REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):
IT Managed Services

DATE OF ISSUE: November 13, 2023
DEADLINE: December 29, 2023 at 4:00 PM
EST

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About the Agency

East Tennessee Human Resource Agency, Inc. (ETHRA) has an overall mission to assist individuals and families through the provision of services, education, and information to solve problems that inhibit their ability to be productive and self-sufficient.

ETHRA is a Knoxville based public not-for-profit 501c3 organization that has been serving Knox County and the surrounding sixteen counties since 1974. ETHRA is a member of NJPA. ETHRA is sales tax exempt and eligible for government and/or non-profit pricing. The administrative offices are located at 9111 Cross Park Drive, Suite D-100, Knoxville, Tennessee 37923. ETHRA is an equal opportunity employer.

As a careful steward of the funds awarded by state, local, and federal governments, ETHRA weaves its resources together to maximize the impact of each dollar invested in support of the many public service programs it operates. We leverage these resources to serve East Tennessee communities through our participation as a grant administrator, local resource network, and nonprofit partner in dozens of public programs and projects.

Through this Request for Proposal (RFP) opportunity, ETHRA wishes to select a single organization to provide IT managed services for our organization. For more information on our organization, please visit our website at www.ethra.org.

Overview of Current Technical Environment

ETHRA's current technical environment is as follows:
- Windows PC, Office 365 environment
- Virtual servers utilized for most applications: DC/DNS/DHCP, IIS, SQL, multiple application servers, and file servers
- Four (4) on premise servers serving as VMware host to virtual servers
- Knoxville office houses transportation call center 7:30 am to 7:00 pm, Monday through Friday, plus after-hours answering service – Has very low tolerance for data and/or voice outages
- Local and Remote Cloud Backups
- External management of highest level of network support

Service Requirements

The following services are the current priority items for ETHRA and each should be specifically addressed in the proposal, including how you would manage support for each area and how the cost is determined, attaching documentation as necessary.

1. Provide 24/7/365 mainly upper-tier support as needed for infrastructure, server and network functions. (2 Fortinet firewalls, 1 HPE SAN, 4 VMware hosts, 1 vCenter vSphere Environment, 1 Backup Appliance with replication offsite)

2. Perform any disruptive maintenance and/or upgrades outside of regular agency work hours of 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday – Friday.

3. Support disaster recovery for servers, workstations, server data and user data. This includes providing an offsite secure environment to host backups, and a DC that we could connect back too if the main office went down.

4. Maintain VMware vSphere virtualization environment with off-site fail-over.

5. Maintain fiber SAN storage for vSphere environment.

6. Assist with ETHRA's goal to streamline the management of the IT infrastructure while continuing to increase the productivity of our workforce.

Information Requirements and Format

Respondents should include responses to the section above and all sections below in their proposal submission. If additional material is required for one or more questions, please label attachments clearly and reference them in your response. Responses received under this RFP that fail to address each of the sections, in adequate and complete detail, will be deemed as non-responsive and will not be considered for selection. Note that responses of "to be provided upon request" or "to be determined" or the like, or that do not otherwise provide the information requested (e.g. left blank) are not acceptable.

For the purposes of understanding more about your company and your ability to successfully fulfill the requirements, please provide the information below as part of your response, clearly referencing each specific question.

I. Company Background

1. Give a brief overview of your organization's involvement in providing IT services in the marketplace.

2. How long has the organization been in this business?

3. In what cities do you maintain offices?

4. Indicate the number of employees in your organization. You may also include additional details such as employees' areas of expertise, experience with virtualization, certifications, etc.

5. How many employees are dedicated to account management and/or technical support?

6. How is the help-desk operated? (i.e., contact method, staffing, etc.)

7. How many employees are full-time vs. contractual?

8. Who are your technology partners? Please describe your relationships and experience with manufacturers and major distribution partners in the technology marketplace

9. What differentiates your organization from your competitors in the marketplace, and how will this be relevant to us?

10. Will you subcontract any components of the proposed solution to third party organizations? If so, please describe the components to be subcontracted and provide details of any agreement in place with the subcontracted firm/individuals as well as a summary of past work that you have successfully completed together.

