

BROWN COUNTY, TEXAS

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) AND TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES

Vendors,

Brown County is seeking Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Information Technology (IT) and Telecommunication Services, managing all facets of technology needed throughout the County. Vendors are invited to submit RFQs and are required to provide as much detail as possible regarding the scope of services approach, capability, and experience in order to protect and secure the technology utilized by county personnel. The County reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses to this RFQ. All submitted responses shall be evaluated by the Technology Committee. The committee will review the responses and submit recommendations to the Commissioner's Court in a timely manner.

Responses are to be sealed and addressed to the Brown County Clerk, Sharon Ferguson, with "IT and Telecommunication Services RFQ" clearly marked on the outside of the envelope or box. All responses may be mailed or hand delivered to 200 S. Broadway, Suite 101, Brownwood, TX 76801 by Friday, February 3, 2023 at 4:00 pm (CST). Office hours are Monday- Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. Brown County will accept responses submitted electronically and they may be emailed to the following email address: sharon.ferguson@browncountytexas.org. RFQs received after that time will be considered late. All responses shall include a statement indicating that the submitter is authorized to offer this response by his or her company and may bind the company under contract if selected.

Copies of this Request for Qualifications are available electronically at www.browncountytexas.org, or by contacting the Brown County Technology Committee at 325.646.1987.

1. **RFO OBJECTIVE**

- a. This RFQ will be used to obtain responses from qualified IT and Telecommunication Service Providers. This information will allow Brown County to review qualifications and enter into negotiations with the vendor/s whose qualifications are the most beneficial to the County.
- b. The purpose of this RFQ is to find complete, reliable, and proactive IT management that encompasses all technology and support to promote the mission of Brown County.

2. **SUBMISSION OF RESPONSES TO THIS RFO**

- a. Responses should be submitted following the guidelines listed in this RFQ. Additional information and materials are welcomed but should be submitted following the specifics listed in this RFQ.
- b. Responses should also be timely submitted as provided in this RFQ.

3. **INSTRUCTIONS TO VENDORS**

- a. **Right to Reject:** Brown County reserves the right to cancel or reject any or all responses received as a result of this RFQ at the sole discretion of the County.

- b. Preparation Costs: Brown County shall not be liable for any costs incurred by vendors in the preparation of responses to this RFQ, including any meetings and demonstrations that may be required or requested. All costs incurred are at the vendor's expense.

4. **CERTIFICATIONS, LICENSES, EXPERIENCE, SERVICE REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL VENDORS WHO SUBMIT A RESPONSE THIS RFO**

- a. Must be able to manage network and computer systems including complex applications, databases, messaging, servers and associated hardware, software, communications, and operating systems necessary for performance, security, reliability, and recoverability of the systems.
- b. Must be able to address configuration management including, but not limited to, changes, upgrades, patches, user login and password security with proper documentation, support of software products relating to servers and workstations, and timely response for repair and maintenance work for all users.
- c. Must be able to manage maintenance and support of network equipment, including switches, firewalls, routers, and all other security devices.
- d. Must be able to install and maintain printers, scanners, network devices, and conduct analysis, routine configuration changes, installation of patches and upgrades, cabling if needed, alert notifications in case of failure of equipment.
- e. Must be able to provide proactive monitoring of network equipment including performance indicators to report on threshold limitations.
- f. Must be able to address network performance and capacity management services and continuous troubleshooting.
- g. Must be able to engineer, plan, and design services for major system enhancements and/or upgrades to existing systems with recommendations for future purchasing and technology needs as requested or necessary.
- h. Must be qualified to offer superior troubleshooting and tech support to all County employees in a timely and professional manner.
- i. Must provide monitoring support, troubleshooting and response for all County servers and network systems with proactive and prompt responses based on severity of any unscheduled outages.
- j. Must provide management of critical security and system patches to all network devices and/or servers and systems on the network to ensure all systems and resources are properly managed and maintained.
- k. Must assist with the selection of appropriate equipment and sourcing and ordering of replacement equipment and parts in collaboration with County employees, and assist with any new installations and configurations of any equipment or systems as needed.
- l. Must work with any necessary parties to repair devices in a prompt manner.
- m. Must manage the Brown County website in collaboration with County employees.
- n. Must advise the County about data security policies and concerns and determine appropriate methods for ensuring compliance with all applicable laws and rules and standards governing Brown County.
- o. Must assist the County in development of customized policies related to the use of technology and disaster recovery.

