

RFP Questions and Clarifications Memorandum

To: Vendors Responding to RFP Number 4586 Campaign Finance and Lobbyist Registration Filing System for Mississippi Secretary of State's Office (MSOS)

From: Craig P. Orgeron, CPM, Ph.D.

Date: October 23, 2024

Subject: Responses to Questions Submitted and Clarifications to Specifications

Contact Name: Solicitations Team

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RFP Number 4586 is hereby amended as follows:

- RFP, Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 2, Procurement Project Schedule is amended as follows:**

Task	Date
First Advertisement Date for RFP	09/24/2024
Second Advertisement Date for RFP	10/01/2024
Deadline for Vendor's Written Questions	3:00 p.m. Central Time on 10/08/2024
Deadline for Questions Answered and Posted to ITS Website	10/23/2024
Open Proposals	11/07/2024 <u>11/21/2024</u>
Evaluation of Proposals	November 8, 2024-January 9, 2025 <u>11/22/2024-01/23/2025</u>
ITS Board Presentation	02/20/2025
Contract Negotiation	February 20, 2025- April 21, 2025 <u>02/21/2025- 05/05/2025</u>
Proposed Project Implementation Start-up	07/01/2025
Project Go-Live Deadline	06/30/2028 <u>07/01/2026</u>

- Attachment A, Section I General, H. Project Work Plan and Schedule, Item 53 is being modified to read:**

The proposed Project Work Plan and Schedule require MSOS approval and must include multiple environments, including, but not limited to, Development, User Testing, Production, and Training ~~and Help Desk support~~.

3. Attachment A, Section VIII, Deliverables Table, is being modified to read:

Table 3 Deliverables

<i>Deliverable/Plan Title</i>
1. Project Work Plan and Schedule (Section I, Item H)
2. RACI (Section I, Item H, #50)
3. Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) (Section III, Item F)
4. Implementation Requirements (Section IV)
a. Project Management Plan (PMP) (Section IV, Item D)
b. System Design and Development (SDD) (Section IV, Item F)
c. System Migration Plan (Section IV, Item G)
d. Data Quality and Management Plan (Section IV, Item H)
e. Data Conversion and Migration Plan (Section IV, Item I)
f. User Acceptance Testing Plan (Section IV, Item K)
g. User Training and Documentation (Section IV, Item L)
h. Change Management and Control Plan (CMP) (Section IV, Item N)
5. System manuals and project documentation – complete and all-inclusive
<i>Deliverables by Module – Corp</i>
1. Business Entity Portal Setup with Searches
2. Data Conversion
3. Business Registrations and Filings – External Portal
4. Business Registrations and Filings – Internal
5. Standard Reports and Queries
6. Corp-specific Interfaces to include B2B Annual Reports, MS Department of Revenue
<i>Deliverables by Module – Uniform Commercial Code (UCC)</i>
1. UCC Customer Filing Portal Setup with Searches
2. Data Conversion
3. Import of UCC Images
4. UCC Filings – External Portal
5. UCC Filings – Internal
6. Standard Reports
7. UCC-specific Interfaces to include B2B Filings (high-volume bulk filings)
8. UCC Customer Subscription Service
<i>Deliverables by Module - Charities</i>

1. Charities Filing Portal Setup with Searches
2. Initial Data Conversion
3. Charities Registrations and Filings — External Portal
4. Charities Registration and Filings — Internal
5. Standard Reports and Queries
6. Examinations and Investigations — shared with Charities, Securities, and Regulation & Enforcement
<i>Deliverables by Module — PreNeed and Perpetual Care Cemeteries</i>
1. PreNeed and Perpetual Care Filing Portal Setup with Searches
2. Data Conversion
3. PreNeed and Perpetual Care Registrations and Filings — External Portal
4. PreNeed and Perpetual Care Registrations and Filings — Internal
5. Standard Reports and Queries
6. Examinations and Investigations — shared with Charities, Securities, and Regulation & Enforcement
<i>Deliverables by Module — Securities</i>
1. Securities Web Page with Search
2. Electronic Import of Securities Filings and Related Payments
3. Data Conversion
4. Securities Registrations and Filings — Internal
5. Standard Reports and Queries
6. Examinations and Investigations — shared with Charities, Securities, and Regulation & Enforcement
<i>Deliverables by Module — Public Records Requests</i>
1. Public Records Filing Request Portal Setup
2. Data Conversion
3. Public Records Request — External Portal
4. Public Records Request — Internal
<i>Deliverables by Module — Revenue Receipting System</i>
1. Internal Revenue Receipting for all Modules
2. Data Conversion
3. Interface with Regions Bank
4. Interfaces with Internal Modules Databases

4. RFP, Section VIII Cost Information Submission, is hereby deleted and replaced with the attached Revised Cost Information Submission form.