11. Please provide details of current customer accounts that are similar in scope and requirements to those of ETHRA.

II. Rates

Explain your rate structure. Is it an hourly rate, monthly retainer, other structure? Elaborate on how the rates would be applied, for instance, different Support Proposal items might require a different rate application.

III. Support

1. Describe fully your technical support options, including the assistance request process, escalation process, support hours, response times (for emergency and non-emergency support requests), staffing levels, staff expertise, and physical location of the help desk.

IV. Proposed Approach and Solution

1. Please provide a proposed work plan for a migration to your organization as an ETHRA vendor. Specifically, provide the following information:

    a. Key activities
    b. Timing
    c. Information/resource requirements from Family League
    d. Deliverables
    e. Key milestones, checkpoints, and other decision points

2. If we elect to move forward with your organization, what ETHRA resources would you require (e.g., information, data, staff resources, communication) during the course of migration and on an ongoing basis?

3. Please identify the team that will be assigned to the account and describe how you plan to interact with us and any third-party providers that may provide services.

4. Please describe your experience in providing the following value-added services:

    a. Remote backup
    b. Network and email system monitoring
    c. Move, Add, Change (MAC)
    d. Hardware installation (SAN, Firewalls, Network switches)
    e. Technical support, including remote user support
    f. Implementation planning and guidance
    g. On-site implementation of business applications

5. Please describe your experience in providing server technology and service for your customers, focusing on planning, implementation, and ongoing support.

V. Financials

1. Describe the pricing model(s) that you typically employ for your standard services.

2. Please indicate the charges associated with each of the following services in U.S. dollars, including the key driver of each cost and whether it is included in a standard per-unit cost vs. charged on an ad hoc basis.
    - Remote backup including local backup device, minimum 10 TB local storage (On-site & Off-site backups) roughly 30 servers, Every 1 day for 30 days, every 1 month for 12 months, every 1 year for 3 years.
    - Technology strategy planning
    - Network and email system monitoring
    - Move, Add, Change (MAC)
    - Warranty, break fixes and installation
    - Technical support, including remote user support
    - Implementation planning and guidance
    - Life cycle management of hardware units

3. Do you offer service bundles and if so, describe the effect of this bundling on pricing?

Submission Requirements

A. Potential bidders must register by sending an email to Nick Pappada, npappada@ethra.org, to receive updated information and answers to questions that will be sent to all registered bidders.

B. All questions about this proposal should be directed to Nick Pappada, ETHRA, npappada@ethra.org.

C. ETHRA's Proposal Response page must be signed and submitted along with your responses to the specific questions identified herein. Additional documentation may be attached to this form.

D. Proposals must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. EST, Friday, December 29, 2023, to ETHRA's administrative offices at 9111 Cross Park Drive, Suite D-100, Knoxville.

E. Electronically transmitted submissions (Email or Fax) **will not be accepted**.

F. Bids must be addressed and mailed or hand-delivered to:
   ETHRA
   Attention: Nick Pappada
   9111 Cross Park Drive, Suite D-100 Knoxville, TN 37923

G. Envelopes containing the proposal should be clearly marked with
   "IT RFP Response – December 29, 2023"

H. ETHRA is not bound to accept the lowest bid. Other considerations will apply:
   - Demonstrated ability to provide necessary service and support
   - Technical certifications and experience
   - Demonstrated expertise in virtualization
   - Response time assurances
   - References

I. ETHRA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or any portion thereof.

J. ETHRA reserves the right to waive minor informalities or technicalities when it is in ETHRA's best interest.

K. ETHRA reserves the right, at its sole and absolute discretion, to amend or modify any provision of this RFP, or to withdraw this RFP at any time prior to contract award. ETHRA shall not be bound by or liable under this RFP and/or any response thereto until a final written contract has been executed by ETHRA and the vendor incorporating the terms and conditions of the award.

L. Vendors shall hold their price firm and subject to acceptance by ETHRA for a period of thirty (30) days from the date of proposal submission.

