

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS/INSTRUCTIONS

The following requirements and instructions supersede General Requirements where applicable. The term "Harris County" and "County" is understood to include the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office (HCFMO)

VENDOR INSTRUCTIONS

Responses to this Request for Proposal (RFP) shall be formatted and organized in the following order for consistency and easy screening:

- Preferred submission is via Bonfire.
- Vendors may submit electronically through Bonfire or via hardcopy to 1111 Fannin, 12th Floor, Houston, TX 77002 no later than the due date and time as stated on the Bonfire Opportunity.
- All proposals must be typed and single spaced.
- Each section of the vendor's response should start on a new page.

Section I: Transmittal Letter – The transmittal letter should include:

- Company name and address; name, title, email, telephone and fax number of person(s) to be contacted for clarifications or additional information regarding proposal;
- Name, title, email, telephone and fax number of person authorized to contractually obligate vendor's company with proposal and any future negotiations; and
- A brief statement summarizing the vendor's understanding of the project and relevant experience.
- Vendors may briefly note familiarity with HCFMO Operational Permit Management workflows, including; Special Events, Business Operational Permits, Pyrotechnics/Flame Effects and Mobile Food Units.

Section II: Section II: Scope of Service - Functional Requirements

- Describe the methodology for migrating all historical and active Emergency Reporting (ER) data, including extraction, validation, and phased import.
- Describe how the system will be configured to support inspections, occupancy classifications, enforcement actions, reporting, and required integrations.
- Provide the approach for delivering administrator and field-staff training, along with ongoing user support and documentation.
- Describe the method for integrating with County systems and conducting functional testing, workflow validation, and User Acceptance Testing (UAT).
- Describe how security, data ownership, access, export formats, data portability, and transition assistance will be supported.
- Describe how the system will support International Fire Code (IFC), International Building Code (IBC), National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) referenced standards, and Harris County Fire Code requirements while maintaining legally defensible records.
- Describe the maintenance, support, and warranty services, including response times, updates, patches, and ongoing system support.
- Provide the project management approach including staffing, schedule, communications, issue resolution, and progress reporting aligned with the County's implementation timeline.
- Describe how the public-facing Operational Permit Management (OPS) portal will support dynamic workflows for all operational permit types, capturing required applicant/operation details, conditional hazard-related fields, and allowing document uploads (e.g., site plans, emergency/security plans, floor plans, technical reports, certifications, insurance documents).
- Describe the administrative backend, including role-based access, permit dashboards, correction/notification workflows, automated renewals, status tracking, and payment-receipt alerts.

- Describe the import of three years of historical permit data, including validation, reconciliation, and logging of key fields (application details, business/location information, precincts, agency data, approval dates, and payments).
- Describe Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping capabilities for displaying active/pending permits with interactive, detail-rich map markers.
- Describe payment processing via authorize.net, including invoices, secure payments, automated permit delivery, and payment-status reporting.
- Describe OPS security architecture, audit trails, reporting/export capabilities, scalability, and compliance with IFC/NFPA/Harris County codes.

Vendor shall refer to the Specifications document for all detailed requirements and provide the greatest amount of meaningful detail in their response as to how each requirement will be met. Vendor shall also indicate if the specifications can be met only under certain conditions or circumstances. If vendor is not able to meet the specification, briefly explain why, noting any concerns or issues Harris County should be aware of.

Mere reiterations of specifications are strongly discouraged, as they do not provide insight into the vendor's ability to meet the specifications.

Section III: Pricing Information (Price Breakdown) - It is Harris County's desire to enter into a Fixed Pricing, all-inclusive fee pricing model. Vendor shall upload a comprehensive description of their proposed price structure, including a detailed explanation of all pricing that correspond with the unit price outlined in **BidTable BT-15CG**. The price breakdown shall also incorporate project milestones and associated deliverables.

Download the excel **BidTable BT-15CG** from the Requested Information section and follow the instructions provided. The completed Pricing Sheet(s) shall be uploaded to Bonfire in Excel format under the section labeled "BidTable – Section III Pricing (BT-15CG)".

At a minimum, the "Price Breakdown" should include:

- Proposed turn-key solution
- Project Management
- Implementation Services
- Training/Documentation for all purchased modules
- Third party software
- Additional Interfaces
- Additional licenses (if applicable)
- Post Go-Live Maintenance
- OPS pricing for the applicant portal, administrative tools, legacy data import, payment integration, GIS module, reporting/export, documentation, training, and ongoing support.

Section IV: Service Level Agreement(s) (SLA)

- Vendor shall provide SLAs outlining system availability, technical support response times, data backup and recovery, and software update requirements. Define SLA metrics for portal uptime, submission/notification reliability, payment-workflow success rates, and GIS performance, including measurement and reporting methods.

Section V: Project Management Plan

- Vendor shall provide a comprehensive project management plan outlining key phases, milestones, deliverables, timelines, and resource assignments. Include OPS workstream milestones: configuration of permit categories, legacy data import, payment integration, GIS enablement, workflow UAT, staff training, and go-live readiness.

Section VI: Vendor Qualifications and Experience

- *Qualifications and Experience* – Vendors shall provide proof of the required qualifications and experience as described in the Specifications document. Vendors should demonstrate experience implementing government operational permit systems including portals, administrative review, payment integration, GIS, and historical data migration.
- *References* – Vendors shall provide at least three (3) letters of reference from clients that are from similar public-sector, infrastructure, similar implementations, and where consultant services were provided.

Section VII: Vendor Resources – Vendors shall provide all relevant personnel’s (Project Manager, Technical Lead, etc.) resumes, experience as described in the Specifications. Include OPS-specific personnel (e.g., workflow analyst, payments engineer, GIS specialist, data-migration lead).

