REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS NO.23-01

ENTERPRISE RESOURCES PLANNING (ERP) SOFTWARE AND IMPLEMENTATION SERVICES (ERP SYSTEM)

Response to Questions

1. **Question:**

   Can companies from outside the USA apply for this?

   Answer:

   Foreign companies can apply for this, as long as they are properly registered to do business in the U.S. and in California.

2. **Question:**

   Does the City require the meetings between the Contractor and City to be virtual or in-person?

   Answer:

   For convenience and cost savings, we prefer virtual meetings where possible. If there is a specific need for in-person meetings, the proposal should include all costs related to travel, lodging, overtime, etc. to facilitate those meetings.

3. **Question:**

   Can the Contractor perform the tasks outside of the USA?

   Answer:

   Work can be performed outside of the USA, if the Contractor is properly registered to do business in the U.S and in California.

4. **Question:**

   Can proposals be submitted via email?

   Answer:

   Proposals must be uploaded to https://app.sharebase.com/#/folder/1108/share/583-iwnqSXOySBFpA-8DBXZK428agtg before the Submission Deadline.

5. **Question:**

   Based off the RFP release date, did the timeline for the RFP get extended?

   Answer:

   No changes have been made to the RFP schedule since the initial RFP release date of August 18, 2022. The schedule is listed on page 4 of the RFP.

6. **Question:**

   Can the RFP Exhibits, A through L be provided in a workable format (i.e. MS Word or Excel)?

Answer:

An Excel workbook with Exhibits C, D, F and I has been posted on the City's website at https://www.escondido.org/purchasing as an addendum No. 1 to the RFP. Refer to the RFP instructions to complete the forms. Exhibits A, B, E,G, H,J,K and L are documents that shall not be modified.

7. **Question:**

Would it be possible to receive the functional checklist via Word Doc?

Answer:

Please see answer to question No. 6 above.

8. **Question:**

Does the City have an anticipated go-live date?

Answer:

We recognize that a final go-live date will depend on the chosen solution, speed of implementation, and other factors, including prioritization of calendar year versus fiscal year boundaries. As such we are not entering this project with a hard cut-off date for the go live. Our initial goal for a realistic go-live date is listed in item 4 of the proposal requirements on page 8 of the RFP but is subject to change.

9. **Question:**

Has the City identified a budget for this initiative, and if so, is it possible to share?

Answer:

Funds have been set aside for project implementation; the full budget will be determined based on the product selection and scope of functionality provided.

10. **Question:**

How many users will be using the ERP system?

Answer:

For internal users, we expect that all City employees will be using a time & attendance component for time tracking and leave scheduling, as well as employee self-service functionality for Payroll (electronic paycheck advice viewing, withholding, direct deposit configuration, etc.). Approximate number of full-time and total number of City employees is on page 3 of the RFP. For external users (public transparency), we don't know in advance how many might want to take advantage of that, but the City's total population is also listed on page 3.

11. **Question:**

Please provide the number of ERP users in each functional department?

Answer:

- Finance/Utility Billing/Payroll: 28 Finance Staff (out of 28, 8 UB and 3 Payroll)
- Distributed purchasing requisition and approvals: 109 Requestors & 140 Approvers
- HR/Benefits/Risk Management: 15
- Other general employee users: See page 3 of the RFP for count of employees

12. **Question:**

Utility Billing is listed as another module that is being considered. What criteria is being used to determine whether the current billing system will be replaced?

Answer:

- Overall ease of use for customer service representatives
- Self-service capabilities for customers
- Public transparency capabilities
- interfacing capabilities for financial data and chart of accounts information with the new ERP solution
- interfacing capabilities for field work orders and other data with our Cityworks AMS system used by Utilities
- Interfacing capabilities for bill generation data to InfoSend, and invoice data out/real-time payments data in with Invoice Cloud
- Reporting and querying capabilities (internal analysis, water agency and state/federal regulations, etc.)
- Total cost of ownership of the solution versus our on-premises Oracle Customer Care & Billing

13. **Question:**

If Utility Billing is selected, is the implementation planned to be a staggered approach?

Answer:

Utility Billing is currently a separate system from our ERP, with separate users and internal technical support staff. We are open to a concurrent or staggered implementation approach, based on vendor and implementor capacity. If the proposal includes Utility Billing, please indicate vendor/implementor's preferred approach to implementation in addition to the ERP implementation.

14. **Question:**

Has the City of Escondido received Federal approval to apply CSLFRF funds to this project?

