Analysis of IT Infrastructure and Plan for Disaster Recovery

Response to Questions Regarding RFP 180-13-02
Updated August 20, 2013

1. Is there a 3 to 5 year IT Strategic Plan that would provide insight into plans to out-source any technologies?

Response: There are no plans to out-source any technologies in the future.

2. In the RFP 2.04 Scope of Work paragraph 1 says the results of the project is to recommend a contingency plan. However, on the following page item #8 say to "Develop an IT Contingency Plan for restoring damaged systems". Is the project to recommend a contingency strategy or to develop one?

Response: The successful bidder will need to develop the contingency plan.

3. On page 9 of the RFP, items #11 - #14 appear to support recommending a contingency strategy. Is this correct or is the successful bidder expected to build the actual plans, discuss cold, warm, hot-site options, etc?

Response: The successful bidder will need to build the actual plans, discuss cold, warm, hot-site options, etc. and provide a recommendation that best supports the Court's mission.

4. In the RFP you mention two data centers, one on the grounds of the ND State Capitol and the second is the JBIT server room. Can you tell us where the JBIT server room is located and provide a list of the servers in each location?

Response: There is only one server room. The JBIT server room is the server room that is located on the grounds of the North Dakota State Capitol and is maintained by ITD. A complete list of servers will be provided to the successful bidder. In the meantime, the JBIT server room houses approximately 80 servers. The majority of the 80 servers are virtual servers using blade hardware technology and VMware. Approximately 10 percent of the 80 servers are conventional / rack mounted / physical servers.

5. Item 6 of what the vendor will be asked to do asks for a "Business Impact Analysis to identify and prioritize critical IT systems. By referring to "IT systems", are you referring to the various court systems, the systems used by IT for operational purposes to run the business, or both?

Response: It is a reference to both.

6. Will the scope of work include the Municipal Court systems?

Response: Yes, it applies to some municipals. There are 14 municipals that use the District Court Case Management System along with the 53 district courts.

7. If the scope of work includes the municipal courts, is the data (technology & physically) co-located with the other court branches?
Response: Yes, the data for these 14 municipals are co-located (technology and physically) on the same servers as the 53 district courts. There are also plans to add additional municipals in the same manner as the first 14 municipals.

8. If the municipal court data is not on the same servers as the other court data, how many are "stand-alone" and where are they located?

Response: Data for those municipal courts that are not using the district court case management system is housed locally and is outside the scope of this project.

9. With regard to the conduct of the BIA (Business Impact Analysis), has a "Recovery Time" been established or is it the intent that the retained consultant determine this with input from court staff?

Response: An exercise was conducted in 2010 to establish suggested "recovery times and system dependencies" for each system/server. This information can be used by the selected vendor along with input from court staff as a starting point, but needs to be reassessed and brought up to date.

10. Has a list of "Known vulnerabilities" been established or a "Vulnerability Assessment" been conducted?

Response: No. This must be completed by the vendor.

11. If vulnerabilities assessment has been conducted, will that document be provided to the retained consultant?

Response: A vulnerabilities assessment does not exist.

12. Are there any "Stand-Alone" software applications?

Response: The Courts don't have any true "Stand-Alone" applications. Every application requires a commercially available operating system and industry compatible hardware.

14. Under "Scope of Work" (Page 8), item 8. "Develop an IT Contingency Plan for restoring damaged systems", Can you please provide specific details on this deliverable. Is this deliverable to be a strategy-specific based document or a procedural/protocol document?

>Response: The Court is looking for a strategy-specific based document that would explain at a high level the various steps required to restore the computer systems to normal operations. The plan must be comprehensive, however not to the level of how to use specific software or where to click to perform certain actions.

15. What is the estimated number of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) on the IT side and on the Business side that will need to be available for the Business Impact Analysis (BIA)?

>Response: The court expects to make approximately 8 IT staff and 10 subject matter experts available to assist with this analysis. Although there will be a small core group of staff assigned to the project, the composition of other staff working on it may change as different business units of the court system are analyzed.

16. Will Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from the Executive Branch Information Technology Department (ITD) be participants in the project?

>Response: Yes. We have a very cooperative working relationship with ITD and expect that they will engage in the project as needed. ITD is aware of this project and supported our request to the state legislature to fund the project.

17. What information is available on the existing structure of the Court IT Disaster Recovery Organization?

>Response: A very high level Continuance of Government (COG)/Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) plan exists and will be provided to the successful bidder.

