



February 13, 2023

To: All Potential Respondents

From: Julie Janssen, Purchasing Agent

Subject: 005-RFP-0214-2022 Secretary of State Business Services Division Call Center

### Addendum Three

The following changes are being made to the above RFP:

- Q1. Are callers required or allowed to connect with a message verification system or pre-recorded message before connecting to a live operator, or must a live operator be the initial contact?**  
A1. Willing to consider, as long as a live operator can be reached during stated mandatory live operator hours. The Agency is requesting the Respondent provide this information in their proposal.
- Q2. The RFP states that there are currently 7 FTE assigned to this program. Do you anticipate the amount of FTE needed will increase, and if so, by how many, and what is the estimated timeline for the increase?**  
A2. Full-time Agency staff are expected to stay. No decision has been made regarding temporary staff.
- Q3. On page 19, under 4.3.1 it states - provide necessary staff to support the call center with demonstrated general business services experience. In order to determine if we qualify to submit a response to this RFP, can you please elaborate on the required experience specifically on the experience you are requiring for business services knowledge, and acknowledge if the State will accept responses from companies with extensive call center experience not related to business services.**  
A3. The vendor needs to have the ability to develop the knowledge base with Agency support.
- Q4. What is the current average handle time for phone calls and other types of communications?**  
A4. Data for FY22 shows an average "engage time" of 2:47 and average "wrap time" of 0:17. Data is not available on average handle time for email. Chat and text are not currently offered.
- Q5. What time of day, days of the week, or times of the year do calls typically peak?**  
A5. Call peaks are cyclic annually, rather by hour or day. Peak times are January, May, and August.
- Q6. Please provide a historical call volume for weekdays and weekends.**  
A6. Weekend call data is not available.

Average weekday call volume: 140

Peak weekday call volume: 200

Q8. Does the organization have any existing chatbots deployed in their network of departments/organization? If yes, are you happy with its performance & functionality? Why or why not?

A8. Agency does not have a chatbot deployed.

Q9. Please specify the tools that DAS is currently using to provide the services.

A9. ICN telephony, Outlook, Teams, and various proprietary, internal systems. However, vendor is not expected to use the same tools.

Q10. Is it possible for the DAS to provide more about the scope of work/vendors' roles and responsibilities?

A10. The State is requesting the Respondent provide this information in its technical proposal and the scope of work will be agreed upon in the Contract.

Q11. Refer to "Respondent's accounting firm" do the vendors need to provide their bank name?

A11. Bank or Accounting Firm they use.

Q12. Question: Will the Iowa Department of Administrative Services (DAS) on behalf of Iowa Secretary of State accept a 100% cloud-based remote call center solution with a work from home model as a viable option for this RFP?

A12. Yes, with the caveat that strong preference will be given to respondents who will employ Iowans. Also, the Agency will expect periodic in-person meetings with development and management.

Q12. Can vendors propose a 100% remote solution?

A12. See A12.

Q13. Will the SOS accept a 100% remote solution?

A13. See A12.

Q14. Previous experience with customer information systems, phone systems, and software required. Contractor shall maintain a call center. Is it mandatory for vendors to maintain a physical facility to support this contract?

A14. No.

Q15. Provide an example of daily, weekly and monthly status report on call volume, wait times, abandoned calls, call dispositions and mutually agreed upon metrics.

A15. The State is requesting the Respondent provide this information in its technical proposal.

Q16. Given the size and complexity of this project, we request at least a 2 week due date extension.

A16. The Agency has agreed to a one-week extension.

Q17. Does the SOS provide IVR/ACD?

A17. No.

Q18. What are the SOS designated Ticketing and Tracking systems?

A18. A combination of Outlook and Teams.

