Database Administration Managed Services RFP

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

** Please Note: At the time the RFP was released, NYeC envisioned a scenario inclusive of both on-prem and cloud-based databases with the expectation that all databases would be in the cloud by the end of 2025. Our timeline has since been moved up and we now anticipate that all databases will be 100% cloud based upon commencement of these services.**

RFP- SCOPE OF WORK/ TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Section I: Please describe what percentage of the databases are in the cloud? By Platform if possible. What cloud? Are they deployed as IaaS or PaaS?

   Response: When this engagement begins, it is expected that NYeC databases will be 100% in the cloud (AWS, Azure) and deployed as IaaS.

2. Section V: What database platforms need to be supported? SQL Server, MySQL? Any others?

   Response: SQL servers for now, but possibly other solutions like RDS moving forward.

3. Section V: Please provide an estimated database server/instance count for each database platform? Production vs. Non-Production

   Response: Prod - 2 x 2 node clusters/ QA - 2 Databases.

4. Please provide a list of servers to be supported by the agreement. Namely server/instance counts.

   Response: For security purposes we are not able to disclose a list of our servers, but we currently have less than 20.

5. How many servers total will we be responsible for?
   a. What types and versions? (Example, SQL 2019 vs SQL 2016, Standard vs Enterprise? MySQL vs Oracle vs Postgres)

Response: See response to #4. MSSQL 2019 Enterprise, possibly AWS RDS. Currently no Oracle.

6. Section V.A.12: Please describe how MySQL clustering is being done? Galera?

   Response: We don't use MySLQ in the environment.

7. Section V.B: Will the SLA reports be generated in eHealth's ITSM system or will the vendor create and produce the SLA reports? Is there a preference?

   Response: Vendor created SLA reports are preferred.

8. Section VI.1: Team Qualifications – is there an expectation on the size of the team? Since this is 24x7 support and need coverage, can we submit the profile of the lead DBAs?

   Response: The RFP does not specify a specific team size. Vendors should propose a team size adequate to perform the scope of work. Yes, you can submit profiles of lead DBAs. Please refer to Section VI. "Contents of Proposal: Application Overview and Qualifications" for more information. No support from outside of the US is permitted.

9. Section VI.2: What monitoring tools are being used currently? Will they remain?

   Response: Currently Zabbix is used, but NYeC is open to other monitoring tools.

10. Section VI.3: For the requested 30 hours per week, is a fixed monthly fee vs. hourly rate acceptable?

    Response: Hourly rate is acceptable.

11. Section VI.3: Are you able to break down the 130 hours and estimate how many hours are needed for each platform? SQL Server, MySQL, etc.

    Response: The current estimate is130 hours for SQL Servers.

12. Automation of tasks is important to efficiently using time. If Vendor believes listed responsibilities can be automated, should we recommend fewer hours?

    Response: Yes.

13. How important is a vendor with more related skillsets than are listed?
    a. Example-data analytics, warehousing, reporting?
    b. What skillsets would you consider beneficial other than what is listed?

    Response: Helpful but not required.

14. Section (V). A- Which help desk system do you use?

    Will this need constant review from Vendor or will email alerts/requests be sent?

    Response: NYeC uses Jira. To be determined.

    a. What is the process NYeC would like for work requests?

       Response: Please refer to the Scope of Work in the RFP which specifies the level of engagement and responsibilities.

    b. Do you want detail of Vendor current practices?

       Response: Yes, that would be helpful.

15. What is the process for approving/onboarding tools? Is there additional budget for 3rd party recommended tools or would that need to be included in the RFP?

    Response: To be determined with selected vendor. Any 3rd party tools would need to be discussed and approved by NYeC.

16. Vendors who provide their own IP/Tooling – Will they have the opportunity to present to you during review process?

    a. If no- How would you like the benefits conveyed via written proposal?

    Response: See above.

17. Team Qualifications: For 24x7 support there will be Leadership, a Primary assigned, a Secondary, and a Support team of ~5. Do you want all these listed, or leadership and a sampling of the team?

Response: Include all listed. Please refer to Section VI. "Contents of Proposal: Application Overview and Qualifications" for more information.

18. When do you generally want patching to take place? I.e. nights/weekends or normal 9-5 hours?

Response: Varies at the moment, preferably after business hours, might be during business hours if third party support is required.

19. Do you have maintenance jobs running or do they need us to set them up.

Response: We have maintenance jobs running.

