



Telephone System Upgrade

Request for Proposal
Issued December 22, 2020

**Responses are due January 22, 2021 10:00 a.m. in electronic
format to rfp@ritaohio.com**

REGIONAL INCOME TAX AGENCY
Telephone System Upgrade

Request for Proposal

| TABLE OF CONTENTS | Page |
|--|-------------|
| Letter from the Executive Director | 3 |
| Introduction and Current Service Description | 4 |
| RITA Telephone System Upgrade Objectives | 6 |
| RFP Requirements | 6 |
| Proposal Instructions | 8 |
| Addendum | 9 |
| Avaya System Support Agreement | 11 |



10107 Brecksville Road • Brecksville, Ohio
44141-3275
(440) 526-0900 • 1-800-860-RITA
TDD (440) 526-5332

December 22, 2020

The Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA, the Agency) is seeking proposals for a **Telephone System Upgrade** that will bring the Avaya system to current supported levels for its existing system.

All proposals must be sent electronically to rfp@ritaohio.com and must be received no later than **10:00 a.m. E.D.S.T., January 22, 2021**.

Providers shall aggregate their requests for clarification, and submit them via e-mail to Bob Kelley, Manager IT Operations, at rfp@ritaohio.com. Submissions should be no later than **January 8, 2021**. Such requests for clarification, and RITA's response, will be supplied in writing to all parties that have received copies of the RFP, without identifying the source of the inquiry.

RITA will work with proposing vendors to approve an Avaya Letter of Agency (LOA) to access detailed RITA Avaya inventory information. Please coordinate these LOA requests with Bob Kelley, via e-mail at rfp@ritaohio.com.

The Agency reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or any part of any proposals, or to waive informalities or defects in proposals, as the Board of Trustees of the Agency deems to be in the best interest of the Agency.

Sincerely,

Donald W. Smith
Executive Director

Introduction and Current Telephone System Description

The Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA, the Agency) is a governmental entity established to administer and collect municipal income taxes for political subdivisions. As an agent for these municipalities, RITA provides substantial financial services to its members. Municipal income tax is collected from individuals and/or employer withholders on salaries, wages, commissions, fees and other forms of compensation. The tax is also collected from business entities based on net profits. As of January 1, 2020 the Agency served more than 340 municipalities throughout the state of Ohio. Total tax collections approached \$1.6 billion in 2019.

The current Avaya maintenance contract expires on March 31, 2021. RITA is seeking quotes for a telephone system upgrade to the most current supported levels so that RITA can avoid “end of support” and/or “end of manufacturer support” for Avaya telecom hardware and software through April 1, 2026. In addition, RITA desires to negotiate a five-year extension of the Avaya maintenance contract. This extension must cover the current versions of hardware and software while the upgrades to the current and support software release levels are in progress.

The timing of the maintenance renewal and the need to upgrade the Avaya system coincides with the annual tax filing season—the busiest time of the year for RITA. Telephone system usage ramps up beginning February 1st and usually lasts through April 30th. In addition, RITA institutes a system-wide freeze on all major system upgrades and/or changes between March 1st and April 15th. Any upgrade plan submitted must take into consideration both this black-out period and the need for RITA to maintain operations without interruption during regular business hours.

RITA currently has an Avaya telephone system that is setup for high availability (detail inventory is provided at the end of this RFP). The main Avaya system is located in the Brecksville office in the central data center. The system uses the IVR to route calls to the appropriate phone queue, enable callers to perform self-serve functions like checking tax estimates/refund status and making payments, and is integrated via CTI with our Siebel contact center management system for screen pops as calls are delivered to agents. The CMS system is used extensively by RITA managers to monitor call volumes/queue wait times and to dynamically assign resources. The system also provides voice mail capability. Nice/Uptivity is being used for call/video screen recording.

In order to respond accurately to the proposal, each vendor will be required to execute an LOA through Avaya to gain access to and verify the existing versions of hardware and software running on RITA’s existing system. Each vendor will also need to execute a mutual non-disclosure agreement with RITA before receiving additional detail system information. This additional information will be provided as a separate addendum to this RFP.

Nearly all calls come into Brecksville over a dedicated VOIP SIP trunk. Calls destined for remote office agents are routed over MPLS circuits to the remote sites using VOIP.

The current telephone system software is running two virtual VMWare pods each with it’s own VSAN. Responding vendors need to review the hardware capacity and determine if there are enough computing resources to accommodate the upgrade during and after the project.

It’s important to note that all upgrades being recommended for both hardware and software must be for on-premise telephone system installations. Cloud based solutions or version upgrades requiring a cloud installation cannot be accommodated at this time.

In addition, the Agency desires an upgrade plan that minimizes system down time and one that can be implemented in phases versus a “big bang” or “all at once” go-live. Vendors will be responsible for providing support resources for each go-live for the day of and the days following each phase of the project. This will ensure product-related issues resulting from the go-live are resolved in a timely manner.

