

RFP Questions and Clarifications Memorandum

To: Vendors Responding to RFP Number 5000 for the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS)

From: Craig P. Orgeron, Ph.D.

Date: September 11, 2017

Subject: Responses to Questions Submitted and Clarifications to Specifications

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RFP Number 5000 is hereby amended as follows:

1. Section IV Legal and Contractual Information, Item 37, second paragraph is being modified to read:

If a Performance Bond/Irrevocable Bank Letter of Credit is required, the Vendor must procure and submit to ITS with the executed contract, (a) a performance bond from a reliable surety company authorized to do business in the State of Mississippi or (b) an irrevocable bank letter of credit that is acceptable to the State. The Performance Bond or the Irrevocable Letter of Credit shall be for the total amount of the contract or an amount mutually agreed upon by the State and the successful Vendor and shall be payable to Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services. No contract resulting from this RFP will be valid until the required Performance Bond or Irrevocable Bank Letter of Credit has been received and found to be in proper form and amount. The Vendor agrees that the State has the right to request payment for a partial amount or the full amount of the Irrevocable Letter of Credit/Performance bond should the products/services being procured hereunder not be provided in a manner consistent with this RFP and the Vendor's proposal by the delivery dates agreed upon by the parties. The State may demand payment by contacting the bank issuing the letter of credit or the bonding company issuing the performance bond and making a written request for full or partial payment. The issuing bank/bonding company is required to honor any demand for payment from the State within ~~fifteen (15)~~ seven (7) days of notification. The letter of credit/performance bond shall cover the entire contract period, with the exception of post-warranty maintenance and support, and shall not be released until final acceptance of all products and deliverables required herein or until the warranty period, if any, has expired, whichever occurs last. If applicable, and at the State's sole discretion, the State may, at any time during the warranty period, review Vendor's performance and performance of the

products/services delivered and determine that the letter of credit/performance bond may be reduced or released prior to expiration of the full warranty period.

2. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 5.1.19 is being added:

5.1.19 Vendor must provide a single point of contact for all services in a given category. In addition, if a Vendor is awarded multiple categories of this RFP, Vendor must provide a single point of contact for all services in all awarded categories.

3. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 9.4.3 is being modified to read:

9.4.3 Bills submitted to the State of Mississippi for payment will be paid forty-five days (45) after receipt of said bill; ~~however, in the event that payment is not made within 45 days, the State will not pay any late fees.~~

4. Attachment A, Category I- Voice and Data Network and Attachment A, Category II- Enterprise Internet are hereby revised.

Category I:

- Added requirements 3.2.1.15 and subsections
- Added P2P T1 Inventory Costs to the Cost Submission tab
- Updated addresses on the P2P T1 tab

Category II:

- Added requirement 3.16.1.2.6

Each Vendor responding to these sections should submit the enclosed Revised Attachment A, Category I- Voice and Data Network and/or Attachment A, Category II- Enterprise Internet when responding to the RFP.

5. Attachment A, Category XI Managed VPN, Item 1.5 is being modified to read:

1.5	The partnership between the State and the awarded vendor is linked through the dedicated local account team. In order to ensure a strong partnership and eliminate the chance of misunderstanding the State's goals, all contact with the State's various logical entities must be done through the dedicated local account team. Under no circumstance should an authorized reseller contact a logical entity eligible to procure services under this agreement.
1.5 1.6	Vendor must designate a named Account Manager, responsible for overall account management including acting as primary point of contact, responding to information requests regarding State services under contract, coordinating with the service provider's subcontractors or partners to ensure seamless delivery of contracted services, and serving as the corporate liaison for State issues. Additionally, vendor must designate a named backup Account Manager, to fulfill Account Manager's duties in his/her absence.
1.5 1.7	The Vendor must identify the executive and professional personnel who will be assigned to the managed remote access service and state their duties and responsibilities.

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: Not counting consumer internet, can you please confirm there will only be one (1) vendor awarded for all ten (10) sections?

Response: **With the exception of Category IV Consumer Internet, each category will be awarded on its own. Each of the 10 categories could potentially be awarded to a different Vendor based on scoring; however, a single Vendor could win multiple or all categories.**

Question 2: If State of Mississippi requires a Tier 1 provider for the bulk of the RFP, and stated it's all or nothing awarded, would we be required to answer the RFP in its entirety?

Response: **Vendors are only required to respond to categories of the RFP for which they are proposing services. The language regarding Tier 1 is only in reference to internet access and only applies to two categories:**

- **Category II - Enterprise Internet - Specification 3.1**
- **Category X - Mission - Specification 3.7.1**

Question 3: Can you please provide locations of where all cable modems / non-fiber would be needed?

Response: **No. ITS does not have access to inventory that is not purchased off of the existing contract. The various logical entities work directly with their local providers to acquire services that are not offered on the existing State Master Contract.**

Question 4: Are the publicly listed locations for the State of Mississippi government and local governments all-inclusive of the base pricing and service requirements or does the state have a listing of undisclosed locations that are not publicly listed that bidders will be required to support?

Response: **With the exception of Category IV Consumer Internet, all service locations are listed in the inventory tabs of the different categories. There could potentially be instances where a site has moved or new service was installed since the inventory was generated for the RFP; however, these instances should be few and the new locations would be in the same general area as the previous location.**

Question 5: Is there a list of all the rate centers that needed to be served? If so, can this information provided or published by the state?

