

RFP Questions and Clarifications Memorandum

To: Vendors Responding to RFP Number 3847 for the Mississippi Department of Information Technology (ITS)

From: Craig P. Orgeron, Ph.D.

Date: April 18, 2016

Subject: Responses to Questions Submitted and Clarifications to Specifications

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RFP Number 3847 is hereby amended as follows:

1. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 10.9.4 is being modified to read:

The Vendor must detail any exclusion to liability that would ~~release~~ **release** the Vendor from claims.

2. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 11.1.4 is being modified to read:

MANDATORY – The site must not be within the flood hazard and tsunami inundation area as defined in the International Building Code (IBC), be within ~~300 feet of a 500-year~~ **200 feet of a 100 year** flood hazard area, or be less than 10 feet above the highest known flood level.

3. Section VII Technical Specifications, Items 11.8.1.7 and 11.8.1.8 are being renumbered as follows:

~~11.8.1.7~~ **11.8.1.6.1** Vendor must define the number of touches included at no additional charge.

~~11.8.1.8~~ **11.8.1.6.2** Vendor must provide a fully loaded hourly rate.

Vendor must include in their proposal a response to each amended requirement as listed above. Vendor must respond using the same terminology as provided in the original requirements.

The following questions were submitted to ITS and are being presented as they were submitted, except to remove any reference to a specific vendor. This information should assist you in formulating your response.

Question 1: General

Will the State consider cloud-based solutions under this procurement, or will only offers that allow for co-location of State-owned equipment be considered under the solicitation?

Response: It is the intent of this RFP to partner with a qualified Vendor that offers co-location data center solutions. As outlined in Section VII, Item 3, the selected environment will be used to house existing compute, network, and storage data center equipment maintained by the State for its production, backup, and disaster recovery purposes. The Vendor is encouraged to define and detail other ancillary services available to the State for consideration. The Vendor should detail other related products and/or services that may be needed or added related to this procurement in Section VII, Item 11.9.

Question 2: General

Will UNIVERSITIES, LIBRARIES & K-12 SCHOOLS definitely be allowed to make procurements from the contract? If not, what is the probability that they will be allowed to do so?

Response: As stated in Section VII, Item 5.7, at the discretion of ITS, other governmental entities such as community colleges, universities, libraries, K-12 schools, and governing authorities may be allowed to purchase from the resulting contract. The Vendor must indicate their ability to assist the state with promoting the proposed solution to these entities to maximize volume and optimize pricing from the contract for the state as outline in Section VII, Item 5.8.

Question 3: General

I am wondering if IBM is the incumbent vendor and if there is an estimated contract value you can provide.

Response: There is no incumbent Vendor for the requested co-location solution. The State does have an existing contract with IBM for Disaster Recovery purposes, but the co-location of State owned equipment is not part of this contract.

Question 4: General

Has the University identified a funding source for this project? If so, are you able to indicate which source will be used?

Response: Funding information is not available for this project.

Question 5: General

Has the University determined an estimated cost for this project? If so, are you able to indicate the anticipated cost of this effort?

Response: Budget information is not available for this project.

Question 6: General

If a vendor is a reseller of a providers Colocation Services, is it acceptable to note this clearly within each response item and reference the subcontractor or would all questions need to be answered by both the prime contractor and the subcontractor? For example: Operational procedures, would it be ok to just to list the procedures of the Colocation provider as these would be the procedures that are being followed and included into the contract.

Response: The prime Vendor can have as many subcontractors as needed to fulfill the requested services. All RFP specifications should be answered by the prime Vendor since the resulting contract will be with this entity. The Vendor should fully disclose if services are being resold in their response.

Question 7: Section VII, Item 3

Is the State interested in options where the vendor provides a full hosting environment rather than just options for floor space with environmental support or rack space?

Response: Please see the response to Question 1.

Question 8: Section VII, Item 3

Are all RFI 3791 responses available for inspection?

