



BERKELEY-CHARLESTON-DORCHESTER
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

PLANNING, PARTNERSHIP & PROSPERITY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Information Technology
Services

Issued: December 9, 2024
Responses Due: January 9, 2025

CONTACT:

Jason McGarry
Procurement/Contracts Administrator
jasonm@bcdcog.com

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**Request for Proposal
RFP # COG2024-07**

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

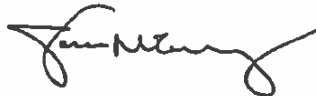
BCD Council of Governments will accept proposals from contractors to provide information technology services (in-house and remotely maintaining, monitoring, supporting) including telecommunication services/support for BCDCOG and entities within the Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties. Other entities include TriCounty Link, SC Works Trident, and Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority.

The deadline for firms to submit written questions for information and/or clarification is **December 20, 2024, by 3:00 PM EST.**

The deadline for receipt of submittals is **January 9, 2025, by 3:00 PM EST** to jasonm@bcdkog.com

This solicitation does not commit Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of proposals submitted, or to procure or contract for the services. Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) reserves the right to accept or reject, any, all, or any part of offers received as a result of this request, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this request for proposal if it is in the best interests of Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) to do so.

Sincerely,



Jason M. McGarry
*Contracts/Procurement Administrator
BCD Council of Governments*

Note: The deadline shown above **January 9, 2025** by 3:00 PM is extremely important. The completed proposal must have been received on or prior to that deadline.

1.0 Introduction

BCDCOG

The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) is a regional agency, which serves a three-county area in South Carolina. BCDCOG offers a wide variety of planning, economic development and social services in order to aid in the orderly growth and development of the area. The BCDCOG's primary objectives are to assist local governments develop local and regional plans within the tri-county region, as well as providing local governments with planning and technical support to improve the quality of life in the region. Please visit our website <http://bcdcog.com/> for additional information.

CARTA

CARTA was created in 1997 by adoption of a mutual agreement by the following jurisdictions: Charleston County, The City of Charleston, The City of Hanahan, and The City of Isle of Palms, The City of North Charleston, The Town of Kiawah Island, The Town of Mt. Pleasant, and The Town of Sullivan's Island. CARTA provides public transportation services within the member jurisdictions, with the authority to determine scope (routes, equipment, and facilities) and standards of the service to be provided. Please visit our website <https://www.ridecarta.com/> for additional information.

BCD-RTMA

In 1996, Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Counties agreed to invest in the cost for the startup of a rural transit service for the residents of the region. The Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester Rural Transportation Management Authority (BCD-RTMA) was created to operate this service. The BCD-RTMA service was implemented to provide a home-to-work option for rural residents. The funding from the three counties was programmed to last only three years, after which we were tasked with becoming self-sufficient. Please visit our website <http://ridetricountylink.com/> for additional information.

SC Works Trident

SC Works Trident connects businesses, job seekers, and training providers to create a pathway to employment in our region's leading industries. Our centers are operated by trained and motivated staff, representing a diverse number of agencies, who are ready to help you fulfill your employment needs. Please visit our website <https://www.scworkstrident.org/> for additional information.

1.1 Proposal Schedule

Proposals shall be solicited and evaluated by the following schedule:

Publish/Release Solicitation_____	December 9, 2024
Deadline for Written Questions_____	December 20, 2024 by 3:00 PM
Deadline for Proposals_____	January 9, 2025 by 3:00 PM

A. Submission

One (1) digital Proposal shall be emailed no later than 3:00 p.m. EST on January 9, 2025, to jasonm@bcdcog.com

Any proposals received after the scheduled deadline on the closing date will be immediately disqualified in accordance with BCDCOG policies.

B. Addenda

In the event it becomes necessary to revise any part of the RFP, addenda will be provided to all firms who received or requested the RFP document from BCDCOG.

C. Proposal review process

The procurement of these Firm's services will be in accordance with BCDCOG and other applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and procedures.

