**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**PROJECT NO. 06-36**

**Upgrade IT Infrastructure**

Date: July 11, 2006

To: All Prospective Respondents

From: Houston Community College System, Procurement Operations

Subject: Informational Letter #1 – Request for Proposals (RFP) for Upgrade IT Infrastructure (Project No. 06-36).

The following written questions regarding subject RFP were received in the Purchasing Department prior to the deadline for submitting written inquiries of July 5, 2006 at 4:00 p.m. (local time):

Question No. 1 – Is HCC willing to negotiate contractual terms and conditions?

HCC Answer – Yes.

Question No. 2 – Would the State of Texas DIR contract be acceptable to HCC for this purchase?

HCC Answer – No. Any contract developed with the selected vendor(s) will be subject to negotiation and will include a detailed statement of work that covers all elements of the work to be performed and the hardware and software to be provided.

Question No. 3 – Small Business Development Program – Please clarify how the 35% goal is measured – is it based on subcontractor portion of the bid, or overall proposal amount? Does it apply to both hardware / software and labor? Also, since the final configuration is to be determined, how will the 35% criteria be evaluated?

HCC Answer – The Small Business participation goal of 35% will be based on the total negotiated contract value. Please refer to paragraph 6H and Paragraph 17 of the Instructions to proposers.

Question No. 4 – In the pricing Module (Page 12) – Unit Price for Hardware – please clarify if the intent is for each proposer to provide one (1) each of all hardware parts so HCC can build their own configuration – or should each proposer provide HCC with a total itemized solution that will replace all end-of-life equipment listed in Appendix A?

HCC Answer – The vendor is to provide unit pricing for each of the different hardware elements being proposed so that HCC can work with the selected vendor(s) to build and price the final configuration based on the results of the Proof of Concept phase.

Question No. 5 – Will HCC provide a network drawing with all 22 campus sites?

HCC Answer – No. For security reasons, HCC will not provide comprehensive network drawings at this time. HCC will provide a detailed diagram of the two "Proof of Concept" sites and will make this available on the Purchasing web page. HCC will provide detailed network drawings and any other information as requested by the selected vendor(s) after contracts have been executed.

Question No. 6 – Are the Enterasys Dragon, NetSight, and Automated Security Manager fully deployed and enabled across the network?

HCC Answer – No. Dragon is only deployed at the core. Port mirroring is used to monitor all traffic passing through the core. ASM and NetSight have not been deployed.

Question No. 7 – Will HCC provide a copy of HCC's security policy?

HCC Answer – The link to the HCC security policy is posted on the HCC Purchasing website, along with the RFP and list of vendors that attended the Pre-Proposal Conference at www.hccs.edu (Click on: Business & Community / Vendor Information / Bid/RFP).

Question No. 8 – Is there layer 3 functionality between the Cisco and Enterasys network components in the current situation? Please describe.

HCC Answer – No.

Question No. 9 – Will the WAN upgrade mentioned include MPLS?

HCC Answer – Although it is unknown at this time, it is likely that the WAN network that will be provided by a network service provider will include MPLS. It is expected that any protocols or services running on the service provider's WAN network will be transparent to the HCC network. The carrier handoff to the HCC network will be strictly Layer 2 Ethernet. HCC has no plans to implement MPLS within the HCC network.

Question No. 10 – HCC states that it has two ISP points in the network, one primary and one failover. Is the failover ISP an active ISP connection?

HCC Answer – The failover ISP connection is only actively passing traffic in the event of a failure of the primary connection. These two connections (primary and failover) are at two different sites.

Question No. 11 – Is HCC using a single ISP provider for both primary and failover?

HCC Answer – Yes.

Question No. 12 – Does HCC want the ASA5500 running in Active/Active mode or Active/Standby mode?

HCC Answer – Active/Standby. See response to Question 13 below.

Question No. 13 – Can HCC clarify the last sentence in 5.0 Phase I Firewall? "HCC requires hot failover at the primary and failover ISP sites."

HCC Answer – If the primary ISP connection fails, all Internet traffic will be automatically and immediately routed to the failover connection. This is a "hot failover" in that the equipment and ISP connection is always active and ready to assume the load. Likewise, when the primary ISP connection is restored, all Internet traffic will be automatically and immediately routed to the primary connection.

Question No. 14 – Is HCC ordering new ISP connections for the new firewalls or does HCC want to use the existing connections?