Response: **The State of Mississippi's existing rate center/exchange across all of the State of Mississippi can be found at the following public locations:**

- **The Guidebook to existing rate center and exchange information within the State of Mississippi:** <http://cpr.att.com/pdf/ms/g003.pdf>. See sections A3.6.2 and A3.7.1, beginning at page 8
- **External websites to provide information on rate centers, NPA/NXX, and exchanges within the State of Mississippi:** <https://www.telcodata.us/search-area-code-exchange-by-company-state> and <https://www.area-codes.com/>

The various NPA-NXX information can be found in Attachment B.

Question 6: The RFP states in Section II, Item 9.1 that "Technical responses and cost submissions must be submitted in Excel format." In Section III, Item 18, the State asks for Additional Information to be included, and goes on to say to include product/services information. Is it the States intent that files provided in Excel should be submitted with the response in Excel? Is it appropriate to provide additional Technical Response materials, which would include the product /services information, in an Adobe pdf or word format?

Response: **Responses to the Category spreadsheets should be provided within the spreadsheet in Excel format and submitted in the Vendor's proposal and as an electronic copy. However, supplementary information can be provided in PDF, Word, or Excel formats. Responses in the spreadsheets should make reference to the supplementary information (including file names for the electronic copy).**

Question 7: Asking to confirm Section III and its intent. Vendors can bid individual sites based on our coverage areas with Type 1 facilities or opt to offer resold service assuming we identify as much in our response.

Response: **Yes, a Vendor can propose its own facility-based services and services it will deliver as a reseller. Services delivered as a reseller must be clearly identified in your response.**

Question 8: In Section III, Item 8 it states that the State has the right to make multiple awards. Will there be multiple awards for each LOT/Category? At the Vendor Conference it was stated there would only be one vendor awarded for each LOT/Category except for Consumer Internet. Please confirm how many vendors will be awarded each LOT/Category?

Response: **With the exception of Category IV Consumer Internet, each category will be awarded on its own. Each of the 10 categories could potentially be awarded to a different vendor based on scoring; however, a single vendor could win multiple categories.**

Question 9: Please confirm that the information provided to the State pursuant to this section will be treated as Vendor's proprietary and confidential information under the Mississippi Public Records Act and other applicable law.

Response: **Any disclosure of proposal information will be made in compliance with the ITS Public Records Procedure established in accordance with the Mississippi Public Records Act. Please see Section IV Legal and**

Contractual Information, Item 34 of the RFP for more information regarding the Public Records Act.

Question 10: Vendor requests that the State define “professional services” as used in Section III, Item 13 of the RFP. Vendor requests that the definition make clear that professional services do not include the core telecommunications or maintenance services solicited in the RFP.

Response: **Professional Services, as defined in this section, applies to members of the local/state account team as defined in the various categories of the RFP.**

Question 11: The term length of the contract award mentioned in Section III Vendor Information, Item 13.5 could place unintended career inflexibility on assigned personnel. Would the State consider adding the following language?

“Should personnel assigned to the project transition into a different internal position, they must train their replacement and must be available to their replacement on an advisory basis for a minimum of 90 days after that responsibility officially transitions. Additionally, replacement personnel must meet or exceed the entering qualifications of the personnel being replaced.”

Response: **The State would like to clarify that personnel assignment is not intended to limit career flexibility. Each category of the RFP contains a specification that states, "Changes to the account team must be submitted in writing to the State for approval at least 14 calendar days prior to the change taking effect. The State reserves the right to request detailed resume information for the replacement individual and reject the proposed team member if he/she does not meet the State’s approval."**

Question 12: Under this RFP there are requirements for vendor managed services that include vendor owned and managed assets. Does the possibility of the State electing to exercise acquisition of products from existing contracts, include requiring a provider to integrate non-standard components into their managed service offerings? If yes, would the State consider language to allow the vendor the opportunity to evaluate the impact of this decision for any unreasonable impact to ongoing management or support costs of the proposed services, including the ability to re-price services?

Response: **No. Vendors are responsible for choosing and purchasing any managed service equipment as long as this equipment conforms to specifications laid out in the various RFP categories.**

Question 13: The order of precedence referenced in Section IV Legal and Contractual Information, Item 4 and contained in Item 3 conflicts with Article 29 of Exhibit A. Please clarify which precedent the State is requesting.

Response: **The items listed in Section IV, Item 4 show the order of precedence of evaluations. For example, items stated in written correspondence after the Vendor has submitted a proposal will take precedence over the original**

proposal response. Exhibit A, Article 29 shows the order of precedence of the contract.

Question 14: Will the State agree to negotiate a cap on the limitation of liability in a final negotiated agreement?

Response: **See Exhibit A, Article 38 “Liability Issues” for language the State accepts.**

Question 15: Is it the State’s position that it will not pay late charges/interest (Section IV.7.4 and Section VII.9.4.3) on late payments as allowed under Miss. Code Ann. §31-7-305 and specifically referenced in Section IV.7.8?

Response: **In the event payment of undisputed amounts is not made within 45 days after receipt of the invoice and receipt, inspection, and approval of the goods and services, Miss. Code Ann. §31-7-305 provides that the public body shall be liable for interest at a rate of 1½% per month on the unpaid balance from the expiration of such 45 day period until such time as payment is made. Please see Amendment 3 to revise Section VII, Item 9.4.3.**

Question 16: Please confirm that the State will remain liable for all other federal taxes and fees that could apply, including Universal Service Fund, 911, etc.

Response: **Yes, the State will remain liable except for taxes and fees that the State is exempt from paying.**

Question 17: Miss. Code Ann. §31-7-309 requires a Public Body to pay vendor’s attorney’s fees related to the collection of interest/late fees as identified in Section IV, Item 7.8. Please clarify how the limitation requested in this section would apply.