Answer:

The Federal Treasury Department is not pre-approving proposed expenditures of CSLFRF Funds. City Council approved the use of funds for the ERP system on 09/29/2021.

15. **Question:**

Please provide the proposal scoring criteria and relevant points and weighting.

Answer:

The evaluation criteria have been posted as addendum No. 1 to the RFP. Please refer to the Contract Selection Process pg.5 of the RFP for additional information on the evaluation process.

16. **Question:**

Have City technical and functional experts been assigned to the project, and if so, how many experts and for what percentage of time?

Answer:

- The ERP project is top priority for 3 Information System technical staff for 2023.
- Finance has assigned 4 functional experts, at a minimum 25% of their time will be devoted to the project.
- HR/Benefits/Risk Management: 4 functional experts up to 50% as required for 2023.
- City Attorney: One functional expert, at a minimum of 30%.
- Other general employee users: See answer to question No.10

17. **Question:**
    Section I.10 indicates that Utility Billing modules will be considered but are not required. However, Exhibit C, Utility Billing requirements, identify multiple "Required" billing requirements. Please confirm whether Utility Billing functionality is required or optional.
    Answer:
    The offering of a Utility Billing system is optional in the proposal response. If the respondent does not offer Utility Billing functionality, or chooses not to propose it, we will still consider the proposal for ERP functionality. If the responding vendor wishes to propose a Utility Billing system as a part of , or working closely in conjunction with, their ERP proposal, they are invited to do so. In that case, the items marked as required in the Utility Billing list will be required for us to consider adopting the Utility Billing system in addition to the ERP system.

18. **Question:**
    Section 1.10 indicates Central Cashiering is a required financial module. However, the Chart of City Applications in the same section references "...if Cashiering is replaced" for both Amelia SmartRec and 3rd party payments. Please confirm whether cashiering functionality is required or optional.
    Answer:
    This was a mistake in the RFP creation. Centralized cashiering is not currently being used, and is optional "nice to have" functionality that will be considered during the proposal selection process.

19. **Question:**
    Budgeting 12 - What is the intended purpose of this requirement? What variables would be modeled?
    Answer:
    The purpose if this requirement is to allow for the development of several alternate department budget scenarios within the same fiscal year during the budget preparation process and to be able to choose one scenario that will move forward and be included in the budget document. This tool is helpful when trying to balance a tight budget. It would allow the department to change or model any line item within their budget.

20. **Question:**
    Budgeting 16 - What is the intended purpose of this requirement? Is it expected that the 12 monthly spread be a manual or automated process?
    Answer:
    The purpose of this requirement is to allow for manual budgeting on a monthly basis that can be used for certain line items that have a seasonal trend, etc. These monthly amounts would automatically roll up into the annual budgeted line item.

21. **Question:**
    Budgeting 20 - What is the intended purpose of this requirement? Is this intended to be Cost Allocation?

Answer:
The purpose of this requirement is to allow for various internal services funds to automatically post charges to departments or an allocation of their costs to specific related accounts of other departments based on various calculation methodologies.

22. **Question:**
Cashiering 3 - Please provide more information about to provide support for multiple cashiers/cash drawers.
Answer:
Payments are collected at various locations Citywide, currently 10 different locations with armored truck bank deposit pickups. The cashiering system will need to be able to track/report payments taken by each specific location in order to reconcile the bank deposits. Multiple cashiers are also at each location, the cashiering system must have the appropriate internal controls for each cashier to balance and close their cash drawers.

23. **Question:**
Cashiering 5 - Please provide examples of other City receivable and third-party applications and how you intend for them to interface/interact with the ERP system.
Answer:
The City uses separate Collections Software and an outside Collections Agency for various types of payments, neither currently interface with the ERP system.

24. **Question:**
Cashiering 7 - Please provide more information on specifics of intent of this requirement.
Answer:
The PCI Security Standards Council (https://www.pcisecuritystandards.org/) sets the data security standards for payment card handling. Our chosen solution, if it will be accepting payments, must adhere to these standards for us to meet our security compliance requirements with our merchant providers.

25. **Question:**
Cashiering 9 - Please provide the intent of this requirement.
Answer:
The City is seeking a cashiering system that either provides the equipment for POS terminals or is capable of working with terminal equipment that would be provided by the bank/merchant services.

26. **Question:**
Cashiering 13 - Please provide the intent of this requirement. Is it your expectation that the “Portal” will process the payment?
Answer:
The City uses a third-party vendor, Invoice Cloud, to process payments. The City is seeking a cashiering system that has a public facing component that is able to take customer payments online.