HCC Answer – The answer to this question is dependent on the outcome of the WAN RFP process. If HCC chooses a service provider other than the incumbent, then new connections will be provided. If the incumbent service provider is chosen, then new connections will not be provided. In the latter case, the vendor will be expected to implement the firewalls utilizing the redundancy provided by the primary and failover lines to facilitate testing and to minimize Internet outages.

Question No. 15 – What is the outage window for cutting over to the ASA 5500 at the primary and failover ISP sites?

HCC Answer – The outage window must be scheduled at least one week in advance. The normal window for a scheduled Internet outage can start no earlier than 10PM, with service restored no later than 6AM. It is expected that the utilization of the primary and backup Internet connections will keep any Internet outages to a minimum.

Question No.16 – What campus and buildings will the Cisco test be at?

HCC Answer – For security reasons, the specific site for the Proof-of-Concept campus for the Cisco Security Architecture will be identified during contract negotiations with the selected vendor. A detailed diagram of this site has been provided on the Purchasing website.

Question No. 17 – What training is required? (Please refer to Attachment No. 3, Paragraph 6.1.13 Classroom training for HCC staff)

HCC Answer – Standard training modules the vendor offers for these products. The goal is for the training to be sufficient to permit existing HCC staff to administer and maintain the installed systems after the project is completed.

Question No. 18 – If the evaluation sites are not yet identified, can HCC provide the quantity of network switches that would be required?

HCC Answer – See answer above.

Question No. 19 – What campus and buildings will the Enterasys test be at?

HCC Answer – For security reasons, the specific site for the Proof-of-Concept campus for the Enterasys Security Architecture will be identified during contract negotiations with the selected vendor. A detailed diagram of this site has been provided on the Purchasing website at Project No. 06-36.

Question No.20 – What training is required? (6.2.13 Classroom training for HCC staff)

HCC Answer – Standard customer training modules the vendor generally offers for these products. The goal is for the training to be sufficient to permit existing HCC staff to administer and maintain the installed systems after the project is completed.

Question No. 21 – If the evaluation sites are not yet identified, can HCC provide the quantity of network switches that would be required?

HCC Answer – See answer to question no 19above.

Question No. 22 – Is QoS required to be configured when the equipment listed in Appendix A is replaced? If so, wouldn't this also be required on existing equipment?

HCC Answer – Yes, QoS will need to be configured on the equipment provided by the vendor. At the conclusion of the installation of hardware provided in Phase III, all equipment in the HCC network will be capable of providing QoS. HCC will be responsible for configuring QoS on existing equipment, in coordination with the vendor's deployment schedule for QoS.

Question No.23 – For the 3100 Main MDF, the C5500 in the MDF (room 4A08), how many ports should be on the two 4503s that are replacing the 5500?

HCC Answer – There will be two WAN connections coming from the service provider's Ethernet-based network, each connected to one of the 4503s. Each 4503 will have two connections into the HCC core network. All connections will be Gibabit Enthernet over multimode fiber.

Question No. 24 – At the bidder's conference, there was discussion of HCC's desire to have chassis switches vs. stackable switches. Please confirm what should be proposed.

HCC Answer – The use of stackable switches will be permitted provided the following criteria is satisfied.

- The stackable switch(es) will replace an existing switch that has fewer than 96 ports.
- There is no loss in features and capabilities, particularly with respect to management and the proposed security solution.

Question No. 25 – Will HCC provide a list of all HCC locations with device descriptions and quantities that will be impacted in this Phase?

HCC Answer – This information will be posted on the HCC Purchasing website with the Questions and Answers.

Question No. 26 – Please further clarify the role of HCC personnel vs. Vendor role in the implementation of the firewall security features in the ASA 5500.

HCC Answer – The vendor will be required to implement an initial set of rules to be jointly developed by the vendor and HCC and that are based on the HCC Security Policy. The vendor will provide training for HCC staff to implement additional rules that will be phased in over a period of time after the project is completed.

Question No.27 – How many VPN users will need to be supported?

HCC Answer – There are currently 82 VPN users that will need to be supported.

Question No. 28 – Please further clarify the role of HCC personnel vs. Vendor role in the implementation of the content filtering features in the ASA 5500.

HCC Answer – The vendor will be required to implement an initial set of filters to be jointly developed by the vendor and HCC and that are based on the HCC Security Policy. The vendor will provide training for HCC staff to implement additional filters that will be phased in over a period of time after the project is completed.

Question No. 29 – Does HCC want to implement email filters?

HCC Answer – The vendor will be required to implement anti-spam filters in the firewall. There is no requirement for the vendor to perform email content filtering.