20. Do they allow meta data, for example job failure, or job success alert to be sent to our system through email or TCP IP?

Response: To be determined; we could do either.

21. Any Security rules that might affect the service that we can provide?

Response: HITRUST R2 – about 1100 controls.

22. With Amazon RDS, what type of database are you using (PostgreSQL, MySQL, MariaDB, SQL Server, Oracle, and Db2)?

Response: Most likely MS SQL Server, PostgreSQL, DynamoDB but others are an option.

23. Please provide the number of RDS instances on AWS per the database type.

Response: Zero at the moment.

24. What is your projected growth in RDS instances and timeframe?

Response: The growth projection is not yet determined.

25. Are you planning to migrate off your on-prem database servers to AWS RDS?

Response: Databases will be in AWS and possibly will be migrated to RDS but as of now is undetermined.

26. What is the time frame to migrate the servers from on-prem to AWS RDS?

Response: The anticipated timeframe is 1 year.

27. Please provide the list of Database Software type, its version, OS type and version of each Database Server in scope.

Response: For security purposes, we are not able to provide this information. This information will be shared with the selected vendor upon contracting.

Please provide the locations of all the data centers where your database servers are hosted?

Response: AWS and Azure.

28. How would you grant the access to the database servers (tools, VPN, etc.)?

Response: VPN\AWS Workspace\Tools

29. Are you experiencing any performance or any other issues with your database servers? If so, please provide the details.

Response: Not at the moment.

30. What database software do you use to back up the disks/data from the Database Servers?
Response: NYeC utilizes local database back up on a daily, weekly and monthly schedule. We also currently backup the entire vm which can recover the entire vm (OS\Data) = NetApp SnapCenter Plugin (part of vshpere interface)

31. What is the current storage type and capacity?

Response: Approximately 155\200 TB.

32. Are there any disk space or I/O bottlenecks?

Response: From time to time depending on the influx of external and internal transactions.

33. What are the CPU and memory usage levels on the database server?

Response: No significant usage, max at 50% CPU, memory 30%.

34. Are the Database servers physical vs. virtual?

Response: Virtual.

35. What is the current replication methodology used to replicate data/backups/servers to replicate to a different location?

Response: SQL Availability Groups

36. Please provide any possible details related to your database replication topology/design

37. Does NYeC currently utilize infrastructure monitoring tools? If so, what tools does NYeC utilize, and how satisfied are you with them? Does NYeC expect or want vendors to offer monitoring tools in addition to managed services?

    Response: NYeC will discuss the use of vendors' recommended infrastructure monitoring tools if that aids the support they provide, but all software needs to be approved by NYeC.

38. If NYeC is open to evaluating new monitoring tools, how many production servers are within the scope of the requested services? How many non-production servers are within the scope of the requested services?

    Response: Yes. Under 10 for each in both environments.

39. How many databases are currently within the scope of the requested services?

    Response: Under 20.

40. What operating systems are deployed in the service environments?

    Response: Windows, Linux (RHEL)

41. Does NYeC currently maintain any runbooks for common tasks or issue resolution?

    Response: Yes.

42. Does NYeC maintain a service issue platform like Zendesk or Jira?

    Response: Jira.

43. How does NYeC currently provide patch management in the service environments?

Response: Patch management is currently manual; scheduled based on resource availability and patch severity.

44. Is NYeC expecting a full-time dedicated team or a shared services model for 24x7x365 coverage?

Response: Dedicated Engineer.

45. Are services expected to be delivered under a fixed scope with SLAs, or is this a time-and-materials-based engagement with prioritized tickets?

Response: Specifics will be negotiated with selected vendor. SLAs can be achieved with time and materials and fixed scope.

46. Will the vendor be involved in any business continuity or failover simulations beyond disaster recovery test restores?

Response: Yes.

47. Is NYeC open to a phased approach for transitioning to the cloud, or does it expect the vendor to support the full migration lifecycle immediately?

Response: NYeC anticipates that at the commencement of this engagement, databases will be 100% in cloud.

48. Can the NYeC please provide an inventory of current on-prem and cloud database systems, including technologies, versions, and hosting environments?

Response: See response to #27.

49. Which cloud platform(s) are in use for the current hybrid setup (e.g., AWS, Azure, GCP)?

Response: AWS, Azure.

50. What percentage of the current database workload is in the cloud vs. on-prem?

51. Does NYeC have a preference or existing use of managed services (e.g., AWS RDS, Azure SQL, Cloud SQL) vs. self-hosted database VMs?