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: RFP, Section VIII, Cost Information Submission: The Cost Elements per module are those listed for the Business Operations and Filing Systems. We respectfully request that the State replace this section with the cost elements for the Campaign Finance and Lobbyist Registration Filing System.

Response: See Amendments 3 and 4 above.

Question 2: RFP, Section VIII, Cost Information Submission: this section does not appear to be aligned to the rest of the RFP. Please clarify how the following sections on pages 34-38 are relevant?

- a. Deliverables by Module – Corp,
- b. Deliverables by Module – Uniform Commercial Code (UCC),
- c. Deliverables by Module – Charities,
- d. Deliverables by Module – PreNeed and Perpetual Care Cemeteries,
- e. Deliverables by Module – Securities
- f. Deliverables by Module – Public Records Requests
- g. Deliverables by Module – Revenue Receipting System
- h. License Per User Cost Over 200

Response: See Amendments 3 and 4 above.

Question 3: RFP, Exhibit A: Is this left blank intentionally?

Response: Yes.

Question 4: Attachment A, Item 29: “The Vendor must propose a single release and implementation to replace the current filing system with limited interruption to service/business operations. Any interruption to current operations must be approved by MSOS and conducted in a way to prevent loss of service.”

Question: Single release is in contrast to modern best practices (agile). Would the state accept a staggered (per module) release model to minimize downtime and speed availability of a solution?

Response: The State requires a single release and implementation for the project.

Question 5: Attachment A, Item 30: “The proposed solution must be compatible with current Microsoft products available through the MSOS Enterprise Agreement. These include, but are not limited to, Microsoft Office 365, SharePoint, Azure, etc.”

Question: Does the state have specific ways they envision the solution to interact with SharePoint, Office 365, and Azure?

Response: **The solution should be compatible with the common features and functionalities of SharePoint, Office 365, and Azure, in reference to each common use.**

Question 6: Attachment A, Item 34: **“MANDATORY:** The Vendor must be in the business of providing vendor-hosted Election Campaign Finance and Lobbyist filing services solutions of similar size, scope, and complexity. Vendor references submitted in RFP Section IX; References must substantiate this experience.”

Question: Across the nation, <Vendor> provides solutions for filers of all sizes, scopes and complexities. While our nationwide experience with the vast array of laws, regulations, and filing technology and knowledge is unmatched, we have not yet deployed a solution for a state agency. Does <Vendor’s> long and acclaimed history of providing outstanding filing solutions to committees of all types, sizes, levels of complexity, and its vast experience working with the wide range of filing regulations, technologies across the nation qualify us to bid on this contract?

Response: **The requirement does not mandate the Vendor have deployed a system at State level, but the Vendor must have a solution of similar size, scope, and complexity deployed and working for 3 years. There is no requirement for the level of government or sector.**

Question 7: Attachment A, Item 42: Will the state be open to alternative staffing models with different personnel that meet the on-site activities? Would the State consider waiving the 50% on site requirement for key personnel, to allow greater involvement by out of state staff who are subject matter experts and industry leaders but who are unable to be on site that often? This would also help reduce travel and overall project costs.

Response: **No, the State will NOT consider alternative staffing models as the State has identified key personnel that would be relevant and necessary to be onsite during, especially during key periods as outlined in the requirements, for the project’s success.**

Question 8: Attachment A, Item 53 and 55: #53 and #55 conflict in terms of the number of environments specified. Please clarify the number and purpose of all environments desired for this RFP.

Response: **Item 55 is the correct number and description for system environments. See Amendment 2 above.**

Question 9: Attachment A, Item 109: “The solution must provide the MSOS staff administrative privileges as the client to troubleshoot issues. (Use dates submitted on reports to create when reports are filed late and to pull information from reports to make it searchable within the system.)”

Question: Please clarify what is meant here. The parenthetical phrase appears unrelated to the rest of this item. Should this be a separate item?

Response: MSOS staff will need to see activity on the Client Lobbyist/Agency user as well as the Lobbyist user. The MSOS staff will need to see system activity or actions by date, time, and action type.

Question 10: Attachment A, Item 167: This appears to contradict with Attachment C that provides two different options for integration: DirectConnect & CommonCheckout. If CommonCheckout is used and the Vendor does not collect the credit card or banking information, is PCI certification needed?