- Q19. What is the call Volume after business hours, can the callers leave voicemail for Call backs?  
A19. The Agency does not collect this information. During business hours, callers can leave voicemail for call backs after being on hold beyond a set time threshold, but not after hours.
- Q20. What is the average speed to Answer?  
A20. Answer time is capped at 15 seconds per operator. If an operator in “Ready” status does not answer in that time, the call is requeue and rolls to the next Ready operator. The average requeue rate is 13.3%.
- Q21. What is the current AHT?  
A21. Depends – does “H” stand for “handle” or “hold”?
- Q22. Can the Contractor bill the DAS in case they use 3rd party telephone interpreter services?  
A22. No. Language interpretation is not part of the RFP.
- Q23. What telephony is used by the DAS currently?  
A23. ICN
- Q24. What is the Secretary of State’s transition plan for existing staff?  
A23. See A2.
- Q25. Section 1.4 states the objective to expand the available service center call hours beyond normal Business Services Division operating hours. What will the extended hours be? Will weekends be included?  
A25. The Agency is requesting the Respondent provide this information in Exhibit 13.
- Q26. Do you anticipate the need for additional agents for the extended hours?  
A26. The Agency is requesting the Respondent provide this information in Exhibit 14.
- Q27. Will the State provide training for a new call center operator with regards to the knowledge base required to effectively operate this call center?  
A27. Yes.
- Q28. As stated in 4.2 Operational Requirements, i.e. 4.2.1 Ability to perform live operator services. The minimum call center hours are 8:00 AM CT – 8:00 PM CT. Are live operator services to be provided only during the regular work week, i.e. Monday through Friday, with the exception of the stated holidays? Or, are live operator services to be provided on days additional to Monday through Friday, such as Saturdays and Sundays?  
A28. The Agency is requesting the Respondent provide this information in Exhibit 13.
- Q29. As stated in 6.3 Special Terms and Conditions 6.3.1 Term Length, the Contract shall have an initial term of one (1) years, beginning on the date of contract execution (the “Effective Date”). What is the proposed contract “Effective Date” of RFP Number 005-RFP-0214-2022?  
A29. Spring/summer 2023
- Q30. Additionally, if different than the Effective Date, what is the proposed “Go Live” date of services to be provided? I.e. When is the first Live Call expected to be handled by the selected vendor partner?  
A30. Spring/summer 2023

- Q31. How will calls be delivered by the state to the respondents call management system, or how will the agents access the calls routing to the current published numbers?  
A31. That's still to be determined, but the solution will probably be a new number that goes directly to the call center.
- Q32. Does the State desire agent mobile access to their contact center platform, via a dedicated app?  
A32. The State is requesting the Respondent provide this information in its technical proposal.
- Q33. Are interactions with the State predominantly inbound? Does the State require the ability for outbound interactions as well, with features such as predictive dialing or preview dialing?  
A33. Yes, overwhelmingly inbound. Outbound is expected to be minimal, and will almost certainly be handled by the Agency rather than call center staff.
- Q34. Section 1.4 (page 3). Can you provide any insight on the contact volume you receive after the current supported hours.  
A34. No.
- Q35. Section 1.4 (page 3). Are the current hours of support 8 AM - 8 PM CT, if not what are the current hours?  
A35. No. The current hours are 8 AM – 4:30 PM CT, Monday-Friday.
- Q36. Section 1.4 (page 3).What systems are accessed currently to support the needs of the citizens?  
A36. Internal, proprietary database systems.
- Q37. Section 1.4 (page 3).Will the vendor have direct credentials access to the systems needed to support the contacts?  
A37. Yes.
- Q38. Section 1.5 (page 3). You identified the average volume of contacts and indicated the high volume months, however it would be helpful to have the peak volumes for the months indicated and the volume for the lower months.  
A39. See A6.
- Q39. Section 1.5 (page 3). Does this volume include email, chat and other channels of contact?  
A39. No.
- Q40. Section 1.5 (page 3). Can you provide call arrival data for a 3- or 6-month period ideally by day and hour, but whatever you can provide would be helpful.  
A40. See attached report.
- Q41. Section 1.5 (page 3). What is the current abandonment rate?  
A41. 2.8%
- Q42. Are there any call recording and quality monitoring storage duration requirements by the state?  
A42. Need to retain long enough for retroactive quality assurance purposes.
- Q43. Are there additional requirements other than the current menu at [515-281-5204](tel:515-281-5204) in front of calls being answered, if so what does the desired messaging solution include?  
A43. The Agency does not expect expansion of the menu, but would consider it.