Proposals shall be submitted as set forth in this RFP. The selection committee will review and evaluate Proposals in accordance with the requirements and instructions contained in this RFP.

Following evaluation of the proposals, the Selection Committee may sub-select finalists who may be invited to participate in an interview, if necessary.

1.2 Instructions and General Conditions

A. Firms Responsibility

Firms shall fully acquaint itself with the conditions relating to the scope and restrictions attending the execution of the services under the conditions of the RFP. The failure or omission of a Firm to acquaint itself with the existing conditions shall in no way relieve it of any obligation with respect to the proposal submitted by the Firm to any contract resulting from this RFP.

B. Duty To Inquire

Should a Firm find discrepancies or omissions in this RFP, or should the Firm be in doubt as to the meanings, the Firm shall at once notify BCDCOG in writing prior to the last day for written questions. If additional clarification is warranted, a written addendum will be sent to all persons or firms receiving this RFP.

C. Signature Requirements

Only authorized officers eligible to sign contract documents will be accepted. Consortiums, joint ventures, or teams submitting proposals, although permitted and encouraged, will not be considered responsive unless it is established that all contractual responsibility rests solely with one contractor or one legal entity. This proposal should indicate the responsible entity. Firms should be aware that joint responsibility and liability will attach to any resulting contract and failure of one party in a joint venture to perform will not relieve the other party or parties of total responsibility for performance.

D. Waiver

By submission of its proposal, the Firm represents and warrants that it has sufficiently informed itself in all matters affecting the performance of the work or the furnishing of the labor, services, supplies, materials, or equipment called for in the solicitation; that it has checked the proposal for errors and omissions; that the prices and costs stated in its proposal are intended by it; and, are a complete and correct statement of its prices and costs for providing the labor, services, supplies, materials, or equipment required.

E. Confidential Information

All proposals received become the exclusive property of BCDCOG. At such time, as a Contract is agreed to by the contractor and the Board, all proposals submitted will become a matter of public record and shall be regarded as public records, with the exception of those elements in each proposal which constitute confidential and proprietary information or trade secrets as those terms are used in S.C. Code Ann. §§ 11-34-410 and 30-4- 40(a)(1) and which are so marked as "TRADE SECRET," "CONFIDENTIAL" or "PROPRIETARY." However, proposals which indiscriminately identify all or most of the proposal as exempt from disclosure without justification may be released pursuant to a freedom of information request. BCDCOG shall not in any way be liable or responsible to any Firm or other person for any disclosure of any such records or portions thereof, whether the disclosure is deemed to be required by law, by an order of a court, or occurs through inadvertence, mistake, or negligence on the part of BCDCOG or its officers, agents, or employees. Any legal costs associated with determination of what is excluded or included in a public records request is at the expense of the Firm.

Firms should not simply mark their entire proposal as Confidential or exempt from Freedom of Information Act. Doing so will result in BCDCOG making an independent determination of confidentiality or exemption. BCDCOG further hereby disclaims any responsibility for any information which is disclosed as a result of Firms such independent determination of confidentiality or exemption necessitated by the Firms failure to properly follow this section.

F. Revisions To RFP

BCDCOG reserves the right, when necessary, to postpone the times in which proposals are scheduled to be received and opened, and to amend part or all of the RFP. Prompt notification of such postponement or amendment shall be given to all perspective Firms who have requested or received copies of the RFP. Receipt of all addenda must be acknowledged in the proposals received by BCDCOG.

G. Protest Procedures

Any prospective Firm or contractor who is aggrieved in connection with the solicitation of a contract may protest to BCDCOG. Any such protest must be delivered in writing within five days of the issuance of the RFP. Or within five days of the amendment there to if the amendment is the issue. A protest must set forth all specific grounds of protest in detail and explain the factual and legal basis for each issue raised. This project is to be funded in part by FTA and is subject to FTA rules and regulations. FTA only accepts protests alleging that a grantee fails to have written protest procedures or has violated such procedures or fails to review a complaint or protest.

H. Withdrawal of Proposal

No proposal may be withdrawn after the proposals have been opened.