Response: **Mississippi Code Ann. §31-7-309 speaks for itself.**

Question 18: Please provide a list of State agencies that use MAGIC and the number of State agencies that don't.

Response: **All State agencies use MAGIC. Public libraries, community colleges, K-12 schools, local governing bodies and Institutions of Higher Learning do not use MAGIC.**

Question 19: Vendor requests that the State define “subcontractor”. Does the State agree the term does not include the following categories, which are often not regarded as subcontractors?

(i) A supplier that is selling to Vendor software or equipment in the ordinary course of business under a pre-existing master agreement and not customizing its offer or product specifically for the State;

(ii) A corporate affiliate of the Vendor that is either operating as a shared service affiliate or providing service on behalf of the Vendor in the ordinary course of business; and

(iii) A contractor or supplier who provides services to, or performs work on, shared public and private networks (e.g. local access providers) and/or the back office environments that Vendor uses to provide services to multiple customers.

Response: **The State declines to define subcontractor any further than it already has in the applicable articles of the Standard Contract included in the RFP.**

Question 20: Please confirm that notwithstanding ITS's right to attempt to resolve any contractual agreements, ITS is not seeking the authority to bind the Vendor to any settlement.

Response: **If a dispute affecting the State's contract arises between the Vendor and its subcontractor, the State reserves the right to enter into discussions with the Vendor and its subcontractor in an attempt to resolve that disagreement. See Exhibit A, Article 23 "Disputes".**

Question 21: In a managed service governed by SLAs, it is common for a Vendor to repurpose equipment that is the vendor's asset, has not reached end of life, and remains viable for the service to be rendered. However, this equipment could be classified as used equipment. Would the State consider a change to the language Section IV, Item 22 such as follows: "For all RFPs requiring equipment, the Vendor must furnish only new equipment in response to ITS specifications, unless an explicit requirement for used equipment is otherwise specified or in the case of a managed service where the equipment is the Vendors asset."

Response: **This requirement does not apply to equipment provided as part of a managed service offering.**

Question 22: Please confirm that the information provided to the State in this proposal that is proprietary and confidential information will be treated as such under the Mississippi Public Records Act and other applicable law.

Response: **See response to Question 9.**

Question 23: How does the Vendor determine the dollar amount required for the performance bond or irrevocable bank letter of credit for each applicable attachment? Usually, a percentage of the total amount is the vendor's cost to list in the Cost Information Submission Form.

Response: **Section IV Legal and Contractual Information, Item 37 states that the price of a performance bond should be for the total amount of one year of service for any given category. The Vendor shall include the cost of this performance bond in their Cost Information Submission for each category in which they are responding.**

Question 24: Please clarify whether the issuing bank/bonding company is required to honor a demand for payment within fifteen (15) days as stated in Section IV, Item 37 or seven (7) business days as stated in Article 6 of Exhibit A, Standard Contract.

Response: **The correct number of days is seven (7). See Amendment 1 for revision.**

Question 25: This requirement states that the Vendor must include the price for a performance bond or irrevocable letter of credit with its proposal. Each category under Attachment A has a placeholder in the cost submission for a performance bond. In order to properly respond to this requirement with accurate Bond/LOC pricing,

could the State provide an estimated value for each category of service listed in Attachment A?

Response: See response to Question 23.

Question 26: Please specify what would trigger ITS's ability to draw on the Letter of Credit.

Response: The State reserves the right to draw on the Letter of Credit in partial amounts or the full amount if the products/services being procured are not being provided in a manner consistent with the RFP and the Vendor's proposal by the delivery dates agreed upon by both parties. The State may also claim against the Letter of Credit if the contract is terminated due to the Vendor's failure to comply with its terms.

Question 27: Can the State please provide an example of how the cost factor for performance bonds are to be provided in Attachment A were applicable?

Response: See response to Question 23.

Question 28: Does the State require specific State of Mississippi agency certification to do business or does general US federal government charters and standard business incorporation meet the state's minimum compliance?

Response: Yes. The Vendor must receive certification of authority through the Mississippi Secretary of State's office in order to do business with the State.

Question 29: Regarding the requested documentation of E-Verify compliance, does production of the vendor's E-Verify assigned company number suffice for this documentation? If not, what other specific documentation does the State expect to be produced?

Response: The State will accept the E-Verify number or any documentation containing the necessary information for proof of E-Verify compliance.

Question 30: Despite the State's instruction in Section VII, Item 2.1, will the State allow vendors to provide exceptions with alternative responses with explanation to the Mandatory Requirements in the Technical Requirements Matrices (Attachment As)?

Response: No, the State will immediately disqualify Vendors for any Mandatory requirement that they respond with "Exception".

Question 31: The RFP timelines have extremely aggressive due dates for both Q&A and RFP delivery deadline for the multiple services and the amount of information being evaluated. Can these deadlines be extended to accommodate a longer time period to accurately evaluate and price these services? A suggestion would be an additional two weeks on the Q&A and additional Month for RFP delivery.

Response: No, the State will not extend the deadline for Q&A or RFP responses.

Question 32: Due to the extent and the complexity of the information requested over the multiple services, we respectfully ask for a three week extension of the due date to allow the time to appropriately develop a solution and address the compliance items in the RFP.

Response: **The State is not providing an extension at this time.**

Question 33: Please explain in more detail what a service term is. Is the term 8 years? What if underlying costs to provide the services go up can prices be adjusted accordingly?

Response: **The initial term is 8 years. Prices cannot increase over the initial term of the contract or during any of the extension periods.**

Question 34: Does ITS intend for entities that are eligible, but not required to purchase services from the contracts resulting from this RFP, to purchase those services from Vendor without committing to any specific term (i.e., length of time) of service?