Response: RFI Responses can be requested through a public records request to ITS. <http://www.its.ms.gov/Services/Pages/Public-Record-Requests.aspx>

Question 9: Section VII, Item 3

The RFP seems to indicate that it is possible for entities to engage under this agreement for hosted services of any kind rather than just co-location for business continuity and disaster recovery. Is this a correct assumption based on "production" reference in the General Overview and Background discussion? Is this assumption correct?

Response: Please see the response to Question 1.

Question 10: Section VII, Item 3.1.1, 3.1.2

The RFP outlines how the vendor is to interface with all types of government entities as outlined in the Mississippi Code.

5.7 appears to conflict with the earlier discussion.

It is also assumed that 5.8 would apply to the entities as described in 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 regardless.

That is; 3.1.2.1 "... The awarded Vendor may market and provide pricing directly to the State's schools and libraries for the systems and services specifically included in contracts executed between the awarded Vendor and ITS." Whereas, 3.1.2.2 "...Awarded Vendors should not market or provide pricing for services from contracts resulting from this RFP directly to these entities unless specifically authorized in writing by ITS to do so." And 5.7 "...may be allowed to purchase from the resulting contract." Please clarify.

Response: The awarded Vendor is encouraged to market directly to K-12 schools, community colleges, universities, and governing authorities; however, ITS wants to be informed of any marketing activities by the Vendor as it relates to services under the contract. Any entity that uses the awarded contract will have to receive an ITS authorization form for financial auditing purposes.

Question 11: Section VII, Section VIII, Exhibit A

References to "change order" or "change management":

6.1 (p36) - change order;

6.2.4 (p37) - change management;

11.3.1 (p53) - change management;
Section VIII (p62) - change order rate;
Exhibit A (p81) - Article 40 - Change Order Rate and Procedure

11.3.1 Appears to refer to changes within the operations of the facility that could impact a customer but are not the result of a customer change request. All other references appear to be with regard to changes requested within the scope of the Master Agreement. Please confirm.

Response: Change management is the process by which a change will occur. Change order is how this request will be processed and approved by the State along with any charges for the work to occur.

Question 12: Section VII, Item 6.2

Please clarify. Specifically, does 6.2.1 deal with standing up / ending the Master Agreement or is the vendor being asked to produce a template type example for any Statement of Work that would be done for any engagements under the Master Agreement or both?

Response: This specification is for any Statement of Work for activities to be done under the agreement.

Question 13: Section VII, Item 8.4, 10.4.6.3

Background checks:

8.4 (p40) - asks for description plus other qualifications for employees;

10.4.6.3 (p45) - requires and asks what checks are performed.

We assume that the Vendor's sub-contractors must be subject to the same requirements. Please confirm.

Related question - are there any minimum checks that the State is seeking (such as what is required for HIPAA)?

Response: This specification is to ensure that all individuals that have access to work areas where state equipment is housed are vetted by the Vendor through an approved background check process.

Question 14: Section VII, Item 9.3

Please clarify. Does this mean a breakdown of any volume-based tiers, or does it mean rack space usage tiers (or other)?

Response: This specification means that billed amounts cannot be combined. The bill needs to be itemized for any services provided so pricing can be verified against the contract rates.

Question 15: Section VII, Item 10

Is UMMC's most recent risk assessment audit available for review?

Response: Audit information is not available.

Question 16: Section VII, Item 10.4.5.1

Does this question intend to request a sample of the digital footage, or does it simply intend to require that vendor captures digital footage?

Response: This specification is for capturing digital footage in case it is needed by the customer at a later date.

Question 17: Section VII, Item 10.4.7

Regarding the "security certification" requirement for ISO 27002 – does this question intend to ask our adherence to the 27002 recommendations/guidelines as a service provider? There is not a certification process directly for ISO 2702.

Response: This specification is asking for adherence to known certifications and guidelines for the Vendor to demonstrate the levels of security being provided at the recommended location. The Vendor should provide evidence of any certifications deemed relevant.