    Response: Currently EC2 (transitioned from VM), preference is to use RDS when possible.

52. What RDBMS platforms are currently in use (e.g., MS SQL Server, Oracle, MySQL, PostgreSQL)? Please specify versions.

    Response: MS SQL Server 2019.

53. Are there any NoSQL or distributed data platforms (e.g., MongoDB, Cassandra) included in this support scope?

    Response: MongoDB.

54. What monitoring tools are currently in place (e.g., SolarWinds, AWS CloudWatch, New Relic, custom scripts)?

    Response: AWS CloudWatch, Datadog.

55. Is automation for patching, backup, and monitoring currently in use, and should the vendor use or replace these?

    Response: We can replace if needed.

56. Are there any specific compliance requirements (e.g., HIPAA, HITRUST, SOC 2) that the vendor must align with?

    Response: HITRUST R2 –1100 controls.

57. Will the vendor have access to production systems directly, or is access controlled through bastion hosts, VPNs, or other methods?

58. How frequently are internal or external audits conducted that involve database systems, and will the vendor support audit response efforts?

59. Are there security baselines or configuration hardening templates that must be followed (e.g., CIS Benchmarks)?

60. What tools or strategies are currently used for disaster recovery and backup verification (e.g., test restore automation, manual checklists)?

61. Does NYeC have a defined RTO/RPO for critical systems, and are these expected to be maintained during the contract term?

62. Are backups centralized (e.g., via third-party tool or platform-native) or distributed by environment/platform?

63. What is the expected cadence and format for performance and trend reports (e.g., weekly, monthly, ad hoc)?

64. Is there a preferred ticketing or incident management system the vendor must integrate with (e.g., ServiceNow, Jira)?

65. Will the vendor have direct communication channels with application teams or only interact via designated NYeC DBA leads?

Response: Vendor can communicate directly with application owners in NYeC.

66. Will the incumbent DBA vendor (if any) provide knowledge transfer or documentation to ensure a smooth handover?

Response: As needed; the extent to which it will be required is to be determined.

67. Are there any legacy systems or configurations that require specialized knowledge to maintain or migrate?

Response: Yes.

68. Is there an expected transition timeline or onboarding period before 24/7 support must begin?

Response: NYeC would expect the selected vendor to begin providing 24/7 support upon the start date of the executed contract with the understanding that there will be an incremental learning period for the vendor's staff assigned to the work.

69. What are the key deliverables or documentation NYeC expects from the vendor (e.g., SOPs, patch logs, recovery plans)?

Response: SOPs, patch logs, recovery plans – specifics to be negotiated and determined once vendor understands particulars of each system after contract is in place.

GENERAL/ ADMINISTRATIVE:
1. How is "good standing" with the NYSWCB determined? Is there a formal application or vetting process? (Section III Eligibility Criteria)

Response: Vendors who are required by the New York State Workers Compensation Board (NYSWCB) to have Workers Compensation and Disability Insurance coverage for

their employees must be in compliance with NYSWCB rules and regulations, have active policies in place and no outstanding penalties and no debarments. Vendors who are unsure as to how the NYSWCB rules and regulations impact their business should visit the New York State Workers Compensation Board website for further information.

2. Is this RFP to replace a current vendor? If Yes – Without giving away proprietary information, could you provide broad strokes information as to why you are switching? If No- What was the impetus for going this route?

Response: NYeC supports the process of competitive procurement for new and existing services to foster innovation and to ensure our organization receives high quality and cost-effective services.

3. Are there any budget guidelines for this RFP?

Response: Vendors are encouraged to submit their best pricing model that will sufficiently support their cost of doing business in alignment with the RFP.

4. Can you clarify any requirements for US-only/on-shore support for this contract?

Response: The RFP erroneously indicates vendors must be headquartered in the Continental United States (CONUS). Vendors MAY be headquartered outside of CONUS but all work must be performed by staff located in CONUS. Any NYeC systems or data accessed under this scope of work shall not be accessed by employees, agents, representatives, or contractors of vendor who are located outside of the United States and its territories.

5. What was the annual spend for the previous year on this Project?

Response: NA

6. If this is a new Contract, What is the annual Budget for this?

Response: NA (See response to #3).

7. Are you open to a hybrid delivery model with a mix of offshore and onshore resources?

Response: No. (See response to #4).

