



**Questions and Answer Set #3
Request for Proposals (RFP)
Local Telecommunications Services
RFP# 060B3490013
October 31, 2013**

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The Department of Information Technology received the following questions by e-mail for the above referenced RFP. These are answered below for all Offerors:

32. 2.13 REPORTS AND MEETINGS (Originally from Q&A Set #2)

2.13.1 Status/Service Meetings

The Contractor shall hold a monthly meeting with the State as scheduled by the Contract Manager.

For each monthly meeting, the Contractor shall submit an electronic status report, itemizing all transactions between the State and the Contractor for the prior month, the planned activities and accomplishments for the current month and any issues with a proposed solution requiring the attention of the Contract Manager or DoIT management. Attendees for these monthly meetings shall include but not be limited to Contractor Contract Administrator, Contractor Transition Project Manager, Contractor Billing Administrator, Contractor Service Manager, and Contract Manager and any designees.

- a) Can the State please elaborate on what is meant by "transaction"?
- b) Would the State be willing to submit every transaction in writing (TSR/PO or otherwise), with each transaction submitted individually for tracking and itemization purposes?

Answer: a) In reference to the monthly meeting, transactions are items that have been added to/removed from and/or closed on the status report.

b) No. Transactions will be dispositioned by the attendees at the monthly status/service meetings.

40. Section 2.9.2 Repairs/Trouble Tickets:

The Contractor shall provide a documented procedure for standard trouble reporting and escalation of all trouble tickets to the Service Manager, to include the following minimum capabilities:

Telephone numbers provided to the State of Maryland shall only be answered by departments that service the State of Maryland accounts.

Can over flow calls during peak periods be handled by pooled representatives, or should calls NOT overflow?

Answer: The State's intent was to ensure that when the phone numbers provided are called for the intended purpose, that an individual who answers the call (during normal and overflow situations) has the

ability to provide the intended service without having to transfer the call, or have the caller redial a different number.

41. Section 2.5.1.2

The transition-in shall be complete when all items identified in Section 2.5.2 have been accepted by the Contract Manager as being successfully completed.

Will the State agree to the use of an Acceptance Document?

Answer: Yes, the State will agree that the use of a mutually agreed upon acceptance document may be used.

42. Section 2.11.2 Availability of Key Personnel

The Contractor shall ensure the identified key personnel will be available to perform Contract requirements 30 days from NTP. Key personnel shall be assigned to the State of Maryland as a dedicated resource.

Can the State please further define “dedicated resource”? Is it the State’s intention that each of the Key Personnel will work full time exclusively on accounts covered by this contract? Or, would the State agree that Key Personnel may also support other State of MD accounts and/or other accounts depending on work volume?

Answer: The State’s definition of “dedicated resource” for this RFP means that one individual shall be assigned to a key personnel position. As work volume allows, key personnel may spend time in support of other accounts

43. Section 2.6.3.2

The Contractor shall obtain a Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) State and Federal criminal background check, including fingerprinting, for each individual performing services under the Contract on a high security State facility premises. This check may be performed by a public or private entity.

A CJIS Federal background check is necessary for each individual assigned to work on premises of a State high security facility and shall be completed within three (3) months of Contract award.

For purposes of the resultant contract, we would like to request CJIS Maryland and Federal Background checks be performed by DPSCS. Can the State provide an agency authorization number to process our background checks? Will the State (DoIT or DPSCS or Designee) be available as necessary to facilitate or assist with the completion of CJIS background checks?

Answer: No. Offerors should contact the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) directly if Offerors wish to obtain background checks as described in this question.

44. Section 3.3.9 Financial Capability and Statements

The Offeror shall include Financial Statements. Provide copies of the last two (2) year-end financial statements (preferably independently audited).

Instead of hard copies of Financial Statements (Annual Reports), would the State of Maryland accept a link to a website that includes Financial Statements/Annual Reports?

Answer: Yes

45. Section 1.5 Pricing for Contract/Contract Modifications

The rates for services will remain the same or lower through the base term of the contract and the two one (1) year renewal options.

The Contractor may grant a concession to the State and lower the rates at any time during the Contract by submitting revised service rates to the State CM. Rates for any contract modification shall be same or lower than the rates provided in Contractor’s tariff.

