed 40 students for an in-person course and 60 students for an online course. Where venues provide for hybrid meeting environments, in-person courses may include remote participation of some students, with the understanding that student participation in some live activities (e.g., breakout sessions, field site visits, etc.) may be limited. Online course attendance may exceed 60 students with the concurrence of the bidder and appropriate meeting facilitation services.

III. General Information

A. Purpose

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is to contract for instructional services to prepare and present a training course for delivery in a “live” webinar or in-person format. This contract will be funded with federal funds provided by EPA to SESARM via Grant XA-01D14120. Although SESARM will be the contracting party, Metro 4 and SESARM are partners in this training effort and any decisions

made will consider the interests of both Metro 4 and SESARM member agencies. The course is entitled “Quality Assurance for Air Pollution Measurement Systems” and is to follow the materials designated by EPA as AMBM 208 (Formerly APTI 470). Metro 4/SESARM reserves the right to review any materials developed or updated prior to delivery and to distribute the materials to our membership for use during the course.

B. Who May Respond

Anyone may respond who has a comprehensive knowledge of the course subject matter and who has extensive experience and capabilities in the delivery of the proposed course’s subject matter in a professional and informative manner, provided that such respondent qualifies and meets the criteria specified in this RFP.

C. Assistance with Proposal Preparation Questions

Metro 4/SESARM will provide clarifications and assistance upon request through a written question-and-answer format. Potential respondents may submit questions in writing to Metro 4/SESARM at any time following release of this RFP. Metro 4/SESARM will respond to questions as they are submitted and post them on the Metro 4/SESARM website if they have relevance to the potential bids of other interested parties. Metro 4/SESARM reserves the right to decline to respond to any question if, in Metro 4/SESARM’s assessment, the question is irrelevant to the preparation of bid proposals and/or if Metro 4/SESARM cannot prepare and submit the requested information to all potential bidders in a timely manner.

D. Instructions/Conditions Relative to Proposal Submission

1. Proposal Deadline

Metro 4/SESARM will accept bids until close of business Friday, **April 7, 2023** unless, solely at its discretion, Metro 4/SESARM chooses to extend the bid proposal deadline.

2. Proposal Content Requirements

The proposal shall include all required information specified in this RFP but shall be limited to no more than ten pages in length. Required information shall include:

- Name and complete contact information for the provider making the bid (if incorporated, include company name and DUNS number).
- Name and complete information for the individual preparing the bid, if different than provider.

- A summary of training and educational experience of the lead instructor and any supporting instructors.
- Any specific experience that uniquely qualifies the instructor(s) to present the course, including how many times the course has been taught, if any.
- Contact information for a minimum of two references knowledgeable about the lead instructor’s qualifications and performance.
- Course Description:
 - i. Agenda, including duration and title of each topic covered
 - ii. Version of training materials the instructor proposes to use
 - iii. Handouts to be provided and date of last update
- Proposals must comply, as applicable, with Subpart C of 2 CFR Part 180, entitled “Responsibilities of Participants Regarding Transactions Doing Business with Other Persons,” as implemented and supplemented by 2 CFR 1532 and certify the contractor is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency.
- Insurance: Proposal must describe the company’s insurance coverage and indicate the company will provide a copy of their insurance certificate as part of entering into an agreement with Metro 4/SESARM.
- Tax Liabilities: Proposal must affirm that contractor (1) is not subject to any unpaid federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, and (2) has not been convicted (or had an officer or agency acting on its behalf convicted) of a felony criminal conviction under any federal law within 24 months preceding the award, unless EPA has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation, or such officer or agent, based on these tax liabilities or convictions and determined that such action is not necessary to protect the US Government’s interests.
- Civil Rights: Proposal must affirm that in carrying out this project the contractor will comply with laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, handicap, or any other demographic category prohibited by law.