Question No.30 – Please further clarify the role of HCC personnel vs. Vendor role in the implementation of HP OpenView, CiscoWorks, and Enterasys NetSight.

HCC Answer – The vendor will be required to install, setup, configure, and implement all three systems in order to exploit each system's capabilities. The vendor will provide training for HCC staff on the installation, configuration, and ongoing use of each of the systems.

Question No. 31 – Are these applications already running and performing monitoring services? To what extent?

HCC Answer – HP OpenView is not currently installed. The vendor should propose a server suitable for the installation. CiscoWorks is installed but is not currently performing monitoring services. NetSight is installed but is performing only minimal monitoring.

Question No. 32 – What product suites does HCC have?

HCC Answer – HCC has the following Openview, CiscoWorks, and Netsight products.

Ciscoworks Routed WAN Management Solution (Windows)
Cisco View---- version 5.5
Resource Manager Essential---- version 3.5
Access Control List Manager---- version 1.6

Ciscoworks LAN Management Solution (Windows)
Device Fault Manager---- version 1.2
Ciscoworks Local Management Solution---- version 2.2
Campus Manager---- version 3.3
Cisco View---- version 5.5
Resource Manager Essential---- version 3.5

HPOpenview server Solaris 8
SUN OS 5.8
Network Node Manager---- version 6.2

Netsight
Policy Manager---- version 1.8.2 Build Number 9

Atlas Console---- version 2.0.2 Build Number 11
Inventory Manager---- version 2.0.0 Build Number 29
Automated Security Manager---- version 2.0 Build Number 20

Question No. 33 – What Platform are these applications running on?

HCC Answer – The server for CiscoWorks is a Sun 280R (one CPU). The server for HP OpenView is a Sun 280R (dual CPU). The server for Netsight is a Dell P4 running Linux Redhat ES.

Question No.34 –When will we have a description of the HCC Proof of Concept campuses? (including the #s and types of users that need to be authenticated ? see types in question below)

HCC Answer – This information is posted on the HCC Purchasing Website.

Question No. 35 – How many wireless users will need to be authenticated at each campus?

HCC Answer – The number of wireless users is not relevant to an award of the RFP. The NAC portion of Phase II (Proof-of-Concept) will be a limited user test, probably consisting of no more than 200 users.

Question No. 36 – How many vpn users will need to be authenticated at each campus?

HCC Answer – The intent of the college is to manage VPN access separately. HCC IT currently manages 82 VPN users systemwide.

Question No.37 – How many wired, internal users (employees) will need to be authenticated at each campus?

HCC Answer – Network Admission Control only applies to the Phase II. The details of the two Proof-of-Concept sites has been posted on the HCC Purchasing website. The vendor is expected to deploy and demonstrate NAC at the site and train HCC staff on the configuration, administration, and ongoing support.

Question No. 38 – How many wired, guest users will need to be authenticated at each campus?

HCC Answer – For Proof-of-Concept, the number of guest users will limited to less than 200. The NAC portion of Phase II (Proof-of-Concept) will be a limited user test to demonstrate functionality.

Question No. 39 – Will HCC provide the skill sets or resumes for prospective interns?

HCC Answer – For the purpose of the vendor's response, the vendor should assume that an HCC student(s) with relevant skills will be presented. The selected vendor is expected to utilize the student(s) in a substantive and meaningful way in order to impart job skills and work experience. Skill sets or resumes for prospective Interns will be provided to the selected vendor.

Question No. 40 – Are the intern opportunities all technical or can some be administrative?

HCC Answer – The proposed use of HCC interns on the project is up to the vendor. Because this project is technical in nature, HCC would expect that it would be primarily technical. The selected vendor is expected to utilize the student(s) in a substantive and meaningful way in order to impart job skills and work experience.

Question No.41 – Is there a network topology with Internet speeds that will allow us to size the ASA?s?

HCC Answer – The Internet connections are as follows. The primary connection at 3100 Main is 50MB burstable over a 1GB line. The secondary or failover connection at Codwell is 50MB burstable over an OC-3 ATM line.

Question No. 42 – The RFP calls for ASAs with both IPS and content filtering, which is not possible at the same time. The CSC module can not scale to the size of HCC. What is the alternative?

HCC Answer - HCC requires the features and services listed in the firewall section, which include IPS and content filtering. If this cannot be accomplished within the same ASA 5500, then the vendor should propose an alternative means for satisfying the requirements.