18. Does the court system have a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)?

>Response: Yes. A very high level plan exists. The COG/COOP plan was last updated in 2013. It is expected that the COG/COOP plan will be reviewed and updated as part of this project.

19. What is the date of the latest updates to the IT Disaster Recovery (DR) plan?

>Response: An official disaster recovery plan, apart from the COG/COOP does not exist.

20. What was the date of the latest functional test of the IT Disaster Recovery plan?

Response: Not Applicable. Please see responses to questions 17 – 19.

21. How often is the current backup system tested to see if it successfully restores all the servers?

Response: The system has never been tested.

22. Are IT operations on a shift rotation, i.e. 24 hour operation, 7 days a week?

Response: No. Regular IT operations are Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., with network staff available on an on-call status for weekends and holidays.

23. Are there any planned significant technology upgrades to hardware/software/telecommunication systems within the next 12 months?

Response: No significant upgrades are anticipated however routine upgrades to VMware, SQL servers and disk capacity are planned.

24. How many remote locations are in scope?

Response: Every major courthouse and courtroom has a digital audio PC that temporarily holds daily audio recordings until they are copied to a mid-tier server for permanent storage. There are approximately 90 of these courtroom PCs. There are currently three older mid-tier servers that are located at remote sites and three new mid-tier servicers that are located in the ITD server room. The three older servers will be decommissioned by the end of 2014.

25. Roughly, what is the number of additional applications in scope, aside from those specifically called out in the RFP?

Response: There are approximately 20 other applications.

26. Can you please provide an organization chart that depicts the various business/operations departments, as well as an idea of who owns which in the scope of application?

Response: All applications are universally owned by all departments. We have a very flat organization, with a single IT plan and a single IT department. However, in general, the Supreme Court utilizes the SCDS program for its day-to-day business, the District Court uses the Odyssey program for its day-to-day business, and the Juvenile Court uses the JCMS program for its day-to-day business.   Digital audio systems and interactive video systems are used throughout all levels of the court.

27. Who approves that the in-scope components of the Business Impact Analysis (BIA) are complete and accurate?

Response: The Operations Oversight Group that the court appoints to oversee this project.

28. Are any of the services provided by external entities in scope? If so, please list the services by vendor.

Response: There are no services in scope that are provided by external entities except those identified in the RFP as being provided by the North Dakota Information and Technology Department (ITD).

29. Is there any current documentation? Including documentation of the network?

Response: Yes, but this information will be provided to the successful bidder only.

30. How many severs in scope?

Response: The JBIT server room houses approximately 80 servers. The majority of the 80 servers are virtual servers using blade hardware technology and VMware. Approximately 10 percent of the 80 servers are conventional, rack-mounted physical servers.

31. How many workstations in scope?

Response: Approximately 700.

32. How many sites in scope?

Response: All 53 district courts, the supreme court and 14 municipal courts.

33. How many Windows, AS400s, etc. Are in scope?

Response: We use Windows only.

34. Application lists that are in scope?

Response: A list of all applications in scope will be provided to the successful bidder. There are approximately 20 applications in scope besides those specifically identified in the RFP.

35. What are the on-site requirements for this project?

> Response: Vendors are expected to be on-site in Bismarck for initial fact-finding and interview sessions.   Most other work, including follow-up interviews, can be done remotely.

36. Will the fact-finding , interviews, and work sessions that may be necessary from several parties within the state be held in one location, or will the vendor need to travel to several locations?

> Response: All interviews and works sessions are expected to take place within the city of Bismarck. Vendors may plan on one additional trip to another location within the state if a site visit to a potential third-party disaster recovery facility is necessary.

37. Section 1.04 of the RFP states the requirement of an electronic copy of the proposal upon submittal. Should this be sent via email or included on a CD? Can the electronic version of our proposal be in PDF format?

> Response: The electronic copy should be submitted via CD or flash drive and should be included in the package with the paper copy of your proposal.

38. Section 6.05 of the RFP states that subcontractors may not be used without prior approval of the state. May we propose a subcontractor in our proposal as part of our project team as a way to receive prior approval?

> Response: Yes. If you are contemplating using subcontractors for any part of the project, please include in your proposal the company name of the subcontractor, and if known, the names and experience of the principle staff from that company who you expect to be assigned to work on this project.