Response: Item 167 is a blanket requirement for PCI standards. That being said, the awarded Vendor will be required to use the State's DFA-approved credit card processor, which is Tyler Technologies. This was stated in Items 168-174. The Vendor will not be expected to collect or store the credit card information.

Question 11: Attachment A, Item 167: If we use a PCI certified payment vendor and we do not collect or store payment data in our own system, would we still be required to obtain a PCI certification?

Response: Item 167 is a blanket requirement for PCI standards. That being said, the awarded Vendor will be required to use the State's DFA-approved credit card processor, which is Tyler Technologies. This was stated in Items 168-174. The Vendor will not be expected to collect or store the credit card information.

Question 12: Attachment A, Item 184: "The solution must allow administrative changes to a record without updating the system transaction date and showing that the change was an administrative correction."

Question: Can the state clarify the specific use case and need here?

Response: There are instances when someone has filed documents and reports before a deadline, and the State needs to make a corrective change to the record, but not the underlying information and the original submission dates need to be maintained. For instance, if it is discovered that a page to a report is missing, we would amend the report to add the missing page but would still need for the submissions dates and information to remain intact as originally submitted.

Question 13: Attachment A, Item 185: Can the state provide more information about the MSOS Closeout Financial System, and the interfaces needed with it?

Response: The Closeout Financial System is an internal application used to close accounts for all the agency's different applications that different divisions utilize. This is a standard file transfer process by export and import. File format and data mapping are all that would be required.

Question 14: Attachment A, Item 232: Does the state have detailed documentation for the table structures beyond what is provided in Attachment D?

Response: The State's documentation was provided in the RFP.

Question 15: Attachment A, Item 332: Are these deliverables for a different RFP?

Response: See Amendments 3 and 4 above.

Question 16: In Reference to RFP No. 4586 – Campaign Finance and Lobbyist Registration – Filing System, we are requesting a two-week Extension of the RFP response submission date. We request that the new submission date be November 22, 2024. This product is for the Elections Division, with the national importance of the 2024 General election, including the President, on Nov 5, 2024, the Mississippi elections division, and our resources will be focused on supporting that election. If the submission date is extended to November 22nd, per the RFP published schedule, we request that the date of your responses to our questions remain the same as in the RFP on October 23, 2024.

Response: See Amendment 1 above.

Question 17: Attachment A, Item 22: Will the vendor be able to access source code and the database of the existing system during implementation to ensure that accurate logics are being transported to the new system?

Response: The State will allow access to the source code and the database to ensure the project's success. The Vendor will be constrained by the confidentiality clause in the executed contract.

Question 18: Attachment A, Item 31: What will be the peak user load for which the system should be sized? We understand the total system users today is 7,639. Can you please provide more information on the total number of active Campaign Finance Accounts by account type such as Candidates, Candidate Committees, Organizations, PAC's, etc., and total number of active Lobbyist accounts?

Response: We are unable to provide a breakdown of the total number by account type due to current system limitations; however, during our annual reporting cycle in January (January 1, 2024 – January 31, 2024), our peak submissions for current users in a single day were 1,100. Due to our system's limitations, we cannot determine the number of users utilizing the system concurrently.

Question 19: Attachment A, Item 57: Can we assume application's registered end users (Campaign Finance Filers and Lobbyist) will login to the system to file their information? Then, MSOS users will oversee and administer the functions and the application, and if needed, upload information to a Campaign Finance/Lobbyist account? If this is the case, the total number of system users will be about 7,639 users as listed in Page 7 section I E. 31, plus 10 MSOS state users.

Response: Yes, the application's registered end users will log in to the system to file their information. Yes, MSOS users will oversee and administer the application's functions. Currently, we do not provide access to users from municipalities, and counties in the system. With the new system and the inclusion of users from counties and municipalities, the number of potential users will increase to approximately 36,000.

Question 20: Attachment A, Item 68: Many of the commonly used browsers such as Chrome offer spell check and grammar check. Is it acceptable that spell check, and grammar check be done by the client's browser rather than the application governing these?

Response: **Yes, utilizing the client's browser spell-check functionality is acceptable.**

Question 21: Attachment A, Item 124 and 128: Could you please elaborate more on what kind of workflow graphics with the drag-and-drop feature that the application needs to generate?