- Q44. How long is the training session provided by the DAS?**  
A44. Training will be ongoing as necessary, but the Agency's current training period for a new phone temp is about three days in the classroom and a week listening to calls.
- Q45. Could you provide detail on the call flow? Will Iowa # be routed to agents? Will the IVR system provide information to agents as to the reason for the call?**  
A45. A customer calls or emails with a question, request, or technical issue – the person fielding the call or email answers the question or makes a request to the appropriate person to fulfill the request or resolve the technical issue. How the calls will be routed is still to be determined, but the solution will probably be a new number that goes directly to the call center. The call tree is not complex enough to provide the reason for the call.
- Q46. Section 3 Paragraph 3.2 Exhibit 10: Are SIGNIA employees required to be on-site? If so, when and for how long?**  
A46. Call center employees will not be required to be on site, but the Agency will expect periodic in-person meetings with development and management.
- Q47. Section 3 Paragraph 3.2 Exhibit 15: Does the BSD have service level goals in mind or are they looking to the partner to make recommendations?**  
A47. The Agency is requesting the Respondent provide this information proposal.
- Q48. Section 3 Paragraph 3.2 Exhibit 16: Could you provide additional details on the outreach efforts you envision to Iowa small businesses?**  
A48. Outreach will serve the purpose of making our customers aware that the Agency have expanded service hours (and a new phone number, if that's what the Agency ultimately choose.) However, this outreach will be performed by Agency staff with support from the vendor, rather than by the vendor.
- Q49. Section 4 Paragraph 4.2.1: What days of the week is coverage required – Monday through Friday or over the Weekend as well?**  
A49. The Agency is requesting the Respondent provide this information in Exhibit 11.
- Q50. Are shared agents (i.e., agents who handle additional clients in addition to BSD) acceptable?**  
A50. The Agency is requesting the Respondent provide this information in Exhibit 14.
- Q51. Section1: Introduction, 1.5 Pg. 3 describes the services provided by Business Services Division staff. Please clarify the expected job duties for call center staff.**  
A51. See A45.
- Q52. How long is the training period for the current clerk specialists? Will that training material be provided to the contracting respondent?**  
A52. See A44.
- Q53. Files business, notaries and lien documents. What does this process entail? Is it all done online? If done online, are the clerks using the SOS website or some other software? Are forms emailed to callers? Do clerks collect/process fee payments? If so, are they using the Fast Track Filing System or some other software/processor?**  
A53. Respondent won't be doing any of this. Agency staff will retain these duties.

Q54. Are you able to post a copy of the typical job description for the Clerk position?

A54. See A53. Respondent staff will not be clerks.

Q55. Can you describe the subject and processing of the type of call most received in the service center? Are callers mostly calling for information or to complete a transaction? What steps are currently taken by the clerk? Will this process or these steps change or be impacted by outsourcing this service to a call center?

A55. Questions are related specifically to the Business Services Division program.

The most common questions are procedural in nature:

-How do I log into Fast Track Filing?

-How do I set up an LLC?

-How do I change my registered agent/registered office address?

-How do I reinstate my administratively-dissolved entity?

-How do I change/add directors/officers?

-How do I renew my notary commission?

Also see A53 and A54.

Q56. Will the State maintain the seven FTE currently answering calls? Will their duties change as a result of this project?

A56. See A2. Agency staff will continue to be responsible for other duties.

Q57. Section1: Introduction, 1.5 Pg. 3 gives monthly call stats of 4000 calls per month. Do you have a report that would show an hourly/daily/monthly break down of those calls? Does the State currently have an SLA metric or will one be established for this project?

A57. See attached report for requested data. SLA metrics would be established as part of the final contract.

Q58. Section 3: Form & Content of Proposals, General question. Does the State prefer to receive proposal documents in PDF or Word/Excel format?

A58. The State has no preference.

Q59. Section 3: Form & Content of Proposals, 3.2, Exhibit 11 Pg 13. Call center hours are listed as 8am – 8pm CT in Section 4: Specifications. However in Section 3, the State requests options up to 24x7. Please clarify the following: For normal call center hours, is the 8am – 8pm CT Monday through Friday or does this include Saturdays and Sundays?