27. **Question:**

Would the City consider submissions proposing only a best-of-breed solution ("point" solution) for utility billing instead of a submission addressing the combined requirements for all components?

Answer:

No, for the City to consider a Utility Billing system, the vendor would need to address the requirements as listed.

28. Question:

The RFP states that Pricing Assumptions are due on September 15, can we have more detail on what the expectation is for that submission?

Answer:

We anticipate that most vendors will use some set of metrics to determine the pricing of their system. Whether per-user, per-population, per annual budget, or something else. We would like to give proposers the courtesy of reviewing the underlying assumptions they are planning to use in pricing out their proposed solution. The intention is to help avoid any misunderstandings around pricing that could affect the consideration of a given proposal.

29. Question:

How many retirees do you track and what is the process for their pay and benefits?

Answer:

We currently have 167 retirees on retiree medical. Retirees are currently entered in the system for tracking purposes only. Invoices are mailed to retirees by the Finance department for any retiree who is pre-Medicare (under age 65). Retirees have the option to auto pay for their benefits from their financial institution or by mailing in a check to the City. For any retiree age 65 or over, billing is processed by the insurance provider.

30. Question:

What internal organizational change management, communications, and training capabilities/resources do you have or expect to have for this project? Do you expect the development of end-user training materials (job aids, videos, PPTs, etc.) to be created internally by the City's internal team, or by your selected ERP implementation partner?

Answer:

The City change management process is informal. Our expectation is that the selected vendor and/or implementation partner, will develop and provide necessary development and training materials, and conduct training sessions for our internal support team. We would prefer the training materials be in a format that can be internally modified into the future as necessary for upgrades, etc.

31. Question:

Have you conducted any stakeholder or pre-evaluation readiness assessments related to this initiative? If so, what were the results?

Answer:

Yes. Prior to implementation start ,we will internally build out current state diagrams.

32. Question:

Have you defined your guiding principles, objectives, value statements and/or success metrics for the project? If so, can you share a reference to what has been defined?

Answer:

Definitions:

Guiding Principles: The city of Escondido's guiding principles are Safety, Cleanliness, and Efficiency

Objectives: have been defined in the RFP, please refer to pg. 3 of the RFP.

Value Statement: See Guiding Principles above.

33. **Question:**
    Do you have a strategy for sharing information to downstream internal and external systems? Do you currently have systems in place that manage the sharing of information between internal systems?
    Answer:
    There is no overall strategy in our system interfacing. Typically, each interface was developed in a standalone manner using the most expedient tools. We do not have any systems in place for managing information sharing.

34. **Question:**
    Have you defined the future of reporting for your organization? Do you know which of your reports are mandatory/regulatory versus required to manage employees or required to run your operations? Do you know what reports or analytics city leaders would like out of the new system?
    Answer:
    We currently do not have a "defined data and reporting" strategy, but our primary goal is to move away from predefined, static reports, where possible. We would like to take advantage of live connections between data points in the system, as well as dashboarding and live task lists to drive work focus. We do have a reporting inventory, and are aware of which reports are required for regulatory purposes.

35. **Question:**
    Within the timeframe of the project, do you plan to undertake any other large projects that could restrict the time of the city of Escondido's internal resources to maintain your desired timeframe for go live?
    Answer:
    The ERP project is the city of Escondido's top priority project. At this moment we do not anticipate any other project that may emerge and would restrict the time of the city of Escondido's internal resources to maintain our desired timeframe for go live.

36. **Question:**
    HR QS 17. Send iCal appointments to schedule interviews with job candidates. – We would like to better understand the iCal appointment requirements; is this similar to an Outlook or Google Calendar?
    Answer:
    iCal is short for iCalendar, an Internet standard format for calendar/schedule exchange, is defined in RFC 5545 (https://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc5545). Ideally any appointments emailed from the system would adhere to this standard, to maximize compatibility with any calendaring system the recipient may use.

37. **Question:**

HR QS 43. Employee Self-Service: view leave balances, request leaves, view pay advices and W2, Federal and State withholding adjustments, direct deposit changes, contacts, address, benefit elections, dependent changes, etc. with one or more approvals before posting. With security features. Describe internal and external access ability. – Can you verify what is meant by external access ability?

Answer:

"External access" was a mistake added during requirements gathering. Our current system is on-premise and firewalled off from anyone outside our network. This consideration will of course not apply to a SaaS or cloud-hosted solution. If you are proposing or offering as an option an on-premise solution, please indicate in general terms what best practices you recommend to provide access to users outside of the local environment, and whether those users would or should have any particular limitations placed upon them.

