

FMPA UTILITY CALL CENTER SUPPORT SERVICES

FMPA RFP 2024-209

Questions & Answers – Revision 3

September 18, 2024

1Q. What is the anticipated volume that the potential partner look to receive? Monthly volume expectations would be best if possible.

1A. This is a new effort for some of our members and we do not have any metrics to provide at this time. It is anticipated that each member will have an individual relationship with the potential partner so call volume would vary according to the specific member's needs.

2Q. Is the work strictly overflow volume, or is there consistent schedules with staffing requirements going to be needed?

2A. It is anticipated that each member will have an individual relationship with the potential partner so call volume would vary according to the specific member's needs.

3Q. Does the work need to be conducted in the US, or are you considering bids from Nearshore or Offshore locations?

3A. It would be appropriate to offer options (if available). Each member may have their own requirements.

4Q. What type of pricing is being requested, per hour, per minute, etc.?

4A. Pricing structure is vendor specific. Please see page TC-6.

5Q. What is the date by which you will answer these questions?

5A. As early as possible.

6Q. If there was a previous solicitation for these services, what was its title, number, release date, and due date?

6A. We view this as a new solicitation.

7Q. When is the anticipated contract start date?

7A. That will be determined by the participating members. We anticipate by 1-1-25 but could be sooner if all parties agree.

8Q. Can you please provide greater explanation of your expectations related to any required subcontracting to minority-owned, women-owned, or other types or categories of small or disadvantaged businesses? For example, what is required with the proposal, and what is required to comply during the term of the contract?

8A. This would be Member specific. We would not have this information.

9Q. Can you please provide greater details on how proposals will be evaluated and how the selected vendor(s) will be chosen?

9A. The proposals will be reviewed and graded based on the criteria in the original RFP.

10Q. Are bidders permitted to deviate in any way from any manner of quoting fees you may be expecting? For example, if there is a pricing page in the RFP, can bidders submit an alternate fee structure? If there is no pricing page in the RFP, do you have any preference for how bidders should quote fees or can bidders create their own pricing categories?

10A. The RFP does not specify pricing format, but suggestions. It is expected each vendor will provide pricing that is most practical to fit their business model.

11Q. Please describe your level of satisfaction with your current or recent vendor(s) for the same purchasing activity, if applicable.

11A. This would be Member specific. We would not have this information.

12Q. Has the current contract gone full term?

12A. Yes

13Q. Have all options to extend the current contract been exercised?

13A. No

14Q. Who is the incumbent, and how long has the incumbent been providing the requested services?

14A. This RFP has been updated and we do not perceive any incumbent to the current RFP.

15Q. To what extent will the location of the bidder's proposed location or headquarters have a bearing on any award?

15A. To the extent that they can fulfil the requirements of the bid.

16Q. How are fees currently being billed by any incumbent(s), by category, and at what rates?

16A. Was provided in different formats depending on area of service.

17Q. What estimated or actual dollars were paid last year, last month, or last quarter to any incumbent(s)?

17A. We would not have this information.

18Q. Is previous experience with any specific customer information systems, phone systems, or software required?

18A. We would not have this information.

19Q. What is the minimum required total call capacity?

19A. We would not have this information.

20Q. What is the minimum simultaneous inbound call capacity?

20A. We would not have this information.

21Q. What is the maximum wait time?

21A. We would not have this information.

22Q. What is the maximum hold time?

22A. We would not have this information.

23Q. What percentage of inbound calls must be answered by a live operator?

23A. We would not have this information.

24Q. What percentage of calls must be resolved without a transfer, second call, or a return call?

24A. We would not have this information.

25Q. What is the maximum percentage of calls that can be terminated by the caller without resolution?

25A. We would not have this information.

26Q. Is there a minimum or maximum number of operators and supervisors?

26A. We would not have this information.

27Q. What is the required degree of dedication for the call center? (Can the call center work on other contracts at the same time as this one)?

27A. We would not have this information.

28Q. What is the required degree of dedication for the operators? (Can the operators work on other contracts at the same time as this one)?

28A. We would not have this information.

29Q. Are callers required or allowed to connect with a message verification system or pre-recorded message before connecting to a live operator, or must a live operator be the initial contact?

29A. We would not have this information.

30Q. What are the recording requirements for inbound and outbound phone calls and how long must recordings be maintained?