M. Vendors may be asked to provide proof of financial and business capability. Evidence could include a business history, evidence of financial soundness, and business references. ETHRA will make the final determination as to the bidder's ability.

N. Unsigned proposals will not be considered.

Review & Selection Criteria

ETHRA will use multiple criteria to select the most appropriate vendor. Respondents are encouraged to be as aggressive and creative as possible in their proposals. The following list summarizes the major qualitative areas that will be evaluated:

- Industry expertise and experience
- Demonstrated customer service quality and support
- Previous relevant experience
- Vendor strength and stability
- Account management
- Financial considerations

Announcement

Selection decisions are expected to be announced by January 19, 2024. All respondents will receive written notice as to whether or not your company was selected for this opportunity.

Contract Terms & Eligibility

Contract Term: Five (5) years from date of contract effective
Non-disbarment

Key Dates

DATE	ACTIVITY
11/13/23	RFP posted
11/24/23	Deadline to submit questions
11/27/23	Q&A posted to website
12/29/23	Deadline to submit initial proposals
12/29/23 – 1/5/24	Initial Proposal Review
1/8 – 1/16/24	Opportunity to Cure/Negotiations
1/16/24	Final Proposal Due
1/17 - 1/19/24	Final Proposal Review
1/19/24	Anticipated Selection Notification
4/23/24	Contract Start Date

General Terms & Conditions

No Guarantee

The submission of a proposal does not, in any way, guarantee a selection. ETHRA is not responsible for any costs incurred related to the preparation of a proposal in response to this RFP. ETHRA reserves the right to withdraw a selection prior to execution of a contract with a vendor in ETHRA's sole and absolute discretion.

ETHRA makes no guarantee of future volumes and offers volume information for directional purposes only, to assist vendors with proposal preparation.

Competitive Negotiation

Negotiations may be conducted with a select group of respondents based on an established competitive range or with just the apparent awarded respondent. Negotiations will be conducted in a manner that is fair to the respondent or respondents selected for further negotiation. If the Agency exercises its right to enter into negotiations, it may identify areas of a proposal that may require further clarification or areas in which it is apparent that there may have been miscommunications or misunderstandings as to the Agency's specifications or requirements. The Agency may seek to clarify those identified issues during negotiations and the opportunity to cure period. All responsive respondents or selected competitive range respondents will be given equivalent information with respect to cost negotiations. By their very nature, single respondent negotiations will not involve making all information as part of the negotiation available to other respondents who were not selected for further negotiation.

Agreement of Non-Disclosure

This document is considered to be proprietary and shall not be disclosed to any other party. It is designed, developed and submitted to potential partners of ETHRA solely for the benefit of ETHRA.

Proposal Response Cover Page – Managed IT Services RFP
12/29/2023

Vendor Name: _____   **Authorized Rep: _____**

Address: _____

Phone: _____   **Email: _____**

Item	Description	Rate
1	Remote monitoring/alerting of core virtual servers. Quantity 30. ETHRA does updates	
2	Managed Service Virtual Center	
3	Managed ESXi server for VMWare Hosts. (4 – Dell PowerEdge)	
4	Managed service for SAN. (HPE MSA 2060)	
5	Managed service for Firewalls (2 – FortiGate 200F)	
6	SSD Enhanced 16TB Backup Appliance (Will need to lease) Backup 30 servers, every 1 day for 30 days, every 1 month for 12 months, every 1 year for 3 years.	
7	Backup Offsite storage (Same backup schedule as onsite appliance)	
8	Managed Service 24x7x365 support	
9	Business Continuity: Offsite private cloud – DC virtual server, 2 vCPU, 8GB RAM	
10	Business Continuity: 10 mpbs internet connection for internet on DC above.	
11	Business Continuity: Managed firewall, dedicated VDOM for ETHRA to remotely connect to offsite DC.	
12	Business Continuity: DC offsite private cloud storage – 100GB	

Checklist of Required Sections:

	Service Requirements	
	Company Background	
	Support	
	Proposed Approach / Solution	
	Rates and Financials	

Signature: _____   **Date: _____**

Position: _____