- Indicate in your proposal that Metro 4/SESARM will have the right to post publicly and re-use instructional materials, including handouts and presentations used in this class. Specify any requested limitations on free use and the rationale for the limitations. Metro 4/SESARM reserves the right to decline entering into an instructional services contract with any bidder who prohibits distribution of course materials to Metro 4/SESARM and course students.

3. Cost Proposal

Cost shall be submitted on a separate page as an addendum to the proposal and shall include a breakdown of the following costs for each training event, for both in-person and online delivery options:

- Course/presentation material preparation, if applicable. (Indicate if this is a one-time cost or recurring cost per delivery)
- Instructional services charges (including instructional preparation, delivery of course instruction, entry of test results, if applicable, into a prescribed data base, and preparation of a final course report and certificates, if applicable)
- Printing and shipping, if applicable (for in-person delivery only)
- Other relevant expenses (Please itemize)

Given that the dates and location of in-person delivery are unknown, costs related to travel are not required to be included in the proposal. Metro 4/SESARM will reimburse lodging, transportation, meal, and miscellaneous course costs incurred by the instructor(s) as described in Attachment 1 of this RFP. Instructor(s) shall consult with Metro 4/SESARM about lodging and transportation costs before incurring them, to make sure that they will be reimbursable.

4. Certification

Prospective bidders shall only submit a proposal if they sign the proposal certifying that the requirements of this RFP can be met and that the bidding entity is in good standing with the U.S. government relative to participating in projects funded with federal grants. The following statement shall be used:

“The undersigned official responsible for submission of this training proposal hereby certifies that the information contained in this proposal is true and accurate to the best of the undersigned’s knowledge and ability; that the bidding entity is qualified to present the course as prescribed in the Request

for Proposals (RFP) and can and will meet the requirements in the RFP; that neither the bidding entity or any of its principals had a relationship with Metro 4/SESARM and/or its principals constituting a conflict of interest; and that neither the undersigned nor any associated partnership or corporation is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, ineligible, or otherwise excluded from participating in a project funded with federal grants.”

5. Cost of Proposal Preparation Limited to Bidder

All costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal pursuant to this RFP shall be the responsibility of, and borne by, the bidder and shall not be reimbursed by Metro 4/SESARM.

6. Right to Reject Proposals

Metro 4/SESARM reserves the right to reject for any reason any and all proposals received in response to this RFP.

7. Small and Disadvantaged Businesses

Metro 4/SESARM encourages bids from small and disadvantaged businesses including those owned by minorities and women.

8. Notification of Award

Metro 4/SESARM expects to make a decision regarding awarding a contract for presentation of this course shortly after the proposal submittal deadline. Proposals shall be reviewed by a committee of individuals selected by Metro 4/SESARM who have no conflict of interest in the selection process.

IV. Instructor Performance and Task Expectations

The instructor(s) for this course shall meet the following expectations and perform the following tasks:

- Demonstrate excellent communication and presentation skills, including prior use of online delivery platforms.
- Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the subject matter.
- Present a professional demeanor throughout the course.
- Adequately prepare to deliver the course.
- Provide a laptop computer for use in the in-person course.
- Provide written or electronic materials to be distributed to students.

- Deliver presentations in an informative manner containing a mix of background, technical, and practical information using lectures and class exercises.
- Be responsive to student questions and concerns.
- Meet course objectives for dispensing core knowledge in the subject area.
- Be prompt in arrival and stay on schedule.
- For in-person delivery, provide hard copies of course materials (including agenda) for course distribution if the bidder has possession of an alternate version of the course that is acceptable to Metro 4/SESARM.
- Communicate with Metro 4/SESARM as necessary to ensure proper pre-course planning.
- Administer post-course quizzes for evaluating how well the course materials were assimilated by attendees.
- Work with Metro 4/SESARM and affected students to administer a minimum of one re-test and a maximum of two re-tests per failing student upon request.
- Provide a summary of results of the quizzes and report results to Metro 4/SESARM.
- For in-person delivery, minimize travel expenses as practical, based on the location of the course.
- Provide an accurate invoice for instructional services consistent with the accepted bid and reimbursements consistent with the reimbursement process described in Attachment 1 within thirty days of the last day of the course.
- For online delivery, provide at the instructor location(s) necessary equipment and high quality and consistent internet connection to conduct the course.
- Conduct a practice session of adequate duration prior to the live training event to test the online delivery.