Response: **This is about the System's UI for workflow configuration. This is done by dragging and dropping workflow objects into a workflow UI and configuring the workflow process's conditions. Vendors should state how Workflows are configured in their proposed system if Object Drag & Drop is not a functional feature.**

Question 22: Attachment A, Section II, H. Document Manager: Does this section need to cater to Campaign Finance and Lobbying system users who file paper documents rather than using the online system? Will using Excel based data import tools be considered for end users who prefer to upload data instead of using the application to enter their data?

Response: **Yes, Excel import tools will be considered, and the proposed system must also allow for scanning and uploading or other submission methods for paper filings**

Question 23: Attachment A, Item 131: Is it acceptable for the user to upload scanned documents rather than having direct scanning access from the web browser?

For MSOS admin users who will be scanning documents for filers, is it acceptable to have a separate application that is not browser based (presented through CITRIX) that can be utilized to scan those documents?

Response: **Yes and Yes.**

Question 24: Attachment A, Item 137: Is it acceptable that user, outside of the application, modifies the draft document by downloading the "current version" and uploading the "next version" after the modification is done?

Response: **Yes, but we would like the ability to version rather than simply overwrite the previous document.**

Question 25: Attachment A, Item 169: Can we assume we interface with State's Credit Card processor where the card processor will store relevant credit card information, process payments, and transfer the approval codes or relevant information back to our system?

Response: **Yes, Vendor will interface with Tyler Technologies' payment processor. Credit Card payment will go through Tyler Technologies. Credit Card information will NOT be collected or stored.**

Question 26: Attachment A, Item 25: This requirement could potentially expose Vendors to unexpected, costly updates for items that are not represented in the RFP solicitation. Would the State consider setting some parameters around the requirement to allow Vendors a more certain cost outcome for the implementation?

Response: **Mississippi Campaign Finance laws and regulations, along with Lobbying reporting laws and regulations, are set by the Mississippi Legislature, and the Secretary of State's systems must comply with any changes. If a change to the system is required in accordance with Mississippi law and a cost would be incurred, the State would enact the Change Order Procedure defined in the Standard Contract.**

Question 27: Attachment A, Items 25 and 101e : Can the State please confirm that Vendors are to propose a campaign finance and lobbyist filing solution only, with no election night reporting included?

Response: **Confirmed.**

Question 28: Attachment A, Item 30: This requirement states that the system must be compatible with Microsoft Azure, does this require that the solution be hosted via Azure, or would the State be open to AWS hosting?

Response: **Compatibility refers to features and functionalities of Microsoft Azure, such as SSO, MFA, and the ability to integrate with tools such as PowerBI. The solution's hosting is at the vendor's discretion, and the state only requests that data reside within the United States.**

Question 29: Attachment A, Item 32 a & b: Both of these requirements refer to government cloud, is there flexibility to host in a FedRAMP compliant environment in lieu of GovCloud specifically?

Response: **The State is flexible on proposals for hosting but does not require FedRAMP compliance. Recommendations for hosting are at the discretion of the Vendor in their proposal.**

Question 30: Attachment A, Item 32c: Can the State please specify the required Professional Services? For example, is the expectation that the vendor will provide Tier 1, 2, 3, and 4 help desks?

Response: **The Vendor is expected to provide support services to address and correct systems issues related to its services (i.e., Tier 3 & 4). Help Desk services provided to public end users will be the responsibility of the Secretary of State's Office (i.e., Tier 1 & 2).**

Question 31: Attachment A, Items 33 and 34 : Are Vendors required to have a system that has been operational for at least six (6) months at the time of proposal submission?

Response: **The Vendor must have a working solution deployed currently in a production environment and have been providing such solutions for at least three (3) years.**

Question 32: Attachment A, Item 42: Is the requirement for the specified key personnel to be available on site at least 50% of the time flexible as long as the State has direct access to these resources 50% of the time?

Response: **No, the State will NOT consider alternative staffing models as the State has identified key personnel that would be relevant and necessary to be onsite during, especially during key periods as outlined in the requirements, for the project's success.**

Question 33: Attachment A, Item 56: Does that state have a preferred MFA solution in mind or is this open to the Vendor to recommend the MFA solution?

Response: **The MFA solution must be compatible with Microsoft Azure MFA and other popular MFA solutions (e.g., Okta). The State would prefer to refrain from using MFA options such as SMS.**

Question 34: Attachment A, Item 74: Does the State plan to build and manage all emails generated by the system? If there is also need for the mailing of physical pieces of mail, can the State please outline the desired associated functionality? For example, will mail merge functionality be needed, or printing and mailing of documents?

