

Request for Proposals (RFP)

RFP # 2024-05-13 – TELEPHONY SOLUTIONS

(A.C.C.E.S.) ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY COUNSELLING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (“ACCES”)

RFP Issued Date: May 13, 2024
RFP Closing Date: May 31, 2024 (5:00 pm EST)

RFP Objective

ACCES is requesting proposals from qualified vendors to provide comprehensive telephony solutions to enhance our communication infrastructure. This RFP outlines the project requirements, scope of work, and evaluation criteria for potential vendors.

The successful proponent will be invited to enter into a Services Agreement for 36 months upon the execution of the agreement.

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SECTION 1 - ACCES OVERVIEW

ACCES is a leader in connecting employers with qualified employees from diverse backgrounds. Over 40,000 job seekers are served annually at seven locations across the Greater Toronto Area. As a not-for-profit corporation, ACCES receives funding from all levels of government, corporate sponsors, various supporters, and the United Way Greater Toronto.

For more information about ACCES, please visit www.accesemployment.ca.

SECTION 2 - DELIVERABLES AND EXPERIENCE

ACCES is requesting proposals for the provision of telephony solutions as described below. The successful proponent will be invited to enter into a Services Agreement for 36 months upon execution of the agreement. At ACCES's discretion, the Services Agreement may be extended.

2.1. Project Overview

ACCES is currently leveraging a Cloud phone system with an average of 321 lines in the GTA, which includes general system users and contact center staff. ACCES has a current calling average of 59,735 minutes per month, of which 45% are outbound and 55% are inbound, and an average of 100 international minutes per month.

Total System Includes:

- 321 lines
- 301 VM and eFax
- 301 extensions
- 301 DID
- 10 Contact Centre agents
- 7 Paging numbers
- Mobile phone app is utilized, but the count is unknown

About the lines:

- 1 company number
- 6 site numbers
- 12 limited extensions
- 106 desk phones
- 195 softphones
- 1 conference number
- IVR

Network Infrastructure:

Each site has a minimum of 50 Mbps fiber internet connection, Meraki MX84, MX85 firewalls and MX250s, MX120, MX125 switches.

Current Devices:

ACCES’s current devices, for ensuring compatibility with the proposed telephony solution, are listed below:

- Polycom IP 335 HD IP phone
- Polycom IP 6000 Conference Phone
- Polycom VVX150
- Polycom VVX300
- Polycom VVX301
- Polycom VVX311
- Polycom VVX350
- Polycom VVX411 + 1 sidecar (Polycom - 84 lines)
- SoundPoint IP 650
- SoundStation IP 7000

ACCES is seeking a replacement system that is a cloud-based phone system, scalable and able to meet our regulatory needs and security standards, along with the new realities of remote working. The replacement system shall support a mix of physical endpoints and laptop-based softphones, along with a mobile app on a smartphone. Options to integrate the new cloud phone system with Microsoft 365 are of interest, but not necessarily required.

The implementation of a new telephony solution aims to enhance communication capabilities across our organization, fostering seamless collaboration in tandem with existing technology. Enhancing reliability and uptime will ensure uninterrupted access to telephony services, promoting efficiency and productivity, enabling us to effortlessly accommodate future growth and expansion, and ensuring our telephony system grows with our organization. The integration with other communication channels and business applications will empower us to streamline workflows and enhance operational efficiency.

The telephony solution should be implemented during August 2024, with a Go-Live date of September 1, 2024.

2.2. Scope of Work

- a. Needs Assessment:
 - Conduct a comprehensive analysis of our current telephony infrastructure and communication requirements.
 - Identify key pain points, challenges, and opportunities for improvement, as well as strengths and essentials.

- b. Solution Design:
 - Propose a tailored telephony solution that addresses our specific needs and objectives.
 - Include detailed specifications, features, and functionalities of the proposed system.
- c. Implementation:
 - Plan and execute the deployment of the telephony solution with minimal disruption to ongoing operations.
 - Provide training and support to support staff and end-users to ensure a smooth transition.
- d. Integration:
 - Integrate the new telephony system with existing infrastructure, applications, and platforms. Ex. Microsoft Teams, Microsoft Outlook, Salesforce
 - Ensure compatibility and seamless communication between different systems.
- e. Testing and Quality Assurance:
 - Conduct rigorous testing to validate the performance, reliability, and security of the telephony solution.
 - Address any issues or concerns identified during testing to ensure optimal functionality.
- f. Documentation:
 - Provide comprehensive documentation, including user manuals, configuration guides, and troubleshooting procedures.
- g. Support and Maintenance:
 - Offer ongoing technical support, maintenance, and updates for the telephony system.
 - Ensure prompt resolution of any issues or emergencies that may arise.