- p. Must monitor and ensure that antivirus software and other similar programs are enabled and functioning.
- q. Must have full-time, on-site staff to assist with the day-to-day technology needs of the County, and must have 24/7 access remotely to assist with any after-hours issues.
- r. Must provide proactive monitoring and management of Courthouse security systems including but not limited to firewalls, intrusion prevention, secure remote access, and any implementation of advanced security solutions the County may utilize.
- s. Must be able to manage other vendors which may be contracted for by the County and serve as the key point of contact as needed.
- t. Must be able to maintain a hardware and asset inventory, in conjunction with county auditors, that includes all technology-related equipment, and must also assist with managing the life-cycle of all County devices and maintain an equipment inventory to ensure our systems are always current to meet the needs of the County.
- u. Must be able to provide support to the County to select, implement, and review software applications and to provide the County with appropriate guidance, technical assistance, and documentation related to software applications.
- v. Must have any licenses or registrations required to do business in the County of Brown and in the State of Texas.
- w. Preference is given if vendor has experience with the following applications: Windows 10, Adobe Standard and Professional, CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch), Microsoft Office including Office 365, Tyler Technologies to include Incode10, Odyssey, Eagle Recorder, Orion, TLETS (Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System), Commissary Express, NetData, Local Government Solutions, Hill Country Software, Watchguard, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Precinct Tracker and any other software used by Brown County personnel.
- x. All Staff working on the Sheriff's Office information systems shall complete a full NCIC (Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System) background check to satisfy CJIS (Criminal Justice Information Services) security policy.
- y. Ability to provide quotes for computers and peripherals based on NCPA (National Cooperative Purchasing Alliance), Texas DIR (Department of Information Resources) or any other Governmental Cooperative pricing and maintain good standing with the Cooperatives throughout the duration of the contract.
- z. Must be able to provide all of the services described herein for all Brown County offices including, but not limited to, the following: Sheriff's Office and the county jail and law enforcement center; Elections Administrator and all activities and duties of the Elections Office; all clerks and courts housed in the Brown County courthouse; Treasurer's Office; Auditor's Office; Probation; offices of the County Attorney and District Attorney; courthouse security and courthouse maintenance.

5. **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

- a. Brown County is requesting that the vendor's response addresses the qualifications outlined above with specificity. The ultimate goal is to secure a smooth operating process in order to maintain an efficient and effective IT platform.
- b. Due to the nature of this request, each response shall be detailed and to the point.
- c. Each response shall provide the following information:
 - i. Letter of Transmittal: The letter of transmittal must contain the following

statements and information:

1. Company name, address, telephone number(s), and website.
2. Name, title, email address, and telephone number of the person(s) to contact and who are authorized to represent the firm and to whom correspondence should be directed.
3. Federal and State taxpayer identification numbers of the firm.
4. A brief statement of your understanding of the services to be performed and make a positive commitment to provide services as specified.
5. The response must be signed by a corporate officer or person authorized to bind the vendor.

ii. Profile: Provide a short profile of the firm including at minimum:

1. Length of time in business
2. Length of time in providing similar services
3. Number of clients
4. Number of clients in governmental sector
5. Number of full-time employees and area of involvement: Technical support, programming, consulting, sales support, administrative support

6. **QUESTIONS FOR VENDORS**

Please respond to the following in your response and use the same order and titles to help facilitate evaluating your responses.

a. General Company Information & Security

- i. Provide a profile of your company, including background and history. Please provide details of your company's practices for staying current on regulations, legislation, certifications, and compliance especially as it relates to HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), CJIS, public records, and government.
- ii. Name, title, address, and telephone number of a minimum of three (3) references for clients of approximately the same size for whom similar services have been provided to, including information referencing the actual services performed, number of users, and length of tenure. References of other Public Sector clients would be most beneficial.
- iii. Describe your strategy for securing your clients data. Include your company's policies as well as any security certificates that you possess. Explain how you will ensure that the security clearances required for CJIS are adhered to. Describe your company's security certification and expertise.

b. Client Relationship Management

- i. Describe how you would manage customer relationship with county "clients".
 1. Describe your training program
 2. Describe all support staff that would be expected to serve the County, including executive, project, and account staff.
 3. Describe the responsibilities of each individual that would be involved in providing services.
 4. Describe the hours of operation for on-site staff and help desk staff.