Response: **Yes.**

Question 35: Throughout the RFP, references are made to subcontractors without defining such term. This creates confusion as to what constitutes a subcontractor for purposes of responding to the RFP. For example, telecommunications are handled by multiple service providers through the chain of communication. It is presumed that they would fall outside of what is contemplated as a subcontractor for purposes of the RFP. In order to more accurately respond to the State's request, can the State provide a more specific definition of what constitutes a subcontractor for purposes of the RFP?

Response: **See the response to Question 19.**

Question 36: Please clarify here as to what is considered non-public data and how that data is differentiated or classified in order for the vendor to determine what data will be encrypted for transit?

Response: **Non-public data is information that the State has determined will not be publicly available. Public data is information that the State has a reasonable basis to believe is lawfully and publicly available from sources such as public records and government-required disclosures.**

Question 37: Please clarify that the scope of this audit conformance would only incorporate systems and data center resources required to support the services propose in response to this RFP.

Response: **The scope of an audit encompasses all systems and data center resources that directly or indirectly support an awarded service/solution.**

Question 38: If there is a request for an ad hoc price redetermination or shortened standard interval please indicate the amount of time provided to respond.

Response: **The State would typically allow 45 calendar days for the awarded Vendor to respond to the price redetermination request. This length of time may be negotiated based on the scope of prices/services being requested.**

Question 39: Please clarify/confirm that the retroactive application of the savings will only be retroactive to the beginning of the new interval and not to the beginning of the contract.

Response: **That is correct.**

Question 40: If there is a charge that is to be divided between two entities on a percentage split, how is this to be reflected on the invoices? Should there be a reference or notation in the invoice to indicate that this is a split charge?

Response: **Yes. Each entity using the split service should receive an individual invoice and each invoice should note that it is a split charge and indicate the details on how the charge is split. Vendor must detail if their billing system has this ability. ITS will work with the awarded Vendor(s) to formally define the bill format (if applicable).**

Question 41: Please confirm that the State does not want to see discounts on the invoice and all charges should reflect the quoted charges in the contract.

Response: **Yes, the State requires the invoice to reflect the contract rate.**

Question 42: With regards to raw data provided to the state, will there be a standard dataset format for all entities or will they each want a different set of data. Example: DEQ ask for: Account, Department, Service, Charge. DHS ask for: Account, Service, Quantity, Rate, Charge.

Response: **Yes, ITS will negotiate a single format that all entities purchasing off of the contract must use.**

Question 43: Please describe what you want the audit results to reflect for reporting purposes. Also, how and to whom at the State should this audit be delivered?

Response: **Content of the reports will be negotiated on a per category basis upon award. A copy of the report should be delivered to ITS and also the logical entity (i.e., school, library, or city/county) that is being audited.**

Question 44: This requirement says audit results must be provided monthly, but Section VII, Item 9.5.4 specifies an annual audit. Please clarify if this is an annual requirement or a monthly requirement?

Response: **Audits must be performed on each logical entity on an annual basis. The State realizes that with the volume of services that could be purchased off of the contract, the Vendor may audit segments of the contract on a monthly basis and provide monthly reports. If the Vendor chooses to audit everything all at once on an annual basis, then a single annual report can be provided.**

Question 45: Since Audio Web Conferencing is not E-rate eligible would we still need to meet E-rate requirements and to respond to that particular LOT/Category?

Response: **No, it is not a requirement that the Vendor meet E-Rate requirements in order to respond to the Conferencing category of the RFP. However, even though Audio and Web Conferencing is not E-Rate eligible today, the FCC could make these services eligible over the life of this contract. While it is not a requirement to be E-Rate eligible today, it may be in the Vendor's interest to be so.**

Question 46: Will weight be attributed to geo-diversity of data and voice core networks?

Response: **To summarize the State's intent, it is important that MPLS and Ethernet offer a robust and resilient statewide architecture. Proposals will be scored against specifications as they are presented in these sections.**

Question 47: Throughout Attachment A spreadsheets some rows are shaded which indicates no response is required. However, with some references it appears that a response could be desired. Please confirm that no response is required for all references that are shaded.

Response: **Shaded cells do not require a response. However, Vendors may respond to shaded cells, if needed.**

Question 48: In the process of developing the response to RFP 5000, the following issues were encountered: 1) When entering responses into the Attachment A spreadsheets, there were issues with hitting the maximum row height on some responses and the data would not display properly, and 2) When trying to print the Attachments, the data was being truncated and not displayed on the printed copy, which appeared to be related to the page breaks within the document. Given these issues with the RFP documents, will ITS allow modification of the formatting of the spreadsheets to ensure proper display and printing of the responses or does ITS have any guidance on how to ensure the vendor can provide a complete and readable response without modifying the formatting of the original documents?

Response: **Vendors are required to provide their response of "A", "E" or "X" in the appropriate cells of the Excel spreadsheet. Vendors can modify formatting to provide proper display of information or provide reference to additional documentation included as an attachment to their proposal response.**

Question 49: Under the Cost Submission tabs within several of the Attachment A documents, there are either "Cost for Evaluation" or "Additional Cost for Evaluation" criteria as well as "Non-Evaluated Price Catalog" criteria. Can the State please clarify what cost will actually be used in the cost evaluation to assign points for these categories? As an example, under Attachment A, Category I – Cost Submission tab, the "Ethernet Dedicated and Multi-Point Switched Services Pricing" is under the "Non-Evaluated Price Catalog" table. Should the vendor interpret this to mean that the pricing for Ethernet circuits will not be part of the cost evaluation?