2.3. Qualifications

- Been in business for a minimum of five (5) years.
- Strong network integration capabilities, including both voice over IP and data network services.
- Proven ability to design and implement complex systems.
- Experience in Hosted Systems Implementations.

2.4. Demonstration of Experience

Please provide three recent references for similar projects that may be contacted (**APPENDIX C – References**). Experience with the non-profit, public sector, higher education, and/or employment organizations is an asset.

SECTION 3 – SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

3.1. Key Dates

Description	Date and Time
RFP Issue Date	May 13, 2024
Proponents' Questions Deadline	May 21, 2024 (5:00 pm EST)
Last Day for Addenda/Responses to Proponents' Questions	May 24, 2024
Proposals Submission Deadline	May 31, 2024 (5:00 pm EST)
Proposals Review Period	June 3, 2024 – June 14, 2024
ACCES Selection Committee to Meet with Top Proponents	June 17, 2024 – June 28, 2024
Contract Award	Week of July 22, 2024
Implementation	August 1, 2024 – August 30, 2024
Go-Live	September 1, 2024

3.2. Instructions to Submit a Proposal

1. Proposals must be submitted by May 31, 2024 (5:00 pm EST) via email to procurement@acesemployment.ca. Proposals submitted after the submission deadline will be rejected.
2. The subject line of the e-mail should contain the proponent's name followed by **RFP # 2024-05-13 – TELEPHONY SOLUTIONS**
3. Proposals must include all completed forms listed below to be evaluated. Failure to provide all of these documents will result in disqualification.
 - Appendix A – RFP Cover Page
 - Appendix B – Conflict of Interest Statement
 - Appendix C – References
 - Appendix D – GST/HST Registration - Confirmation of Exemption (*if Applicable*)
 - Appendix E – Bid Form in .xlsx format

Important Note: The maximum size of an email that ACCES can receive is 10 MB. The proposal may be separated into sections and sent in multiple emails if necessary.

3.3. Amendment or Withdrawal of Proposal

- Changes to the submitted proposal can be made no later than the submission deadline and to be marked ***"FINAL PROPOSAL"*** in the email subject line.

- At any time throughout the RFP process, a proponent may withdraw a submitted proposal by sending a notice of withdrawal to procurement@acesemployment.ca.

3.4. Subcontractors (if applicable)

- The proponent must list any subcontractors they will use for delivering the services requested in this RFP. Subcontractors will not be hired without ACCES's prior written approval.

3.5. Proposal Receipt

- ACCES will send an email confirmation upon receipt of a proposal.

SECTION 4 – EVALUATION AND SELECTION

4.1. Evaluation Process

ACCES will evaluate the proposals based on the following criteria.

Criteria	Weight
<p>Company Profile and Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the company's legal name and location (state/province of incorporation); HST number; number of years in business; primary contact details; number of employees/current staffing; financial stability or total revenue previous fiscal year; core competencies, services and products. • Describe the company's experience in delivering the services. • Provide resumes of the staff who will plan, design, and configure the overall services and who will provide the necessary technical guidance and leadership. • <i>Please note:</i> Any sub-contractors must be denoted, and a company profile must be completed for each firm, including a description of work history with the proponent, their experience and qualifications. 	5%
<p>Project Timeline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the proposed project timeline with the expected start and end dates for the activities listed in Section 2.2 Scope of Work, mentioning the resources required from ACCES related to each activity. 	10%
<p>Technical Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear and concise explanations for all the items listed in Appendix F – Technical Requirements. 	50%
<p>Pricing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Bid Form (Appendix E) and attach it to the proposal in .xlsx format. 	35%