30A. We would not have this information.

31Q. What are the recording and storage requirements for non-phone communications?

31A. We would not have this information.

32Q. What information is to be included in call logs?

32A. We would not have this information.

33Q. What was your average monthly call volume over the past year?

33A. We would not have this information.

34Q. What is the current number of seats for operators and supervisors at your existing call center?

34A. We would not have this information.

35Q. What is the current average wait time for phone calls?

35A. We would not have this information.

36Q. What is the current average handle time for phone calls and other types of communications?

36A. We would not have this information.

37Q. What is the current average after-call work time for operators?

37A. We would not have this information.

38Q. Over the past year, what is the percentage of calls received in English versus non-English?

38A. We would not have this information.

39Q. Over the past year, what percentage of calls received were in Spanish?

39A. We would not have this information.

40Q. What time of day, days of the week, or times of the year do calls typically peak? This would be member specific.

40A. We would not have this information.

41Q. Questions regarding “Provide a platform for Member’s to access customer information collected by vendor”

In providing a portal for self-serve reporting to potentially any Member's customers, is/are there any existing portals for this service?

If there are any existing portals for this, will we be replacing these portals, taking them over, or integrating with them?

Do you have any specific requirements or detailed specifications for this portal?

41A. The current systems would be unique to each member. The existing portal configuration (if any) and desired transition would be assessed on an individual basis.

42Q. Questions regarding “Portals utilized by Member staff shall provide for single sign on using Microsoft ADFS or Microsoft Azure Active Directory”

Can the vendor award the contract use their own IDP and create member credentials within their environment on behalf of members?

When providing single sign on using Microsoft ADFS or Microsoft Azure Active Directory, with the varying potential Members, whose identity provider (IDP) will be used?

Will there be a need for any integrations with Member utility’s current software/billing system such as Customer Information Systems (CSI), Outage Management Systems (OMS), and/or financial or billing systems?

If yes, can you provide the names of some or all of the systems to be integrated with?

Additionally, if there will be integrations, do you have integration specifications that can be shared at this time?

42A. Specific portal requirements will be member specific.

43Q. With respect to Section Customer Service Call Receipt & Response Item R – can you provide specific names of the software/billing platforms used by your members?

43A. Our members vary in size and complexity. We do not have information on each utility’s software.

44Q. Section 4.c provides parameters for Related Experience – will you accept references from other states?

44A. Yes

45Q. Are you open to the idea of a call center providing services to the FMPA members using a WFH (Work From Home) business model?

45A. The responding vendor will need to demonstrate they can provide the requested level of service.

46Q. With respect to Section Customer Service Call Receipt & Response Item G – will your members provide a framework under which the contractor’s agents can arrange for payment arrangements? In other words, how much authority will be given to the contractor?

46A. Our members vary in size and complexity. Each member will have their own policies in this area.

47Q. Some of your services may require the contractor to access the FMPA member’s system to do account activation or shutoffs, creating and clearing service orders. Will your FMPA member company allow or provide the contractor access to their systems? And if so, will the FMPA member provide training to the contractor on their system?

47A. Our members vary in size and complexity. Each member will have their own policies in this area.

48Q. For the various entities requiring service today, and in order for us to provide the most favorable pricing, can you indicate how many people they have managing these after-hour calls today?

48A. We do not have this information. Each participating utility is unique in customer count, utility structure, resource utilization and technology application

49Q. What is the duration of the required training?

49A. No Requirement

50Q. Section C, page 5, stipulates relevant experience. We have relevant experience with municipal utilities, including after-hours services in other states outside of Florida. Does this allow us to be qualified for this initiative?

50A. Experience does not have to be Florida specific.

51Q. You referenced SLAs (service level agreements). Do you have specific SLAs in mind for this project?

51A. No

52Q. What holidays do you observe? Will the vendor be required to work on holidays? If so, are we allowed to bill for holiday pay at a different rate?

52A. Observed holidays will vary by member. Yes, you can anticipate needing to provide service on holidays. Each vendor will be evaluated on total value provided for the services offered. Your rate structure should reflect any cost escalation.

53Q. Without any idea of volume, it will be difficult to determine a price for this opportunity. Would you accept a range of prices, depending on volume?

53A. Yes

54Q. Call Volume: Can you provide any additional guidance or estimates for anticipated call volumes across member utilities, both during regular hours and after-hours?