Response: For evaluation purposes, the State is comparing the prices to replace the current inventory of services. In each category under the "Evaluation of Cost" section, there are references to these inventories. For example in "Ethernet Dedicated and Multi-Point Switched Services Pricing" Category I 5.1 states: "For the services listed in the Data Network Technical Specifications portion, the items marked as "Additional Cost for Evaluation" on the Cost Submission tab and the tabs labeled "3.2.1 Switched Ethernet" and "3.2.2 MPLS" will be used for evaluation. Vendor must provide the monthly and one-time fees for the current inventory."

The Non-Evaluated Price Catalog is to give the State options going forward with the contract to perform upgrades or request new services. For this section, we would like the Vendor to propose all bandwidths and options. For the Ethernet section referenced above, this information was requested in Category I Item 3.2.1.3.

Question 50: As it pertains to each RFP 5000 attachment, can a vendor bid on a single or limited products within each attachment. e.g. Category I, Voice and Data- Vendor no bids on Centrex yet bids on PRI's. Would this example be disqualified?

Response: The State will award each category to a single Vendor; therefore, vendors must propose all services in a given category.

Question 51: Is the classification of Mandatory (M) items required at the time of RFP submission? Or can a vendor Agree (A) to a mandatory item then meet qualification after award but prior to contract execution?

Response: Vendors must be able to meet mandatory requirements at the time of the RFP proposal submission.

Question 52: Will the State consider staffing models (i.e. dedicated vs. designated Account Manager/Network Engineer located in Jackson metro area) other than what's defined in the Technical Requirements Matrics (Attachment A)?

Response: No, but to clarify the specification, only certain team members must be located in the Jackson Metropolitan area (i.e., account team manager and at least one of the account managers). The other positions vary based on the details listed in the specification for that role.

The following questions are in reference to Attachment A, Category I- Voice and Data Network:

Question 53: How does the State expect the call detail reporting to be delivered (i.e. delivered via portal, pushed to specific email address, etc.)?

Response: The call detail reporting should be downloaded via a self-service portal. Vendor should supply a single download containing all bills for all services that they provide to the State. This applies to each category the Vendor wins.

- Question 54:** The last sentence of Item 4.7 states that all Vendors that attend the mandatory Vendor conference will be provided the current inventory of Centrex nodes. When and how will this information be made available?
- Response:** **NPA-NXX information for all Centrex lines is included as Attachment B to this memo.**
- Question 55:** Please specify how the Centrex service referenced is delivered today? Would the State consider an option to convert existing Centrex services to IP?
- Response:** **The Centrex service is delivered to the location by the incumbent provider over copper facilities. The State is considering a future conversion from Centrex to a hosted VoIP solution that is being bid in Category VI; however, on day one of the new contract, Centrex must be available for use.**
- Question 56:** Please clarify if the customer owns the handsets associated with the Centrex services or if the vendor is expected to provide the handset as part of the service.
- Response:** **The customer owns their handsets.**
- Question 57:** Can the State provide details regarding dial plans for the existing Centrex Groups?
- Response:** **Within a given Centrex node, 4 digit dialing is enabled. For dialing between nodes or other dialing, 7 or 10 digits are required based on NPA by first dialing a designated digit to get an outside line.**
- Question 58:** This requirement states that “there will be costs associated with migrating from the State’s existing network.” and “Vendor must detail all associated costs with conversion”. Is the State requesting the vendor itemize their charges associated with converting from the existing network only, or is the State also requesting the vendor to speculate on what the conversion costs may be internal to the State?
- Response:** **The State is asking for the Vendor to itemize their charges associated with converting from the existing network only. Internal costs will be determined by the State (i.e., duplicate backbone circuits).**
- Question 59:** Item 5.2.6 it states that the vendor will be totally responsible for all conversion-related costs. If the vendor is going to bear the cost of conversion, and the cost to the State is zero, please clarify what costs are being added to the evaluation?
- Response:** **Based on the conversion plan submitted by the Vendor, costs the State will bear during a conversion will be identified by the State and taken into account (i.e., duplicate backbone circuits).**
- Question 60:** Is there consideration to convert existing Centrex or POTS supported location to HostedVOIP or SIP trunking
- Response:** **The State is considering a future conversion from Centrex to a hosted VoIP solution that is being bid in Category VI.**

Question 61: To assist the vendor in being as accurate as possible in pricing and provisioning voice and data services, would the State consider providing the agency/entity name that goes with the address data provided, as well as any other descriptive details that may be available?

Response: **No, the inventories included give address information that the State believes is sufficient.**

Question 62: Many of the point to point T1s have simple descriptions for termination points such as 'Telco CO'. Please clarify exact addresses for any such facility referenced in the RFP?

Response: **Updated information for these point to point T1s are included in the REVISED Attachment A, Category I.**

Question 63: Please specify any existing locations that currently will require diverse entrances and/or fully protected services?

Response:

Circuit Type	Address
MPLS	1 Mema Dr, Pearl, MS 39208
MPLS	1286 Gluckstadt Rd, Gluckstadt, MS 39110
MPLS	1281 Hwy 51, Madison, MS 39110
Ethernet	500 Clinton Center Drive, Clinton, MS 39056

Question 64: Many locations show multiple services at a single location. Is it up to the provider to determine how to deliver all services to a location or will the State list services that must be delivered on separate physical paths or equipment?