V. Metro 4/SESARM Obligations

In preparing proposals, prospective bidders may assume that for in-person courses Metro 4/SESARM will:

- Make all course location arrangements and communicate and inform students and instructors in a timely manner.

- Make arrangements for basic audio-visual needs including a digital projector, stand, surge bar, extension cord, screen, and flip charts and/or dry-erase board, if requested.
- Make arrangements for morning and afternoon break refreshments. All other meals will be on your own.
- Make timely payment for instructional services within 30 days of receipt of an accurate invoice.

And for online courses

- Make all arrangements for course registration and communicate and inform students and instructors in a timely manner.
- Provide the online delivery platform to be used for the course.
- Provide a moderator during the entire online course to assist the instructor. The moderator will work to resolve technical issues with the delivery platform, respond to questions about the course delivery and content, and monitor participant engagement during the course.

VI. Proposal Selection Criteria

Metro 4/SESARM expect the following criteria to be key components of the evaluation of proposals:

- Completeness of proposal relative to this RFP including proper certification and signature. A bid may be disqualified if substantially deficient in content or if the required certification and signature are not provided.
- Bidder's ability to meet the needs specified in this RFP, including delivery of the course both in-person and/or online.
- Recent experiences of Metro 4/SESARM with the bidder including an assessment of past course evaluations, if applicable.
- Information from references.
- Qualification of secondary instructors, if applicable.
- Other pertinent information, if any.
- Quoted cost.

VII. Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of Metro 4/SESARM to prohibit discrimination against its customers, contractors, employees, and applicants for employment based on race, color, national origin, disability, age, limited English proficiency, sex and any other demographic category prohibited by law.

It is further the policy of SESARM to require that all staff, officers, Board of Directors members, agents, and representatives operate in conformance to this policy and associated procedures.

Attachment 1

Metro 4/SESARM's Modified Federal Reimbursement Process

Metro 4/SESARM will reimburse, within reasonable limits, actual travel costs using a modified federal reimbursement process as described below.

- Instructors shall plan on arriving the day before the course begins and leaving the afternoon or evening the course ends except in special circumstances that shall be specified in the proposal.
- Transportation shall be by the most economical means possible, taking into consideration practicality and availability of alternatives. Private-owned vehicle (POV) mileage reimbursement, if requested, will be capped at the amount of the cheapest practical travel alternative including consideration of airfare and rental car. The 2023 POV mileage reimbursement rate, where applicable, is \$0.655/mile.
- Instructors are expected to secure the lowest reasonable airfare offered. Metro 4/SESARM provides reimbursement at the economy fare rate for domestic travel. The use of first class, business, or international air travel is not authorized.
- Instructors shall use the lodging facility which is hosting the students for the course and shall procure lodging rooms at the negotiated rate, if applicable, unless SESARM has been notified of extenuating circumstance and SESARM has approved alternative lodging arrangements in advance of arrival at the lodging location.
- Instructors shall use reasonable ground transportation services if travel is required from an airport to the lodging and meeting locations and return.
- Meals will be reimbursed using the meal-specific federal rate for the host city. The reimbursement rate for each meal includes any tips. The federal reimbursement process is modified in that SESARM will pay on a meal-for-meal basis only for meals where expenses are actually incurred and only when the instructor is on official travel status fully covering the following core hours for each meal:

Breakfast: 6:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

Lunch: 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Dinner: 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

- Reimbursable incidental expenses shall include business-related bellhop and housekeeping expenses.
- Other business-related itemized expenses, if any, shall be reimbursed provided that proper documentation is presented with the reimbursement request.
- Receipts shall be required for all costs equaling or exceeding \$25.00 excluding meals.