Would this also be the mechanism for the contractor to propose rate increases (Price Increase Modification)? Will the State accept future proposals from the Contractor, to include potential rate increases, decreases, upgrades or replacements to service offerings, and/or changes to service offerings?

Answer: No. The rates for services will remain the same or lower through the base term of the contract and the two one (1) year renewal options.

As to upgrades, replacements or changes to service offerings, see Section 2.7.1 of the RFP.

46. Section 2.9.1 Contractor Service Center Capabilities

The Contractor shall have Service Centers with remote maintenance capability, staffing, and security. The State reserves the right to inspect the Contractor's Service Center(s) prior to award.

a) The Contractor shall provide a 24-hour staffed service center.

b) The Contractor shall provide a dedicated Service Manager (see section 2.11.1).

c) The Contractor shall provide service telephone numbers to the State that are answered by departments servicing State of Maryland accounts.

At least one telephone number shall be provided to allow the State to cancel a service order and request service order status.

Our Service Order Fulfillment group handles service order issuance, cancellation, status, etc. Would the requirement for contact number to cancel or request status on services orders fit best in RFP section 2.7?

Answer: The last sentence of Section 2.9.1 should have read:

At least one telephone number shall be provided to allow the State to cancel a repair/trouble ticket and request repair/trouble ticket status. See Amendment #6, Item #1

47. Section 2.7.2.1 d) A service order number shall be provided at the time of request.

We provide a tracking number at time of request. Service order number is provided at the time of issuance. Will this meet the requirement?

Answer: A tracking number can be provided at the time the request is made, with a service order number being provided once the actual service request is issued, as long as either number can be used to identify the service order throughout the life of the resultant contract.

48. Section 2.13.6.1

The Contractor shall provide additional reports for managing State accounts as requested by the Contract Manager.

We must account for the cost of this work. Can the State please provide an estimate of the volume of additional reports?

Answer: The State expects the additional reports to be minimal, but the State expects the Contractor to provide these reports at no additional cost.

49. Section 2.15.1

Contractors shall submit invoicing procedure and samples with its proposal (See Section 3 Proposal Format and Submission Requirements).

Should "Contractors" be "Offerors"?

Answer: Yes. See Amendment #6, Item #2.

50. Section 2.2

Could the State please amend section 2.2 in accordance with regulatory requirements to protect CPNI? Please see the following note from our CPNI Attorney, and proposed changes to section 2.2 Account Access.

Section 2.2 Account Access Requested Amendments:

“We are required by Section 222 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (the “Act”) and applicable regulations adopted by the FCC to protect customer proprietary network information (“CPNI”) of all of its customers and prevent its unlawful disclosure. The billing records being requested are properly classified as CPNI and therefore we must have proper authorization from the billed customer to disclose this information to other customers, and assurances that the DoIT will safeguard this information. In addition, the DoIT and the customers who will be providing the DoIT access to their billing data, must provide the contacts who are authorized to receive this information to safeguard against unlawful disclosure to unauthorized persons. The language I propose incorporates these procedural safeguards, which we are required by statute to implement. As drafted, Section 2.2 is too vague in scope and does not provide the express level of authorization which is required for us to comply with the statutory requirements and applicable regulations”.

2.2 ACCOUNT ACCESS

2.2.1 Account information shall be available to both **authorized representatives of DoIT** and the Requesting/Billed Agency for each account created or transitioned under the resulting Contract **pursuant to the requirements of this section.**

2.2.1.1 As the issuing Agency for the Contract, DoIT shall have full access for all accounts created and/or transitioned under the resulting Contract in addition to the Requesting/Billed Agency that manages each individual account. **DoIT contract manager shall be the authorized representative for DoIT (“DoIT Contract Manager”).**

2.2.1.2 The Contractor shall provide account access to the appropriate ~~Requesting/Billed Agency personnel~~ **DoIT Contract Manager** for each account **in accordance with this section;** under the Contract.

(a) Contractor provides consent for access to account information by DoIT Contract Manager. Contractor agrees such information may include Customer Proprietary Network Information (“CPNI”), the disclosure of which is governed by 47 U.S.C. section 222, and applicable regulations; and

(b) Contractor and DoIT/ will take reasonable measures to limit access and disclosure of account information and CPNI accessed pursuant to this section, including but not limited to the adoption of non-disclosure requirements at least as stringent as those Contractor or DoIT takes to secure its own confidential and proprietary information;

2.2.1.3 DoIT shall have the ability to access account information from any **subject** account under the resulting Contract.