Response: **The State will list services that must be delivered on separate physical paths and equipment.**

Question 65: Within Category I, there is an inventory tab called "Point to Point T1s." However, on the "Voice Evaluation Costs" tab of Category I, there is not a line item labeled "Point to Point T1s" for pricing to be input for Point to Point T1s. Does the State intend for vendors to provide pricing for point to point T1s since inventory is also provided?

Response: **Yes, a line item has been added to the "Cost Submission" tab for "Point to Point T1" to allow for the inventory to be priced as a whole. Please see the REVISED Attachment A, Category I.**

Question 66: These items in Category I & II are all VoIP based services- Can Hosted VoIP providers bid specifically on these elements without bidding on the entire Category I and Category II?

Response: **No. The State will award each category to a single Vendor; therefore, Vendors must propose all services in a given category.**

The following questions are in reference to Attachment A, Category II- Enterprise Internet:

Question 67: By enabling solutions that leverage multiple peering relationships, optimize traffic patterns, provision access demands across multiple connections to national high capacity ISPs, and utilize direct connections to Internet Exchange Points (IXP), the State has the opportunity to maximize competition for these Internet services. Will the state consider removing the mandatory Tier 1 requirement or modifying the requirement to “a Tier 1 provider or bulk provider with direct connectivity to 1 or more Tier 1 providers” for the Enterprise Internet category?

Response: **No. The State of Mississippi has always had a Tier 1 provider and we believe that our size, importance as an entity, and the criticality of services provided warrants that we continue this standard.**

Question 68: This requirement states that “there will be costs associated with migrating from the State’s existing network.” and “Vendor must detail all associated costs with conversion”. Is the State requesting the vendor itemize their charges associated with converting from the existing network only, or is the State also requesting the vendor to speculate on what the conversion costs may be internal to the State?

Response: **The State is asking for the Vendor to itemize their charges associated with converting from the existing network only. Internal costs will be determined by the State (i.e., duplicate backbone circuits) for the conversion period.**

Question 69: Item 5.2.6 states that the vendor will be totally responsible for all conversion-related costs. If the vendor is going to bear the cost of conversion, and the cost to the State is zero, please clarify what costs are being added to the evaluation?

Response: **See response to Question 59.**

Question 70: Would the State be amenable to a SIP voice service that includes both local and long distance calling services as a bundled offering? And if so, would such a bundle be considered in lieu of or a replacement for the Long Distance services included with Attachment A, Category VIII?

Response: **No; however, the State is interested in SIP calls paths that do not charge long distance or have continental US long distance included free of charge.**

The following questions are in reference to Attachment A, Category III- Raw Internet:

Question 71: We are interested in bidding on the Raw Internet category, as we have dark and lit fiber available, but only in [specific city]. Is the state primarily seeking out one sole vendor to supply the entire state, or multiple vendors with their own smaller service areas, like we have in [city]?

Response: **The Raw Internet category will be awarded to a single Vendor to service the entire State.**

Question 72: Does Mississippi have a list of facilities that are covered by the RFP to determine construction costs for Raw Internet?

Response: Currently the State does not utilize a Raw Internet offering so there are no current facilities. For Raw Internet, the provider is only providing internet access and it is up to the logical entity ordering the service to get a transport circuit to the Vendor's POP.

Question 73: Based on the information provided in this requirement and the additional feedback from the Mandatory Vendor Conference, we interpret your request for information about our Software Defined Network products or services to focus on a self-service portal platform with features such as dynamic provisioning of bandwidth allocation, assigning bandwidth resources by time or application workload, intelligent path selection based on application policies, and real-time edits to network access. Please confirm.

Response: Yes. Vendors should also propose any options that you have available that you believe the State could benefit from.

The following questions are in reference to Attachment A, Category IV- Consumer Internet:

Question 74: This requirement states that "Vendor must provide a minimum of 5 email boxes per broadband account." Does the State have a requirement, preference, or restriction on the email type (POP, iMAP, Office365, etc.)? Would the Vendor be expected to provide the domain hosting for the email boxes?

Response: No, the State does not have a requirement, preference, or restriction on the type of email box. The Vendor is not expected to provide domain hosting for the email boxes; however, the Vendor may provide this service and the costs associated.

The following questions are in reference to Attachment A, Category V- WAN Equipment:

Question 75: Are Cisco Partners who purchase through Cisco Authorized Distributors eligible to respond to Category V? All Cisco Authorized Partners who purchase through distribution are required by Cisco and contractually obligated to purchase through Cisco Authorized Distributors, who source their equipment directly from Cisco. Cisco is available to verify Cisco Authorized Partners that meet these criteria.

Response: Yes, Vendors may purchase through Cisco Authorized Distributors.

Question 76: Since E-rate rules do not allow a provider to specify a specific vendors equipment be used, will MS ITS allow the vendors to provide alternative equivalent equipment of other vendors.

Response: No. It is not the State's intent for this category to be E-Rate eligible. The intent of this category is primarily for State Agency connectivity to the Enterprise State Network; however, other entities may use the contract as allowed.

Question 77: Presuming that E-rate funding will be associated with this equipment, can the State verify that they will accept equipment from other manufacturers then Cisco as per program rules whereby "equivalent" equipment must be considered? In

addition, can a provider respond with pricing options that include more than one manufacture type whereby the end users would then have a choice as to what equipment best fits their needs?

Response: See response to Question 76.

Question 78: WAN Equipment Attachment indicates that the vendor must have a principal office location in the Jackson metropolitan area. Is a service address/location considered acceptable? As you can see, [vendor] has national coverage and 4,900 available technicians.

Response: No.