8. Work will be onsite or remote?

   Response: Remote.

9. Can you please give us an extension of 1-2 weeks to submit our proposal?

   Response: We are unable to give an extension.

10. Does the NYeC accept offshore resources to execute the project?

    Response: No.

11. Must be in good standing with NYeC, the Department, and the New York State Workers Compensation Board. Could the NYeC please clarify if it is required to provide any proof of good standing with the proposal response? If yes, please specify which information or certification you require.

    Response: No proof is required to be submitted with the proposal. NYeC will conduct a preliminary review to ensure vendors meet the minimum eligibility criteria.

12. In the event that a vendor does not possess a Certificate of Good Standing at the time of proposal submission, could NYeC please clarify whether it is acceptable to provide proof that the certificate is in the process of being obtained?

    Response: See response to #11.

13. Could NYeC please clarify whether certificates of good standing are required from all three entities—NYeC, the Department, and the New York State Workers' Compensation Board?

    Response: See response to #11.

14. Is it sufficient to be in good standing with just one of the following entities—NYeC, the Department, or the New York State Workers' Compensation Board—or is good standing required with all three?

15. Could NYeC please clarify whether vendors who are in good standing with only one of the following entities at the time of proposal submission—NYeC, the Department, or the New York State Workers' Compensation Board—may be disqualified?

Response: Per section III "Eligibility Criteria", vendor must be in good standing with all 3 entities to be eligible for consideration.

16. In the event that NYeC requires certificates of good standing, could you please clarify the process for obtaining these certificates from both NYeC and the Department?

Response: See response to #11.

17. Completion of the New York State Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire. Could the NYeC please clarify if this Questionnaire should be submitted with the proposal response or if it is a post-award requirement?

Response: It is at the vendor's discretion if they wish to submit the questionnaire with their proposal. It is not a requirement at the time of proposal submission but if vendor is selected for conditional contract award, it will be required at that time, prior to any contract execution.

18. Regarding the New York State Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire, could NYeC please clarify whether it must be completed again if it was already submitted in 2021?

Response: Vendor Responsibility Questionnaires (VRQ) must be certified within 6 months from the date the request is made. If the VRQ has not been certified since 2021, it will need to be re-certified.

19. Regarding the New York State Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire, could NYeC please clarify whether completing the questionnaire on the New York State website is sufficient for compliance, or if a copy must also be included with the proposal response?

20. If your company has experience working in health information technology, please describe. Could NYeC please clarify whether demonstrating such experience is a mandatory requirement? Additionally, will vendors who lack prior experience in this area be disqualified from consideration?

    Response: See Sections III & IV for mandatory requirements associated with this RFP.

21. If your company has experience working in health information technology, please describe. Can the NYeC please clarify if this experience can be met through a subcontractor?

    Response: The RFP does not prohibit the use of subcontractors.

22. If the resources that vendors provide at the time of proposal submission are not available at the time of a potential contract award, could firms replace them with equally qualified resources?

    Response: Please review Section VI. "Contents of Proposal: Application Overview and Qualifications" for specifics related to the project team assigned to the project.

23. Could the NYeC please clarify what type of documentation or evidence is required to demonstrate compliance with HIPAA, HITRUST, and other relevant privacy/security standards?

    Response: Vendors should address their ability to comply with these provisions in the narrative of their proposal. Vendors may provide 3rd party certifications with their proposals at their discretion.

24. Should the vendor's response address compliance at the organizational level, project level, or both?

    Response: Both.

25. Is demonstrating compliance with HIPAA alone sufficient, or is compliance with additional standards such as HITRUST also required?

Response: See Sections III & IV for mandatory requirements associated with this RFP. Vendors are encouraged to articulate in their proposal narratives any and all aspects of compliance in accordance with Section VI. "Contents of Proposal: Approach and Workplan).

26. If subcontractors or third-party vendors are involved in delivering the services, do they also need to meet these compliance requirements? Should we include documentation or attestations on their behalf as well?

Response: Yes.

27. In section VIII. Application Process and Timeline mentioned the following: submit your application in Microsoft Word format using font size 12 with a maximum of 15 pages (excluding Technical Requirements and Cost Proposal). Can NYeC clarify what specifically is included under Technical Requirements and where this section should be addressed within the proposal response?

Response: A separate submission on Technical Requirements is not required for this RFP.