I. Reserved Right

All Firms are notified that the contract for this service is contingent upon Federal and State appropriations. In the event that funding is eliminated, decreased, or not granted, BCDCOG reserves the right to terminate any RFP; any contract awarded hereunder or modifies any contract or this RFP accordingly. BCDCOG makes no representations that any contract will be awarded to any Firm responding to this RFP.

- BCDCOG reserves the right to waive any minor irregularities in any and all Proposals.
- BCDCOG reserves the right to reject all Proposals and re-solicit or cancel this

procurement if deemed by BCDCOG to be in its best interest, without indicating any reason for such rejection(s).

- BCDCOG also reserves the right to enter into a contract with any Firm based upon the initial Proposal or on the basis of a best and final offer without conducting oral interviews.

J. Prohibited Interest

No member, officer, employee of BCDCOG or member of its Board during his/her tenure or one year thereafter, shall have any interest, direct or indirect, in any resultant contract or the proceeds thereof.

K. Notice To Proceed

The Firm shall be issued a written Notice to Proceed. Any services provided prior to receipt of the Notice to Proceed shall be at the sole risk and expense to the Firm.

L. Labor Provisions

South Carolina is a Right-to-Work state. The successful Firm shall be responsible for compliance with all applicable requirements of 49 USC § 5333(b).

M. Cost of Proposal Preparation

BCDCOG shall not be responsible for any cost or expenses incurred for preparation of the Proposal in response to this RFP. Firms shall not include such expenses as a part of the price proposed. BCDCOG and the BCD Council of Governments shall be held harmless and free from any and all liability, claims, or expenses whatsoever, incurred by, or on behalf of any person or organization responding to this RFP. Costs related to Proposal preparation include, but shall not be limited to the following:

- Preparing proposals in response to this RFP.
- Negotiations with BCD Council of Governments on any matter related to this procurement.
- Costs associated with interviews, meetings, travel, or presentations.
- Other expenses incurred by a Firm prior to formal Notice to Proceed for any agreement.

2.0 Scope of Work

The BCD Council of Governments is issuing this RFP to qualified vendors to provide information technology services (in-house and remotely maintaining, monitoring, supporting) including telecommunication services/support to include the following:

- Hardware/Software/OS Maintenance & Care
- Desktop Care
- Server Maintenance & Care
- Firewall Monitoring & Remediation
- Executive Advisory Services:
 - IT Strategy Development
 - IT Program Management

- IT Governance
- IT Risk Management
- Miscellaneous IT Projects
- Telecommunications Support

Applicants should submit proposals to the BCDCOG that include:

- Outline of statement of work for both IT and Telecommunications
- Contractor's current pricing schedule

2.1 Preferred Qualifications

Providers should have significant experience managing an outsourced IT platform for small organizations. Providers must have expertise in all Microsoft products including but not limited to MS Office, ArcGIS and Share File. Further, providers must have proven track records of managing cloud environments. Providers must have an immediate response for technical support during regular business hours and must be available to come on-site within 24 hours.

Providers should provide the BCDCOG with a management portal that shows all servers and workstations and the health of each item. The portal should also serve as an inventory of assets, displaying the details of each device (including but not limited to: serial number, memory, etc.).

2.2 Services

Contractor will provide the necessary qualified resources for support of desktop and server related issues. Monitoring and incident response services will be provided to the BCDCOG at an unlimited basis. Emergency work orders should be provided at least 3 times per month at no additional charge.

Proactive services including patch management and antivirus and support tools will be provided. Contractor will provide maintenance activities on included devices such as the application and vendor provided software and firmware updates.