Question 79: Item 2.2 states that Vendors must deal directly with Cisco for equipment acquisition. Use of manufacturer distributors or used equipment resellers will not be authorized under this contract unless an exemption is specifically authorized by ITS. Our question would be: Are Cisco Partner who purchase through Cisco Authorized Distributors eligible to respond to Category V? Cisco recently changed how some partners can purchase Cisco products. This affects all partners, Gold, Silver, etc. Some Vendors are contractually obligated to purchase through Cisco Authorized Distributors. Cisco Authorized Distributors do not sell used equipment, everything sold is net-new to from Cisco. If it's not in stock, it is drop shipped from Cisco directly. Partner tools allow for tracking, gathering of serial numbers, etc. just as if it was a direct order to Cisco. Cisco is also available to verify this criteria. Could ITS change 2.2 to allow local Gold Partners that purchase through Cisco Authorized Distributors to be able to respond to this section without taking an exception?

Response: See response to Question 75.

The following questions are in reference to Attachment A, Category VI- Hosted VoIP:

Question 80: Can you clarify how costs should be calculated? For example, "Cost for all basic features." Does this mean cost per seat, or is it based on total numbers located elsewhere (Inventory tab within the spreadsheet, etc.)?

Response: Costs will be calculated per seat plus all associated costs for providing the service.

Question 81: Based on the information provided in the spreadsheet, the assumption is we will only be quoting a monthly price based solely on the number of seats provided. There are many other variables as to type of seat (example: Call Center vs. basic user, etc.), and there can be variables based on the number of locations involved. Should we only quote basic seats at each site based on quantity provided?

Response: There are currently no call centers on the existing hosted VoIP provider, so quoting all stations as basic is acceptable. However, all other costs must be provided.

Question 82: What is the max number of VoIP seats possible?

Response: If the State were to migrate all existing legacy and VoIP stations, the maximum number of seats would be approximately 45,000.

Question 83: Please define the service "Coverage Path".

Response: Coverage Path is defined as "Call Forward Busy/Don't Answer".

Question 84: Please define the service "Send all calls"

Response: Sends all calls immediately to the station's designated coverage path.

Question 85: Please provide details on any existing Contact Center solutions in place including:

- Number of Agents
- Number of Concurrent Agents that are taking calls at any time
- Work Hours
- Number of Supervisors
- Call Flows
- Features Required

Response: There are currently no call centers on the existing hosted VoIP provider.

Question 86: Long Distance:

- Please provide current Long Distance Traffic Details.

Response: The existing solution does not bill long distance calls made within the continental US. If there are long distance costs for this service, they should be billed through the long distance provider awarded in Category VIII.

Question 87: Please provide detailed information on the existing Avaya and Cisco PBX systems:

- a. Make, model, and quantity of each PBX
- b. Whether the PBX is under Manufacturer Support and if so, duration of contract
- c. Firmware version
- d. Make, model, and quantity of handsets

Response: The State's Enterprise Avaya PBX is:
a) Avaya Aura Communication Manager 7.0
b) Under Manufacturer (Avaya) Support
c) Various but all in the 7.x code base
d) Various Avaya Digital or VoIP Sets - 1600, 2400, 6400, 8400, 9400, 9600
Total 16,500

Question 88: Item 3.7 request that the State would like to leverage existing Avaya and Cisco PBXs equipment in use. Could ITS please provide details of what the current Avaya and Cisco PBX are and any details such as versions of firmware, types of current handsets, etc? This information will be helpful in determining integration and functionality.

Response: See response to Question 87.

Question 89: Are we to assume that each of the listed locations has no existing usable equipment? Do these locations currently lease or own their equipment? In many cases, switches, routers and some phone equipment can be used and reduce costs. Our cost would be affected by this, so please let us know if there is any equipment that will be usable or not.

Response: LAN switching and routing equipment is not in the scope of this category. Equipment currently used on the existing hosted VoIP solution is rented from the current provider. Vendor should propose all equipment necessary for their solution.

Question 90: Can you please confirm that these prices should include regulatory fees and applicable taxes?

Response: The State will pay regulatory fees and taxes except for those that the State is exempt from paying.

The following questions are in reference to Attachment A, Category VIII- Long Distance:

Question 91: Can the State provide a list of countries they call from current carrier?

Response: The State is not aware of any country that we cannot call with our current carrier.

Question 92: Will the chosen Vendor for other voice offerings (Centrex, POTS and VOIP as an example) by default be the vendor of choice for Long Distance, or is the Long Distance Category expected to be awarded on its own merit, irrespective of all other category awards?

Response: Category VIII Long Distance will be awarded on its own merit and all voice services awarded via this RFP will use the chosen long distance provider from Category VIII.

Question 93: Item 3.3.2.1.5 states, "Vendor must extract obvious authorization codes (i.e. 0123456) before sending/providing electronic data". What is meant by the term obvious authorization codes? Can ITS provide further clarification as to the description to the meaning of obvious authorization codes?

Response: The State's intent with this specification was to have the Vendor not allow authorization codes that could be easily guessed. Vendor should not allow for "obvious" codes in the following formats:

- Made up of consecutive Ascending Numbers (ex: 1234567)
- Made up of consecutive Descending Numbers (ex: 7654321)
- All single digits (ex: 1111111)

Question 94: Can ITS provide further clarification as to the requirement of pass through billing and is this limited to just centrex lines or all voice lines?

Response: The State defines pass through billing in this context to be when a third party provider bills the State through the awarded Vendor's long distance service. This is applicable to all voice lines.

The following questions are in reference to Attachment A, Category IX- Audio and Web Conferencing:

Question 95: Would the state consider an "on premise or hosted solution" for Audio/Video and Web conferencing?