4.2. Selection Process

- ACCES reserves the right to accept or reject any proposals.
- ACCES may request further information from the proponent or third parties to verify, clarify or supplement the information provided in the proposal. ACCES may reevaluate the proposal based on any such information.
- Top scoring proponents will be invited to interview with ACCES’s Selection Committee.
- The evaluation process will consider a proposal that offers the best value and solution to ACCES, which may not necessarily be the lowest-priced proposal.
- The proponent that receives the highest score will be invited to enter into a contract with ACCES. If the highest-scored proponent declines the invitation to further participate, ACCES reserves the right to invite the next highest-scoring proponent to enter a contract instead.
- In the event of a tie score, ACCES’s Selection Committee will consider all available tangible and intangible information, including but not limited to the information contained in the proposals, to arrive at the tiebreaking decision.
- ACCES will award the contract in writing.

SECTION 5 – TERMS AND CONDITIONS

5.1. Inquiries

- Proponents should e-mail all questions to: procurement@accesemployment.ca by the “Proponents’ Questions Deadline” (*Section 3.1.*). ACCES will not respond to questions after this deadline.
- Inquiries deemed appropriate will be answered via addenda by the “Last Day for Addenda/Responses to Proponents’ Questions” (*Section 3.1.*). The addenda will be available online via the same bidding platform(s).

5.2. Blackout Period

- From the issuance of this RFP until the selected proponent executes an agreement, any contact regarding this RFP (other than as permitted in this RFP) with personnel employed by or contracted by ACCES is prohibited. During this time, proponents should not approach any ACCES personnel or contractor concerning this bidding, the contracting process, or their proposal.

5.3. Acknowledgment of Non-Binding Procurement Process

- This RFP is not intended to create any contractual or other legal obligations or duties whatsoever owed to any proponent or potential proponent by ACCES. Without restricting the generality of the foregoing, no contractual relations shall exist between ACCES and any proponent until the execution of an Agreement/Contract with that proponent.

5.4. Insurance

- Even though ACCES does not identify any specific insurance requirements in this RFP, this shall not be construed as a waiver of the successful proponent’s responsibility to carry

insurance that would be considered appropriate for a prudent person or business to carry while engaged in the activities and providing the Services, including liability insurance.

5.5. Incidental Expenses, External Factors and Proposal Outcome:

- ACCES receives funding from various sources; therefore, all contracted services are subject to budget availability.
- ACCES as a non-profit organization under the *Broader Public Sector (BPS), Act 2010* is unable to reimburse the proponent for any incidental expenses such as food, hospitality, mileage, parking, photocopying, printing, etc.
- ACCES shall not be liable for any expenses incurred by any proponent, including the expenses associated with preparing the proposal.
- ACCES reserves the right to withdraw this RFP or terminate the resulting contract within the terms of the contract without penalty.

5.6. Conflict of Interest:

- Proponents may not have any personal or business interest that would present an actual, potential, or apparent conflict of interest with the performance of the contract to be awarded (*APPENDIX B – Conflict of Interest Statement*).

5.7. Publicity:

- Proponents should not use the award of a contract as part of any news release or commercial advertising without ACCES’s prior written consent.

5.8. Disclosure of Confidential Information:

- Proposals should mark any confidential information. The confidentiality of such information will be maintained by ACCES, except as otherwise required by law or by order of a court or tribunal. Proponents are advised that their proposals will, as necessary, be disclosed on a confidential basis, to ACCES’s staff to advise or assist with the RFP process, including the evaluation of proposals. If a proponent has any questions about the collection and use of personal information pursuant to this RFP, questions are to be submitted as per (*Section 5.1 “Inquiries”*).

5.9. Notification and Debriefing

- Once the contract has been awarded, the other proponents will be notified of the outcome of the RFP process via e-mail.
- Proponents may request a debriefing after receipt of notification of the outcome of the RFP process. All requests must be sent to procurement@acesemployment.ca and must be made within sixty (60) days of such notification.

5.10. Bid Dispute

- Any bid disputes should be submitted to procurement@acesemployment.ca within five (5) business days of receipt of the notice of award.

- The Selection Committee will review a bid dispute and take the appropriate remedial action, including, but not limited to, reinstating the proponent into the competition, or cancelling the RFP.
- The RFP award may be delayed because of a bid dispute.