~~2.2.4 Information and/or access for DoIT and the Requesting/Billed Agency to accounts and individual phone numbers shall be possible by any mechanism available, including, but not limited to: Telephone requests, email requests, web access (including web portals), and account reports.~~

Answer: See Amendment #6, Item #4.

51. Section 2.3.2 Industry Standards, third paragraph:
A schedule will be established by the State to implement new standards or changes to existing ones. New implementations and/or changes to maintain conformance with Contractor imposed standards shall be made at no additional cost to the State.

Typically, Standards bodies control standards. When necessary, we implement changes adopted by Standards board(s). We cannot surrender the scheduling of network-wide changes to the State. Can the State please clarify what is meant by “A schedule will be established by the State to implement new standards”?

Answer: When new standards are implemented, the schedule for this implementation will be mutually agreed upon by the State and the Contractor. See Amendment #6, Item #3.

52. Contract, Attachment 2 Section 4 Consideration and Payment

“4.2 The Contractor shall submit invoices monthly for Services completed during the previous billing period (not to exceed 35 days). Each invoice must include the Contractor’s Federal Tax Identification Number which is _____.”

Can the State please clarify what is the intent of the 35 days?

Answer: The State desires timely invoices for services received. The State would like invoices to be submitted no later than 35 days after the associated services were performed.

53. From Q&A 2, Question 21:

Section 2.4.5: The Contractor shall provide a mechanism to perform an audit of services that appear on an invoice. When requested, this audit of services shall be performed at no additional charge, shall be completed within 30 days of request, and shall indicate any services billed on the invoice that have not been used within the last 90 days.

Can the State please elaborate on what is meant by ...services billed on the invoice that have “not been used” within the last 90 days?

Answer: The State wants there to be a process in place to validate we are receiving the service(s) that are being billed. As an example, there is a line on an invoice called “Station Message Detail Recording – Common Equipment”. The audit would indicate if that service is being used.

FOLLOW UP QUESTION:

We would agree to a process to validate the State is receiving services for which they are being billed. The determination of whether a service is “in use” may require significant research, and the assistance of State of MD Personnel and/or other resources that may be beyond the control of the contractor. Could the State agree to an audit plan within 30 days of request?

Answer: The State would agree to an audit plan within 30 days of the request. The maximum duration for the completion of the audit shall be an additional 90 days after acceptance of the plan, with an additional 60 days for any billing adjustments to be applied to the invoice.

54. From Q&A 2, Question 22: Section 2.4.5:

The Contractor shall provide a mechanism to perform an audit of services that appear on an invoice. When requested, this audit of services shall be performed at no additional charge, shall be completed within 30 days of request, and shall indicate any services billed on the invoice that have not been used within the last 90 days.

We’ll need to account for the expected cost to perform this work. Can the State please provide an expected frequency of requests for the audit of services?

Answer: The frequency would be related to the quantity of incorrect bills received from the Contractor.

FOLLOW UP QUESTION

We need to account for the amount of work effort required to perform this task. Some definition around the audit frequency would be helpful. Will the State ever request audit of services on all accounts? Will the State ONLY request audit of services on account suspected of containing errors?

Answer: The State’s intent is to only request audits on what would be deemed reasonable. Here are some examples of past audit requests:

- **A contractor inadvertently billed the same item, on two different accounts, incorrectly. The same contractor had billed the item correctly on many other accounts. The audit was only requested on the two accounts.**
- **A contractor had the State's contracted prices incorrectly removed from their respective billing system. All accounts were requested to be audited, rebilled and credited for the overbilling.**

55. Section 2.5.1.1

The transition-in shall take no longer than 270 days after notice to proceed (NTP).