5. Describe how you would report to County contacts and users about status of systems, elicit needs of users, needs for change, etc.

c. Service Levels

- i. Describe service levels you will provide to the County of Brown.
 1. Describe your work order/trouble ticket system.
 2. Describe availability of key staff during normal business hours and after business hours.
 3. Explain your guarantee how adequate staff is available 24/7, including holidays.
 4. Provide your guaranteed response time for issues dependent upon severity and time of day.
 5. Provide your average response time for after-hours issues.
 6. Scheduled down times for routine maintenance.
 7. Describe your communication strategy for keeping clients informed of system conditions and changes.
 8. Describe how you would assist the County in development and implementing user policies.
 9. Describe your plans for disaster recovery.
 10. Describe how major software upgrades would be applied and what upgrades would require additional fees.
 11. Describe any of services beyond the scope of this RFQ that you provide which may be beneficial to the County.

d. Management

- i. Please demonstrate how you would institute change control in the County's computing environment.
- ii. Describe your monitoring tools and strategies to monitor and ensure the stability of the computing environment in the Brown County.
- iii. Describe how these monitoring results would be communicated to Brown County.
- iv. Describe how you would document and record maintenance, installation, performance, and changes to the system.
- v. Describe the documentation that you would make available to the County at the end of any contract period or as requested.
- vi. Describe how you would maintain confidentiality in strict compliance with HIPPA and other confidentiality laws and regulations.
- vii. Describe willingness to serve as the liaison between the County as well as any software company for whom the County does business with.

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- a. Responses shall be reviewed on the following factors with the indicated relative importance factors.
 - i. 30% - Company experience, certifications, expertise, security, and references from similar agencies.
 - ii. 30% - Service levels
 - iii. 20% - Client Relationship approach
 - iv. 15% - Management (Change Control, Monitoring, Documentation)

8. MISCELLANEOUS

- a. The County reserves the right to award a contract based on responses received without further discussion or negotiation. Vendors should not rely upon the opportunity to alter their qualifications during any discussions.
- b. The County reserves the right to reject any or all responses for failure to meet the requirements contained herein, to waive any technicalities, and to select the responses which best meets the requirements of the County.
- c. Vendors must specifically identify any portions of their submitted responses deemed to contain confidential and proprietary information or trade secrets. However, the vendor should also understand that information submitted may be subject to Texas Open Records Act Laws and may be disclosed if requested.
- d. State Law Requirements for Contracts:
 - i. The contents of this section are required by Texas Law and are included by County regardless of content.
 - ii. *Agreement to Not Boycott Israel Chapter pursuant to the Texas Government Code:* By signature on vendor form, Contractor verifies Contractor does not boycott Israel and will not boycott Israel during the term of this Contract.
 - iii. *Texas Government Code Section 2251.152 Acknowledgment:* By signature on vendor form, Contractor represents pursuant to Section 2252.152 of the Texas Government Code, that Contractor is not listed on the website of the Comptroller of the State of Texas concerning the listing of companies that are identified under Section 806.051, Section 807.051 or Section 2253.153.
 - iv. *Certificate of Interest Parties Form 1295:* Effective January 1, 2016, pursuant to Texas Government Code, Section 2252.908 (the "Interested Party Disclosure Act"), the County and/or Cities may not award a contract to a bidder unless the bidder submits a "Certificate of Interested Parties Form 1295 (the "Disclosure Form") to the Entities as prescribed by the Texas Ethics Commission ("TEC"). In the event that the bidder's bid for the Entities is the best bid received, the Entities or either of its consultants, will promptly notify the bidder. That notification will serve as the conditional verbal acceptance of the bid. Upon this acceptance, the winning bidder must promptly, not later than 4:00pm on the Tuesday following award by one or more of the Entities electronically file Form 1295. **Form 1295 can be found and filed electronically at www.ethics.state.tx.us/.**
 - v. *Disclosure of Certain Relationships:* Pursuant to Chapter 176 of the Local Government Code, any person or agent of a person who contracts or seeks to contract for the sale or purchase of property, goods, or services with a local governmental entity must disclose in the Questionnaire **Form CIQ** the person's affiliation or business relationship that might cause a conflict of interest with the local governmental entity. By law, the Questionnaire must be filed with the Brown County Auditor's Office no later than seven (7) days after the date the person begins contract discussions or negotiations with the entities or submits an application or response to a request for proposals, bids, correspondence, or another writing related to a potential agreement with the entities. Updated Questionnaires must be filed in conformance with the forms available at: <http://www.ethics.state.tx.us/data/forms/conflict/CIO.pdf>.