28. There appears to be some inconsistency regarding the 15-page limit. Section VIII states that Technical Requirements and Cost Proposal are excluded from the page limit, while Section X states that the SLA and Cost Proposal are excluded. Could NYeC please clarify exactly which sections are excluded from the 15-page maximum?

Response: A separate submission on Technical Requirements is not required for this RFP. Cost Proposal and vendors' proposed SLAs are excluded from the 15-page maximum.

29. Section X. Evaluation Criteria notes a 15-page limit, excluding the SLA. Could NYeC clarify whether the SLA referenced here corresponds to the content outlined in Section

2: Approach and Workplan? If not, we would appreciate clarification on what should be included under the SLA.

Response: A separate submission on Technical Requirements is not required for this RFP. Cost Proposal and SLAs are excluded from the 15-page maximum.

30. Regarding Exhibit A and Exhibit B to Exhibit 3 – Federal and State Clauses, could NYeC please clarify whether these forms are required at the time of proposal submission or if they are post-award requirements?

Response: These are exhibits to the Master Services Agreement. They would be completed at the time of contract execution.

31. Could the NYeC please kindly grant an extension for the due date submission?

Response: We are unable to give an extension.

32. Is the utilization of subcontractors permitted by the NYeC for this project?

Response: See Response to #21.

33. Could the NYeC please clarify if is it allowed to use digital signatures?

Response: NYeC is allowed to use digital signatures.

34. Could the NYeC please disclose the allocated budget for this contract?

Response: NA (See Response to #3).

35. Is there any incumbent associated with this project? If so, please disclose the name.

Response: NA

36. Could NYeC please clarify whether proof of the Certificate of Insurance is required at the time of proposal submission, or if it is a post-award requirement?

Response: Post-award requirement but a preliminary check will be completed by NYeC to ensure vendor meets minimum eligibility requirements to participate in RFP have been met.

37. Does the NYeC accept remote resources to work on the project?

Response: The services contemplated in this RFP are to be provided remotely.

38. Is it allowed to use subcontractor references?
Response: References should be relevant to the entity that will be performing the services contemplated by this RFP.

39. Could the NYeC please clarify, if firms can provide commercial references?

Response: The RFP does not prohibit this.

40. Could the NYeC please clarify, if firms can provide references for ongoing contracts?

Response: The RFP does not prohibit this.

41. Could the NYeC please clarify, if firms can provide government references?
Response: The RFP does not prohibit this.

42. Could NYeC kindly clarify whether it is mandatory for all three references to be directly related to the scope of work outlined in the proposal?

Response: See Sections III & IV for mandatory requirements associated with this RFP.

43. In case firms are submitting confidential information in the response, is it required to provide a redacted version?

44. If the proposal contains confidential information, are vendors permitted to mark those sections as confidential?

45. If vendors are using subcontractors, are those subcontractors also required to be in good standing with NYeC, the Department, and the New York State Workers' Compensation Board?

Response: Yes.

46. Could NYeC please clarify whether proposal responses must be submitted exclusively in Word format, or if PDF submissions are also acceptable?

Response: A PDF is acceptable.

47. Can NYeC please clarify whether all staff performing the work must be full-time W2 employees based in the U.S., or are U.S.-based contractors allowed?

Response: The RFP does not prohibit the use of subcontractors. Please see response to #4.

48. Does NYeC require resumes and background checks of assigned staff before contract execution?

Response: Please review Section VI. "Contents of Proposal: Applicant Overview and Qualifications" for specifics related to assigned staff.

49. What is the anticipated contract term and renewal structure (e.g., 1-year with renewals, multi-year base)?

Response: The final contract term will be negotiated between NYeC and the awarded vendor.

50. Are there defined SLAs or KPIs tied to penalties or incentives for incident response and system availability?

    Response: Please review the Scope of Work for expected incident response times and system availability. Vendors are asked to include their proposed approach to SLA's in accordance with Section VI. "Approach and Workplan".

51. Please include a list of current clients. ' - Are these clients supposed to be similar to the SOW or in general?

    Response: At vendor's discretion.

52. In case a vendor does not have prior experience with Healthcare IT, are they allowed to bid on this RFP?

    Response: Please review Section III. "Eligibility Criteria".

53. Must have a minimum of 3 years providing the same service.- Does the same service mean to provide services related to Healthcare IT?

    Response: The RFP does not limit experience to Healthcare IT.

54. Can vendors who have experience with other Non-Healthcare clients such as Transit bid on this RFP?

    Response: See Responses to #53 and #54.