38. Question:

HR – Publish Compensation and classification information for other cities and public records requests – Can we get clarification on if the compensation is to be stored in the new ERP and needs to be published to external sites or provided in a report if public records requests are received?

Answer:

A report is needed to post on our website and to provide upon request.

39. Question:

HR QS 48 – Publish salary tables and job descriptions on a regular basis - Is this a report that is accessed internally by folks with proper security? Or something else?

Answer:

Salary Tables would be reports as well as data fields to look up; Job Descriptions would be individual documents; both would be accessible via MSS and eventually ESS.

40. Question:

Benefits – Support donated leave based on leave dollars donated. Converted to match employee's rate. - Can you clarify what the desired end result is? If Bob makes $30/hr. and he donates 100 hours to Bill and he makes $40/hr. Do we just want to make sure those hours pay out at $40 for a total $4000?

Answer:

Correct.

41. Question:

Benefits – Employee Self-Service: view leave balances, request leaves, view pay advices, W2, direct deposit changes, contacts, address, benefit elections, dependent changes, etc. with approval step before posting. With security features. Describe internal and external access ability. – This is a very similar question to #43. We would just like to verify what is meant by external access ability?

Answer:

Please see answer to question No. 37.

42. Question:

Benefits – Online open enrollment and life benefit changes with update to employee record band carriers for benefit elections. Upload and attach scanned dependent verification documents, e.g., birth and marriage certificates, divorce decrees, etc. during enrollment. Describe internal and external access ability. – Again, requesting clarification on external access ability.

Answer:

Please see answer to question No. 37.

43. **Question:**

Risk Management – Track liability and property insurance claims. – Where would this information be stored? On an employee? Department?

Answer:

Claims against the City are stored in a custom-developed subsystem in our PeopleSoft Financials system. We pull records with claim number, incident date, and claimant's name.

Property and Vehicle damage records are saved under Health and Safety and tied to vehicles and employees under Subrogation. We are able to pull records by file number, file name, employee ID, vehicle / equipment number, and incident date.

Employee vehicle accidents are also recorded under Health and Safety by employee ID and name. We are able to upload photos and documents to individual records.

44. **Question:**

Timekeeping – Ability to hide complexity of charge and activity codes behind user friendly descriptions of these codes. – An example of this would be very helpful. Currently, do employees have to enter the entire financial string to charge their time?

Answer:

Currently our process is based on time entry into Excel workbooks to generate a time card which is printed and hand entered per pay period. There is a cell in which the employee enters a program or project number override. In an electronic time and attendance system, we would like users to be able to specify chart of accounts overrides that are configurable to be as simple to use and targeted as possible, typically to the department, or in some cases to the individual employee. For example, an employee in Public Works should have a configured list of program code overrides that correspond to the specific job duties they are required to track by time spent. Ideally, this list would be by the description of the duty, rather than the numeric code, for ease of use.

45. **Question:**

Timekeeping - Ability for an employee to define preferred depletion order for paid time off, and not have to specify the type of paid time of take when leave is requested, e.g., Floating Holiday Bank, Accrued Comp Time, Vacation Bank, Reserve Leave Bank. – Could the City expand on this so we can better understand this requirement? We can allow employees leave types to go into one single PTO bank and they can request different time off types that come from that single bank… is the what the City is looking for? Or does the employee set up the rules in advance and they request PTO and the system knows they want to first to use Floating Holiday? If it's the latter, is this employee by employee, so they can be different?

Answer:

We cannot use a single PTO bank. The City has a number of different types of discretionary leave banks, depending upon bargaining group, which are subject to varying restrictions. For example, there are leave banks that are a single dump of hours at the beginning of the year, and are lost if they are not used by the end of that year. There are banks used to accrue holiday time by employees for whom a holiday falls on a regularly scheduled day off. There are also separate vacation and reserve banks. By City policy, all vacation time must be expended before using time from the reserve bank. A nice-to-have feature for the employee would be the ability to request time off as a generic schedule placeholder. When it comes time to bring that time off period into the Payroll process for payout, the system would follow a hierarchy of banks as defined by the user. For example, perhaps they want to first draw from the "use it or lose it" bank. Then when that is exhausted, use the holiday float bank, then any accrued comp time, and finally vacation time. This would prevent the user from having to manually calculate and use the hours within their banks when taking PTO. Ideally this would be optional for those who choose to use it, and be set per employee, as the employee is the one with control over which bank they choose to use.