Response: **The State assumes this question is actually referring to Item 73. No, the State will not be managing emails generated by the system. However, the state wants mail merge functionality along with the printing or mailing of documents.**

Question 35: Attachment A, Item 90: Can Vendors assume that mobile access will only be required for the public facing portion of the system and not the back office portion?

Response: **Yes, the solution should be both mobile friendly and mobile accessible for the public-facing portion of the system. Being mobile accessible for the back-office portion of the system is not required.**

Question 36: Attachment A, Item 104: Can the State expand on the intended use for certificate numbers?

Response: **A certificate number is a unique ID generated for a lobbyist when registering a lobbyist client. Each certificate number is unique to the specific lobbyist/lobbyist client relationship and is to be included on reports as confirmation of the correct filing of reports for the appropriate lobbyist client.**

Question 37: Attachment A, Item 104: Can the State expand on the need for invoices and what those would contain?

Response: **Invoices are needed for fines and penalties due to late filing and registration fees for Lobbyists.**

Question 38: Attachment A, Item 104: Can the State confirm if there is a preferred vendor to which to connect to validate addresses?

Response: There is no preferred Vendor.

Question 39: Attachment A, Item 108: Can the State please confirm that a report is considered a consolidated document and required to include all the reported finances?

Response: Confirmed.

Question 40: Attachment A, Item 126 and 127: Is it the intent of the State to have the ability to clone current workflows to create additional workflows as needed? Can the State be more specific about the built-in administrative tools needed?

Response: Yes, the State wants to be able to edit, create, duplicate, and delete workflows and workflow processes without the Vendor's assistance.

Question 41: Attachment A, Item 129: Will the State be able to provide a list of the defined workflows common to MSOS?

Response: Yes. This will be discussed and shared after the procurement is awarded and the project begins.

Question 42: Attachment A, Item 131: Can the State describe what functionality should be included in document manipulation and editing and the expected overall workflow for the DMS functionality?

Response: The State may need to file stamp documents electronically. Versioning control as replacement documents are provided and uploaded. Ability to track access and change management of documents. Ability to add tags and metadata to documents to help organize and find them.

Question 43: Attachment A, Item 132: Can the State provide the use case(s) for the bulk scanning functionality and the systematic association of those documents to records?

Response: A large number of paper filings will need to be brought into the system. This feature will be key to making this a more efficient task.

Question 44: Attachment A, Item 134: Can the State provide the expected upper limit for file sizes that must be accepted by the system?

Response: The average file size will be between 5 MB and 15 MB per file; however, during bulk uploads, the total file size for all uploads can exceed 100 MB. The number of bulk uploads can vary; however, during campaign finance deadlines for major election periods (i.e., gubernatorial election years), there can be a number of bulk uploads occurring simultaneously.

Question 45: Attachment A, Item 147: Can the State please confirm the number of reports needed? Can the State also describe the expected workflow for the creation of reporting templates?

Response: There are 18 different types of Campaign Finance Reports, and the number required during any given year will fluctuate. There are also eight different types of Lobbying Reports. The State is open to various proposed workflows for creating reporting templates.

Question 46: Attachment A, Item 223: Is the state open to an Agile approach rather than the prescribed waterfall approach?

Response: The State requires a single release and implementation for the project.

Question 47: Attachment A, Item 253: Can the State confirm the scope of the online tutorials is a step-by-step process guide for various steps of processes versus video snippets that illustrate various steps of the processes?

Response: The State is open to vendor proposals on how they would recommend satisfying this requirement. The State does not currently have a set preference.

Question 48: RFP, Section VIII, Cost Information Submission: The Cost Information Sheet provided does not reflect the Campaign Finance & Lobbyist Registration modules. Can an updated cost document be provided?

Response: See Amendment 4 above.

Question 49: Attachment A, Item 332: The deliverables appear to be for Business Services and not Campaign Finance & Lobbyist Registration. Can they be updated to reflect the appropriate deliverables?

Response: See Amendment 3 above.

Question 50: Attachment A, Item 79: Can the state provide an example of a conflict?

Response: An example would be that the filing period does not match the entered or uploaded information.

Question 51: Attachment C: If a vendor uses CommonCheckout (Option 1), does this eliminate/reduce the penalties in Mississippi Department of Information Technology Requirement 12: Breach Notification and Recovery

Response: Credit Card payment will go through Tyler Technologies. Credit Card information will NOT be collected or stored. This was stated in Items 168-174.

RFP responses are due November 21, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time).

If you have any questions about the information or if we can be of further assistance, please email the Solicitations Team at RFP@its.ms.gov.

cc: ITS Project File Number 47844

Attachment: Revised Cost Information Submission