A59. All of the above. The current hours are 8 AM – 4:30 PM CT, Monday-Friday. Part of the purpose of the call center will be to be able to provide expanded hours.

Q60. For normal call center hours, is the 8am – 8pm CT Monday through Friday or does this include Saturdays and Sundays?

A60. See A59.

Q61. For options, should we list the cost for every one hour increment up to 24x7 or does the State wish to narrow the parameters to specific optional time windows most desired?

A61. List the cost for every one-hour increment up to 24x7.

- Q62. Section 3: Form & Content of Proposals, 3.2, Exhibit 16, Pg 16 discusses an Outreach Plan. Please provide additional information as follows: When will outreach be required? i.e., after an outage event or natural disaster; per the Agency's normal business operations/marketing; Specific timings or milestones, such as after a Business Services event, etc.
- A62. See A48.
- Q63. Which State of Iowa citizens? Is there a database of contacts for Business Services or would this be all citizens in the State of Iowa?
- A63. See A48.
- Q64. What mechanism would be used? Is this confined to the use of our call center staff and technology or would other outreach methods (i.e., TV advertising) be required?
- Q64. See A48.
- Q65. Please provide examples of how/when this was done in the past.
- A65. See A48.
- Q66. Section 4: Specifications, 4.5 & 4.6, Pg 19 references Sales made under the contract. Can you clarify what is being sold? Is this a reference to the collection of fees for filings? If so, will the contractor use the Fast Track Filing System for payment processing or should some other transaction processor being provided by the Respondent?
- A66. The State is requesting a quarterly report of all invoicing made from Respondent to Agency during Quarter period. Respondent will not be making any sales as part of its duties for Agency.
- Q67. Section 1 Paragraph 1.5 outlines the functions of and support provided by the Business Services Division (BSD). Section 3 Paragraph 3.2 Exhibit 12 asks about training agents to handle certain tasks and situations. Could you provide greater detail on the support our agents will provide other than answering call?
- A67. None. See A53 and A54.
- Q68. Will the agents be expected to fulfill form requests?
- A68. No. The expectation is that Respondent will communication such requests to Agency staff.
- Q69. Will agents have access to the BSD's CMS system to fulfill such requests?
- A69. No. See A68.
- Q70. If not is there an internal ticketing system agents can access to for identifying follow up actions?
- A70. No. See A68.
- Q71. Is there an escalation process already in place for questions agents can't handle/ address?
- A71. Yes, but it's an informal, internal process. The expectation is that this will be part of the scope of work that the Respondent and Agency will develop together.
- Q72. Will agents be provided access to the BSD email server to send responses?
- A72. Yes, if emails are included in the scope of work for the final contract.
- Q73. Section 4 Paragraph 4.6 Administrative Fee: How does the 1% administrative fee apply for this RFP? Are the agents expected to sell a service to the small business community?

A73. The State is requesting an Administrative Fee based on all invoicing made from Respondent to Agency during Quarter period. Respondent will not be making any sales as part of its duties for Agency.

Q74. Is the platform for electronic communication state provided?

A74. No. The Respondent will provide this platform.

Q75. Is there any State application needed by the agents besides the knowledge base?

A75. That is still to be determined.

Q76. If hours are expanded, volume will be low during some hours. Is the use of shared agents desired (agents who have their time split supporting multiple clients)? Or can agents only work this state program?

A76. The Agency is requesting the Respondent provide this information in Exhibit 14.

Q77. Section 4.2 (page 18). Does the State require or desire integration with any external applications?

A77. Not at this time.

Q79. Could you please suggest a standard pricing format to maintain uniformity among vendors?

Q79. See section 3.3 Cost Proposal in the solicitation document listed below. The Respondent is asked to provide its best pricing structure. The State does not post Scored Specification points until the day the solicitation closes.

Q80. Would you accept cost per minute, or cost per hour?

A80. See section 3.3 Cost Proposal in the solicitation document listed below. The Respondent is asked to provide its best pricing structure.

Q81. If the vendor does not offer an incentive discount for payment in less than 60 days, what is the Secretary of State's typical payment timeline?

A81. Secretary of State typically pays its bill within 30 days of invoice. This would be negotiated and included as part of the final contract.