Question 18: Section VII, Item VII.10.5.12.2, 0.6.1.1, 10.6.1.2, 11.7, 9.2.2
SLA references:

10.5.12.2 (p47) generator fuel vendors;

10.6.1.1 and 10.6.1.2 (p48) temperature range maintained for the facility's customers and humidity range;

11.7 (p56) what are the "standard" SLAs provided under a hosting arrangement - power, temp, humidity, network connectivity, escalation process;

11.9.2.2 (p57) SLAs for "remote hands" services

Please confirm that all SLAs referenced in the RFP are in regard to the SLA(s) to be included in the Master Agreement and any SOWs under the Master Agreement will be subject to the same.

Response: All of the Awarded Vendor's SLAs, as well as the Statement of Work, will be part of the Master Agreement.

Question 19: Section VII, Item 10.7.1.2; 6.1.2

References to 24/7:

10.7.1.2 (p49) re: alarms and indications response; 11.6.1.2 (p56) re: customer support

Are these SLA requirements?

Response: No. The Vendor is asked to provide this information to assist the State in its evaluation of the proposed location.

Question 20: Section VII, Item 10.9.4

Clarification that the word "releaser" is a typo.

Response: Please refer to Item 1, in the Amendment.

Question 21: Section VII, Item 11.1.4

Will ITS change specification 11.1.4 to read as follows? "MANDATORY – The site must not be within the flood hazard and tsunami inundation area as defined in the International Building Code (IBC), be within 200 feet of a 100-year flood hazard area, or be less than 10 feet above the highest known flood level."

Response: The State is amendable to this change. Please refer to Item 2, in the Amendment.

Question 22: Section VII, Item 11.1.2

Will ITS change specification 11.1.2 to read as follows? “MANDATORY – The proposed facility must be a minimum of 130 miles inland from a coastal shore. ITS prefers, but not require, the facility to be a minimum of 150 miles inland from a coastal shore.”

Response: No.

Question 23: Section VII, Item 11.1.3

Under any circumstances will sites greater than 250 miles from the Jackson Metropolitan Area be considered? If yes, what would those circumstances be, and what would be the revised maximum distance from the Jackson Metropolitan Area that would be considered?

Response: No.

Question 24: Section VII, Item 11.1.3

Will ITS consider removing the Mandatory Requirement within section 11.1.3? Based upon a 2014 FEMA report (cited below) showing the wide geographic impact of natural disasters, we would respectfully request the removal of section “11.1.3 MANDATORY – The proposed facility must be within 250 miles of the Jackson Metropolitan area”.

A 2014 FEMA report titled “Emergency Power Systems for Critical Facilities: A Best Practices Approach to Improving Reliability (FEMA P-1019, September 2014), cites several examples of natural disasters whose impacts span well over 200 miles in radius; including 2007 ice storms that spanned several states, high winds from hurricanes spanning 50 to 600 miles, the 2011 tornadoes in the Southeastern U.S. that resulted in damage in multiple states, the June 2012 Derecho Winds that damaged sub transmission and distribution systems over an 800-mile path, and Super Storm Sandy that impacted a 1,000 mile section of the United States and interrupted power to 1.1 million customers.

Response: No.

Question 25: Section VII, Item 11.1.3

Section 11.1.3 States that it is MANDATORY for the proposed facility to be within 250 miles of the Jackson Metropolitan area. Can this Mandatory requirement be removed? Limiting to only 250 miles from Jackson Metropolitan area limits the number of qualified responses. If this cannot be removed, can the language be revised to except facilities within 400 miles from the Jackson Metropolitan area or to a location that is a direct flight from Jackson?

Response: No.

Question 26: Section VII, 11.2.5.4, VI.11.9.4

References to 24/365:

11.2.5.4 (p53) re: access to the facility by customer; 11.9.4 (p58) re: onsite engineering

Are these SLA requirements?

Response: No. The Vendor is asked to provide this information to assist the State in its evaluation of the proposed location.

Question 27: Section VII, Item 11.6

The facility we are proposing is scheduled to open in June of 2016, does this facility opening in June of 2016 meet the requirements of 11.1.6?