Contractor will provide the following contract services as part of the monthly fee:

- Server monitoring and maintenance
- Workstation monitoring and maintenance
- Monitor and maintain best security practices on servers and workstations
- Patch/software update management on servers and workstations
- Support services for workstations and servers
- Install, monitor and maintain virus protection services
- Install and manage protective web filtering
- Provide inventory reporting via the customer portal
- Provide service analysis reports to BCDCOG upon request or schedule
- Install and configure software purchased by the BCDCOG
- Advise BCDCOG on future anticipated software and hardware needs
- Monthly Executive Summary emailed once per month

Provide 2-step authentication services

Server and workstation monitoring and maintenance – Servers and workstations are continuously monitored by an automated system and reviewed by contractor for anomalies or issues.

Monitor and maintain best security practices on servers and workstations

Security is the first concern. Events should be monitored to identify security risks. Continuous research should be performed on security advancements to keep all systems safe and secure. Provide phishing testing exercises and cybersecurity training for staff.

Patch/software update management on servers and workstations

Operating system and common software patches/updates should be installed on a regular schedule.

Install, monitor and maintain virus protection software

Antivirus software should be installed and configured on each monitored system. Issues with antivirus software will be resolved as necessary. Logs from the antivirus will be reviewed and virus issues handled immediately.

Install and manage protective web filtering

A web filter should be installed and configured to protect from access to malicious websites.

Provide inventory reporting to BCDCOG

Inventory reports should be made available to the BCDCOG via a web portal.

Provide service analysis reports

Reports should be provided upon request or a regular schedule.

Install and configure software purchased by the BCDCOG

Contractor will assist BCDCOG with installation of software as needed.

Advise BCDCOG on future/anticipated software and hardware needs

Contractor will make recommendations on hardware and software as needed.

Monthly Executive Summary

A high level report of work completed will be provided on a monthly basis.

Contractor will provide hosted offsite backup services for servers.**2.3 Email Hosting**

Contractor will provide hosted Microsoft Exchange services with spam filtering. Contractor will provide 50 GB of storage per user. Contractor will provide the BCDCOG with a firewall to help prevent unauthorized access to email data, which will consist of hardware and software designed and configured to control or limit access to computer and network resources. Contractor will configure the firewall, provide intrusion testing, and upgrade and update the firewall. Contractor should immediately notify the BCDCOG of any breach of the firewall.

2.4 Equipment Totals by Location

BCDCOG

- 4 servers
- 94 workstations
- 1 Firewall
- 53 Email Accounts with backups
- 59 2-step Authentication services

SC Works Charleston locations:

- 3 servers
- 94 workstations
- 3 Firewalls

TriCounty Link location:

- 2 servers
- 13 workstations
- 1 Firewall

11 Email Accounts (Home Telecom) with backups

CARTA Leeds Avenue location:

- 6 servers
- 10 workstations
- 1 Firewall
- 14 Email Accounts with backups

3.0 Proposal Content and Outline

Section 1: Proposal coverage

Cover the scope of work and general objectives to which the proposal is addressed.

Section 2: Prior and current experience

Include a list of projects currently in progress or completed within the last two years which are relevant to the type of project effort proposed. Include the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of contact points with those clients. BCDCOG reserves the right to request information from any source so named. Provide a minimum of three (3) references that demonstrate your experience. A contact person with telephone number for each reference should be included.

Section 3: Qualifications of Project Team and Key Personnel

Does the staff assigned to the project have the necessary skills to carry out the tasks? Is there a sufficient number of staff available to get the work finished in a timely manner? Who will be key staff dedicated to the project?

Section 4: Signature

The proposal shall be signed by an official authorized to bind the Firm, and shall contain a statement to the effect that the proposal is a firm offer for a ninety (90) day period. The proposal shall also provide the name, title, address, and telephone number of the individual(s) with authority to negotiate, and contractually bind the company, and also the identity of the person who shall be contacted during the period of proposal evaluation and negotiation.

Section 5: Provide any pertinent information needed to describe your services.

Section 6: Provide detailed pricing schedule.

4.0 Evaluation Criteria

The proposal will be evaluated on the following categories listed below.

- I. Qualifications and Experience of the Firm – 40%
- II. Personnel; Knowledge and Experience of Key Individuals - 20%
- III. Cost Proposal – 30%
- IV References – 10%