54A. This would help in more accurately scaling staffing and resources. We do not have this information. Each participating utility is unique in customer count, utility structure, resource utilization and technology application

55Q. Participating Members: Are there any additional member utilities expected to join after the listed members? How might their participation affect call volumes and services required?

55A. We do not know if other members will request service.

56Q. Service Flexibility: Will vendors be expected to provide a consistent level of service for all utilities, or will service requirements differ significantly across member utilities? If so, can you clarify the variations?

56A. Some members request the vendor take overflow and afterhours. Others have requested full time service. We do not have specifics which members requested what level of service.

57Q. Emergency Communication: Are there any specific expectations around emergency communications during storm seasons or catastrophic events? Should vendors outline services for this as a mandatory requirement or as an optional value-add?

57A. No, outline services you would offer. From RFP: Customer Service Call Receipt & Response w) is optional.

58Q. Staffing and Resources

1. Staffing Levels: Do you have any minimum or recommended staffing requirements for after-hours and emergency response calls? Should vendors propose their own staffing models based on call volume estimates? And could you provide guidance on the anticipated number of agents or employees required to adequately support the call volume and service requirements across the participating FMPA member utilities?

58-1A. We do not have this information. Each participating utility is unique in customer count, utility structure, resource utilization and technology application

2. Language Support: Beyond English and Spanish, are there any additional language support requirements based on your customer demographics? If so, what are the most commonly requested languages?

58-2A. This would be member specific. We don't have this information.

3. Dedicated vs. Shared Resources: Are vendors required to dedicate operators exclusively to FMPA member utilities, or can they share resources across multiple clients? What degree of dedication do you expect for operators and supervisors?

58-3A. Vendors are expected to provide services at the agreed upon level of service. The vendor will be responsible for determining the most appropriate way to allocate resources. The requested format is stated in section 4. Proposal Contents.

59Q. Technology and Systems

1. System Integration: Can you clarify which utility systems (CIS, OMS, billing systems) are used across the member utilities? Should vendors be prepared to integrate with a variety of systems or a standard set of platforms?

59-1A. Member systems will vary, anticipate a variety of platforms.

2. Call Monitoring: Are there any specific requirements for live monitoring or reporting of calls?

59-2A. No

Should vendors offer specific platforms or tools for this functionality?

59-2A. If available

3. Data Encryption and Security: Can you provide more details on the data security standards vendors must meet? For example, are there any specific encryption protocols or compliance frameworks beyond Florida's public records laws?

60Q. Service Level Expectations

1. Response Time and SLAs: Are there any predefined expectations for average response times, maximum hold times, or the percentage of calls resolved without transfer? Can you outline any specific service level agreements (SLAs) you expect?

60-1A. This will be member specific.

2. Customer Satisfaction Metrics: What specific customer satisfaction metrics are most important to FMPA (e.g., post-call surveys, call resolution rates)?

60-2A. This would be member specific.

3. Should vendors propose their own methods for measuring customer satisfaction?

60-3A. If available

61Q. Pricing and Financials

1. Pricing Flexibility: Are there any limitations on how vendors can structure their pricing models (e.g., per minute, per hour, flat fee)?

61-1A. No

2. Should vendors include scalable pricing options for future participating utilities?

61-2A. Yes

3. Storm/Emergency Pricing: Should vendors provide separate pricing for storm season or emergency communication services? How should these services be priced considering FEMA reimbursements?

61-3A. Vendors need to determine their pricing structure.

62Q. Compliance and Legal Requirements

1. FEMA Compliance: Can you provide more specific guidelines regarding FEMA compliance and how it applies to this contract, especially concerning reimbursement and related documentation?

62-1A. Please see the FEMA sections of the RFP; Sections 23 -41.

2. Public Records Compliance: Are there any additional public records requirements that vendors should be aware of beyond data retention and encryption?

63Q. Additional Documentation

1. Optional Services: Is there any particular interest from FMPA or its members in value-added services such as billing, mail services, or payment processing? Should vendors prioritize offering these services as part of their proposals?

63-1A. This is not specifically requested in this RFP. If these items are added as optional, it would allow our members to utilize these services if the vendor was awarded the bid.

2. Training Requirements: Is there any mandatory training for call center staff regarding Florida utility regulations or specific utility programs that vendors must include in their proposals?

63-2A. Not at this time.