We believe the Transition In process will require a significant work effort both on the part of the contractor and on the part of State of MD personnel. The collective Transition In project team will likely include at a minimum, the contractor's Transition Project Manager, ordering resources, billing resources, the State of Maryland Contract Manager, and State of Maryland Telecommunications Coordinators and designees as resources. The Communication Plan will be a significant factor within the Transition In Plan, and will rely on timeliness of responses and input of numerous State of MD Personnel. We also believe that conservatively the nine-month time line would require the successful transition of at least 30 accounts per day based on 22 working days per month for nine months. Based on an 8 hour work day, that equates to 3.75 accounts transitioned per hour, every hour of each business day for nine months. We do not believe this is sufficient time to execute a quality Transition In Project.

With this in mind, would the State be willing to amend this requirement to allow for a mutually agreeable Project Plan and its time line to be developed once a contractor is selected? Alternatively, would the State agree to a notice to proceed (NTP) Start date that initiates Project day 1 after a mutually agreeable Project Plan is put in place by the contractor and DoIT?

Answer: According to information provided by the incumbent vendor, there are approximately 4,243 accounts on the existing contract. Based on the number of hours as identified (1,584=8*22*9) it would translate to 2.67 accounts per hour, 30% less than stated. The assumption is that much of the transition processing will happen in large blocks that are submitted when information is verified and processing will be taking place overnight. In addition, the resultant contract will only include accounts from the Executive branch, so the transitioned number of accounts on the resultant contract will actually be less.

56. Section 2.5.2.1

Have an account name in the format of SOMD XXX "Identifier" where:

- *SOMD is the first word of the name*
- *XXX is an agency acronym that is approved by the Contract Manager*
- *The "Identifier" is defined by the Requesting/Billed Agency, with a minimum of 25 characters*
- *The acronym SOMD may only be used for the accounts under this resulting contract.*

Our invoicing allows for 25 characters per line, with 4 lines for account Name and Address/ Street information, plus 1 line for City/State/Zip (5 lines total). Will this meet the State's requirements?

Answer: Yes. Even if there is a four letter agency acronym, there would still be 15 characters for the Identifier.

57. Section 2.5.2.3

Consolidate any accounts as requested by the State at no additional charge to the State,

Record order and/or service order charges may apply for this work. Would the State consider record order charges and service order charges to be submitted with Exhibit A?

Answer: You should submit the request to add items as identified in the RFP process (see answer provided in Q&A Set #2, question #6) with Exhibit A.

Consolidation of accounts during the transition process, or corrections required due to incorrect provisioning of original orders shall be completed at no additional charge.

58. Section 2.13.1 Status/Service Meetings

The Contractor shall hold a monthly meeting with the State as scheduled by the Contract Manager. For each monthly meeting, the Contractor shall submit an electronic status report, itemizing all transactions between the State and the Contractor for the prior month, the planned activities, and accomplishments for the current month and any issues with a proposed solution requiring the attention of the Contract Manager or DoIT management.

Attendees for these monthly meetings shall include but not be limited to Contractor Contract Administrator, Contractor Transition Project Manager, Contractor Billing Administrator, Contractor Service Manager, and Contract Manager and any designees.

We do not fully understand this requirement. Can you please define “transaction”? For example do you mean all orders, TSRs, POs, phone calls, email requests, etc.? Can you please name every item that would be considered a transaction?

Answer: In reference to the monthly meeting, transactions are items that have been added to/removed from and/or closed on the status report.

59. Section 2.13.1:

We do not fully understand this requirement. Can you please further define “activities” and “accomplishments”, and site examples of each?

Answer: In reference to the monthly meeting, activities are items that have pending action (e.g. T1 between Baltimore and Annapolis has gone down three times in the last three months), accomplishments are activities that have been closed during the period (e.g. All PIC changes have been completed).

60. Please provide clarification

The RFP says there are hundreds of sites.

1) We need the site list and site locations to see if we have services we can provide at their location.

Answer: There is no comprehensive list of all site locations, some are in State owned facilities, some are in leased spaces.

2) Will the bid award be partial or the winner takes all so we might be able to participate where it makes sense.

Answer: The bid award for the specific Functional Area will be for the requested services for all locations that are a part of the resultant contract. There will be no partial award.

3) Is there an internet connection at the site locations that we can run our voice services over?

Answer: Each location will have one of the following options for the connection to the internet:

- 1. No internet access**
- 2. Dedicated connection to an ISP**
- 3. Connection to network Maryland.**

The technical response should identify the preferred method of connection to your facilities, and any minimum requirements for the internet connection to ensure optimum performance.