Response: The State is seeking a Vendor hosted solution. The State will not accept an on premise solution.

Question 96: Please define whiteboard sharing and intelligent devices in regards to features and activations.

Response: "Intelligent device" would be a mobile device (phone, tablet, etc). "Whiteboard sharing" refers to an interactive all-in-one display system (e.g., MondoPad).

Question 97: Please specify what level of ADA compliance is required and any specific third party devices that need to be compatible and supported.

Response: Vendor must meet the minimum level of ADA compliance as required by federal law; however, Vendor should detail any additional certification/compliance that their product achieves above these minimum standards. There are currently no requirements for specific third party devices.

Question 98: Please clarify with this requested option, who functions as the operator and what specific services should they be able to assist the customer with?

Response: The Vendor would have staff that serves as the operator. At minimum, the operator would assist getting users into the correct conference calls, activate recording features, and providing statistical information.

Question 99: Please clarify that the intent is to be able to add new features and functions under the contract, understanding that availability, delivery, and pricing details would be determined/negotiated after receiving the request.

Response: Yes, that is the intent.

Question 100: Can you give us a historical reference for Audio Web Conferencing? How many minutes have you historically used for Audio Web Conferencing?

Response: In the fiscal year from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017, the statistics are:

- Number of Conference Calls: 47,880
- Number of Conference Minutes: 1,738,488
- Number of Conference Accounts: 449

The following questions are in reference to Attachment A, Category X- MissiON:

Question 101: This category states service can be derived FROM a Tier 1 provide, assuming that gives us the latitude to partner or resell a tier 1 provided access circuit as well.

Response: **Yes, partnering or reselling is allowed for Internet Access for the MissiON Network.**

Question 102: Does the State currently utilize in-line DDoS protection on Tier 1 commodity Internet for the MissiON network? If so, should the price for in-line DDoS protection of Tier 1 commodity Internet be an additional cost for evaluation in both the Existing MissiON Design (3.6.1) and the Future MissiON Design (3.6.2.1 and 3.6.2.2.1)? Currently the MissiON Cost Information Submission tab shows DDoS as a non-evaluated price catalog item.

Response: **Yes, currently the MissiON network receives internet access from the State network and takes advantage of the State's existing DDoS protection. The Vendor should propose in-line DDoS protection but that service may or may not be utilized based on an individual MissiON member basis.**

The following questions are in reference to Attachment A, Category XI- Managed VPN:

Question 103: There are three references/requirements in this attachment numbered 1.5. Please clarify if all three references are valid requirements? If all three are valid requirements, please clarify the third 1.5 requirement relative to the request to identity executive personnel assigned to manage the remote access service.

Response: **These items were misnumbered and are all valid requirements. See Amendment 5.**

Question 104: How many VPNs will the State initially require? How many client based VPN tunnels are supported today and how many site to site VPN tunnels are supported today?

Response: **There are approximately 100 site-to-site tunnels defined in the ITS-hosted VPN solution. There are between 600 and 700 client accounts defined.**

Question 105: What is the associated timeline to complete the migration to the vendor solution?

Response: **Multiple, but not all, agencies currently use the ITS-hosted VPN solution. Migration of users and tunnels from the existing ITS-hosted VPN solution to the awarded solution is expected to be completed by June 30, 2018.**

The migration of agencies not using the ITS-hosted VPN solution will be a multi-year, phased approach. The State will work with the awarded Vendor on the migration schedule for this phase of the migration effort.

Question 106: How many physical tokens are required?

Response: At minimum, each user of the VPN solution will be required to use a physical or soft token. The number and type of tokens required will be determined during the migration process.

Question 107: How many soft tokens are required?

Response: See the response to Question 106.

Question 108: It is understood that the number of VPN's is going to be required to scale; however, hardware put on site can be sized to handle growth. Could ITS estimate some of the following?

- a. Estimated number of site to site VPN's currently in place?
- b. Estimated number of Remote Access VPN's in place?
- c. Estimated number of Mobile VPN Access currently in place?
- d. Estimated growth of ITS hosted VPN's? i.e. If the State of Mississippi mandates agencies to leverage this service how many estimated Site to Site VPN's, Remote Access and Mobile VPN's would there be?
- e. If the State of Mississippi mandates agencies to leverage this service, would there be a roll-out schedule/timeline or would it be expected that the system must support the estimated number of users day one?

Response:

- a. There are approximately 100 site-to-site tunnels defined.
- b. There are between 600 and 700 client accounts defined.
- c. The State does not differentiate between traditional and mobile clients.
- d. The State does not have metrics available to demonstrate how many VPNs are currently in use across ITS customers.
- e. The migration of agencies not using the ITS-hosted VPN solution will be multi-year, phased approach. The State will work with the awarded Vendor on the migration schedule for this phase of the migration effort.

Question 109: Does ITS have a preferred VPN solution?

Response: No.

Question 110: Does ITS have a preferred two factor solution?

Response: No.

Question 111: Item 3.14.1 states that ITS currently utilizes the AT&T Threatmanager product as a SIEM. Will ITS continue to use this solution or does the State want to see pricing on alternative options?

Response: The State is not requesting SIEM services within this RFP. Vendors are not required to propose pricing.

RFP responses are due October 5, 2017, 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 Michelle Smith at 601-432-8057 or via email at Michelle.Smith@its.ms.gov.

Enclosures: Attachment B: NPA-NXX
REVISED Attachment A, Category I- Voice and Data Network
REVISED Attachment A, Category II- Enterprise Internet

cc: ITS Project File Number 42410