The Regional Income Tax Agency is not responsible for any costs incurred by the respondent in preparation of a proposal. RITA reserves the right to negotiate with the vendors submitting proposals in order to obtain the most favorable terms, conditions and pricing for the Agency as determined by the

Agency in its sole discretion. Also, as deemed in the best interest of the Agency by the Board of Trustees, RITA reserves the right to reject any or all parts of the proposals.

RITA Telephone System Upgrade Objectives

1. **Upgrade the Avaya Phone System** to most current supported levels so that RITA is not at “end of support” and/or “end of manufacturer support” for Avaya telecom hardware and software for five years.
2. Extend the maintenance agreement that expires on 3/31/2021 for five more years commencing 4/1/2021 and include interim support for the existing versions of hardware and software until the upgrade is complete.
3. Responders must ensure the response includes the upgrade for all dependent third party applications which include
 - a. ConvergeOne Call Survey (or replacement product)
 - b. Avaya CTI for Siebel (Production and QAT environments)
 - c. IVR
 - d. Call Sweet
 - e. Call Copy

RFP Requirements

- **Please describe in detail using the far right response column how the proposed solution fulfills the need.**
- **Avoid simple yes/no answers.**
- **Marketing brochures included as part of the main body of the RFP response shall not be considered. Such material must be submitted only as attachments, and must not be used as a substitute for written responses. In case of any conflict between the content in the attachments and a provider's answers in the body of the proposal, the latter will prevail. The provider will also limit the use of boilerplate material in constructing the response.**
- **The proposal must be accompanied by a cover letter, signed by an individual authorized to bind the proposing entity.**
- **Please include summary schedule(s) of costs in addition to the individual responses below. The costs should be broken out by major deliverable and option. For example the Avaya Software, Avaya Hardware, IVR upgrades, After Call Phone Survey, Call Sweet and Call Copy.**

| Requirements | Response |
|--|----------|
| 1. List and briefly describe the recommended software upgrades for each Avaya hardware and software component required to maintain Avaya maintenance and support. Pricing should be reflected in the table provided with the RFP. | |
| 2. Briefly explain whether or not you are able to extend support on existing versions of hardware and software during the upgrade project. Explain any limitations in RITA obtaining support. | |
| 3. Briefly explain whether or not you are able to extend the software maintenance and support for RITA hardware and software after the upgrade for a period of 5 years. | |
| 4. List and describe any software or hardware that will not last the 5 year life cycle desired by RITA as part of this upgrade. List the end of support date and the software/hardware component. | |
| 5. Indicate and briefly explain any third party software associated with RITA's telephone system that you are not able to upgrade. | |
| 6. List and describe any value add services that you can provide during and after the upgrade to help RITA keep their hardware and software current over the next 5 years. | |
| 7. For each software and/or hardware upgrade listed in Requirement #1, please list the available security features and recommendations to ensure system hardening and security best practices are implemented. | |
| 8. RITA has identified some software components within the Avaya software that might have security vulnerabilities. List and describe any value add services that you provide that can assist RITA in remediating any vulnerabilities through software patching. | |

| Requirements | Response |
|--|----------|
| 9. List and describe any security vulnerabilities in the versions of software being installed that are required to run the system but have not yet been remediated by Avaya. | |
| 10. Provide a functional Solution Deployment Manager (SDM) solution or comparable strategy to be able to continually upgrade applications supported by SDM. | |

Proposal Instructions

Insert your responses to the RFP requirements to the right of the requirement/question in the Word table if at all possible.

List all components required for the upgrade, a description and their associated hardware, software and/or professional services cost in the spreadsheet included with the RFP.

Proposals must be received by the Executive Director, Regional Income Tax Agency, by 10:00 a.m. E.D.S.T., January 22, 2021. Proposals shall be emailed to rfp@ritaohio.com.

It is RITA's intention to enter into a contract as soon as practical after the proposals are evaluated and Board approval is received. The successful vendor shall enter into a contract with the Regional Income Tax Agency within ten days of the notification of award or as soon as practical thereafter as determined by RITA. Implementation work is expected to begin no later than March 1, 2021.

Proposals will be evaluated on several factors including the degree of fit to the requirements and cost.

The Agency reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or any part of any proposal, or to waive informalities or defects in proposals, as the Board of Trustees of the Agency shall deem to be in the best interest of the Agency. By submitting a proposal, each respondent is insuring that complete confidentiality of all Agency information will be maintained by all vendor personnel.

By submitting a proposal, each respondent is insuring that they are an Equal Opportunity Employer and that their employees and applicants for employment are not discriminated against because of their race, creed, color, sex, age, genetic information or national origin. By signing a contract with RITA, the successful vendor guarantees that they comply, or will comply with the above provision and all other applicable state and federal laws regarding public contract work, and agrees to indemnify and hold the Regional Income Tax Agency harmless from any claims or damages incurred against or by the Regional Income Tax Agency resulting from any non-compliance by the successful vendor.

By submitting a proposal, each respondent is declaring that they are not in arrears to RITA for municipal income taxes or any other obligation to the Agency.

Addendum

The information contained in this section and subsequent sections is sensitive in nature. Please contact Bob Kelley at rfp@ritaohio.com to execute a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) in order to receive this information. Only qualified vendors will be able to execute the NDA and receive this information.