Response: Yes, but the facility must be available in June 2016 to accept customers.

Question 28: Section VII, Item 11.8

If we propose a price per kW all in model, then should we answer questions 11.8.1.3 through 11.8.1.5 or can we answer those questions as not applicable?

Response: The Vendor can take an exception, as explained in Section V: Proposal Exceptions to this specification and then detail how this specification can be accomplished.

Question 29: Section VII, Item 11.8, 11.9.7

11.8 - "Pricing Detail in Provider's Format" and 11.9.6 - "The Vendor must attach a matrixed list of services provided and costs associated for managed services."

Should what is asked for in these two sets of requirements be included in the Cost Submission (Section VIII) or is this something else?

Also where are costs associated with 11.9.7 to be presented?

Response: All costs must be reflected in Section VIII, Cost Information Submission form.

Question 30: Section VII, Item 11.8.1.8

11.8.1.8 - "fully loaded hourly rate" - is this the same as the Change Order Rate in Section VIII (p62)?

Response: This specification is separate from any Change Order charges as it is asking for remote hands rate for on-site services. Please refer to Item 3 of this Memorandum.

Question 31: Section VII, Item 11.9.6.4

Can you provide any background on the potential scenario posited by this question?

Response: This specification is asking how 3rd party Vendors, approved by the customer to access and work on state equipment, are allowed into work areas for long term work assignments. For example, a 3rd party Vendor may need access to the State's work area for extended lengths of time for programming or configuring state equipment.

Question 32: Section VII, Item 13.2; 9.2

Section VII, 9.2 - Is there a required format for invoice details to be submitted electronically as required by Section IV, 13.2?

Also is there a format preferred for the consistent invoice information specified in Section VII, 9.2?

Response: Invoices submitted to any customer should be in the same format so comparison of charges can be easily identified and reconciled against contract pricing. Electronic invoices can be submitted through MAGIC. For additional information on invoicing please refer to Section IV, Item 13.1.

Question 33: Section VII, Item 13.3

Will the total lifecycle cost of lowest valid proposal be calculated solely based services provided for technical requirements addressed on Page 41 of the RFP (UMMC's 12 racks of colocation and their specified power requirements as defined in the document)?

Response: Please refer Section VII, Item 13.1.4 for the evaluation criteria for the award. The State will use all costs proposed in Section VIII, Cost Information Submission and make every effort to compare pricing on a like for like basis.

Question 34: Section VIII, Cost Information Submission

In regards to grid in Section VIII, if we price an all in kW model does this need grid to be answered or would this grid apply to the statement made in 11.8.1.9 on page 57 about other state agencies utilizing services?

Response: Cost Information Submission Form must be completed in order to evaluate costs. You may take exception to the form provided and propose an alternative solution.

Question 35: Section VIII, Cost Information Submission

Would the State allow presentation of an alternate pricing structure different than the table provided (in replacement of the table)? Delivering colocation at a "U" level as opposed to half-rack or full-rack reduces the ability to provide an optimal secure environment.

Response: Please refer to Section VII, Item 10.3.6 and Item 10.3.7 concerning the Vendor providing racks verses the customer providing racks. The pricing matrix is in regard to Vendor provided racks.

Question 36: Exhibit A, Standard Contract

Confused over defined term in 2.5 "Statement of Work" and then reference in 5.2 to "Supplement" (term not defined" and later in 5.2 references to "Supplements and Contractor's Statements of Work" and "a Supplement or Statement of Work...". "Supplements" are again referenced in Article 13 but not statements of work.

Are "Statement of Work" and "Supplement" the same thing?

Response: No, A Supplement will be used for governing authorizes to purchase off the original Master Agreement. The Supplement will contain a Statement of Work that will include but is not limited to the objectives, requirements, deliverables, timetable and costs.

RFP responses are due May 3, 2016, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time).

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Patti Irgens at 601-432-8223 or via email at patti.irgens@its.ms.gov.

cc: ITS Project File Number 42227