Section VIII: Optional/Value Added Services – Bid Table (BT-78OT) Vendors may propose OPS enhancements such as Short Message Service (SMS) notifications, additional permit types, advanced analytics, or ePermit integration.

Section IX: Legal Documents – Include any standard agreement(s) and/or contracts(s) associated with vendor’s response.

Section X: Miscellaneous – State exceptions to any of the requirements in this RFP, if any. Company brochures, marketing materials, or any other information vendor deems appropriate to the RFP response may be included in this section.

Section XI: Technical Requirements

The technical requirements are constructed to correlate to the Harris County Universal Services Reference Architecture (USRA) and to determine vendor’s ability to provide technical capabilities. When proposing a response to this RFP, the vendor shall address all subsections of the technical requirements for the proposed solutions and services supporting US needs.

➤ **HCUS Reference Architecture (USRA)**

- The USRA is a compact, comprehensive, abstract illustration of the technology components and business processes supporting County operations, as illustrated in the attachment titled Harris County Universal Services Reference Architecture (USRA). The USRA has been developed to provide guidance on how solutions shall deploy and operate within the Information Technology (IT) environment. The USRA serves as a reference for the specific architectures that vendors may implement to solve County business objectives.

➤ **The USRA Consist of Six (6) Interrelated Domains:**

- Vendor shall respond to technical requirements pertaining to the domains of:
- Data Services
- Digital Services
- Enterprise Technology Infrastructure Services
- Information Security Services
- IT Management
- Technology Optimization

➤ **USRA Checklist Questionnaire Q-13LW**

- Vendors shall complete the questionnaire as part of vendor’s proposal response. "Complete" is defined as responding to all questions. A response is still required for non-applicable questions. The questionnaire will

assist the County in understanding the scope, capabilities, technical implementation, and deployment features of the proposed solution.

➤ **Technical Requirements Domain:**

- Vendors shall respond to technical requirements pertaining to the domains of:
- Data Management
- Application Management
- Infrastructure Management (including Server and Network Services)
- Security Management
- Service Management
- Program Management
- Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Management

➤ **Methods of Delivery**

- Vendor shall present the County with details on at least one (1) of the following delivery options for the proposed solution, along with any alternative delivery methods that may be available:
- **Premise-based**
 - ◆ Premise-based solution; all servers will be provided by the vendor, installed at County location(s), and maintained as part of the enterprise. The solution (all hardware and software) is owned by County and is often viewed as a capital expense. County maintains control of the servers and maintains their security.
- **SaaS (Software as a Service)**
 - ◆ SaaS, an on-demand, and a hosted model; in this case the provider licenses an application that is hosted at a remote location (i.e., Network Operations Center) to customers through a subscription model, generally a monthly or yearly fee. This approach can also take into consideration a “cloud computing” model where all the technology is in the “cloud” and accessed over the Internet as a service.
- **Hybrid Model**
 - ◆ Hybrid model in which the solution (hardware / software) is hosted at the County location and the provider will perform the day-to-day responsibility of managing (maintain and support) the software/hardware for the County. The management of the solution could be either through onsite presence or remote. The provider’s expertise and experience in this subject area is important for more efficient operations.
- The County requires vendors to propose at least one (1) approach that provides an efficient solution while meeting both the County’s functional requirements and its technical standards, including the data-centric architecture approach. At all points, the County will have ownership of its data and shall be able to access or be provided the required data to support the proposed service or other services deemed necessary to access the information. If otherwise, the vendor shall state the reasons (functional and technical), as to why they cannot meet the County’s requirements.

➤ **Platform Administration/ Professional Service**

- Vendor shall provide the County with platform administration (maintain & run). System administration and maintenance of implemented platform, as well as the addition of new software components if needed, is expected to be provided by the vendor based on the method of delivery (Section 4.5) adopted.

➤ **Data Management**

- Vendor is expected to provide the County with details on their approach to the following data management areas:
- Data Governance
- Data Quality
- Data Security
- Data Operations

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Award shall be made to the responsible vendor whose proposal is determined to be the best evaluated proposal resulting from negotiations and taking into consideration all aspects of proposal impact items and the following in order of relative importance:

- Scope of Service/System Functionality (Section II)..... 30%
(Ability to deliver a robust, flexible solution that meets functional and technical requirements.)
- Integration, Interoperability, and Reporting (Section II)..... 25%
(Compatibility with existing systems, Application Programming Interface (APIs).
- Experience and Training (Section II) 10%
(Intuitiveness of the interface, ease of use, and availability of training resources to support adoption.)
- Implementation and Support Services (Sections II, V, and IV) 10%
(Deployment timelines, SLAs, and vendor support services.)
- Project Team, Organizational Experience, and References (Sections VI and VII) 10%
(Qualifications, competence, experience, and structure of the proposed project team assigned to project.)
- Vendor Presentation/Demo 5%
- Pricing (Section III) 10%
- Cybersecurity and Information Technology Controls [Pass/Fail]
Vendor shall acknowledge and agree to abide by the County Cybersecurity and Information Technology Controls defined within the attachment.

Cybersecurity Technical Questionnaire (when applicable): IT Infrastructure Planning and Security Governance (I2PSG) committee review to assess IT security and/or cybersecurity risk of proposed solution shall apply if the proposed product(s)/solution(s) needs or requires access to the Harris County network. The intent of this review phase is to ensure that proposed product(s)/solution(s) meet or exceed the minimum IT security and/or cybersecurity requirements. Product(s)/solution(s) will receive a “Pass/Fail” rating. Product(s)/solution(s) receiving a Fail rating may only be considered for award if they do not require access to the Harris County network.

Submission of a proposal implies the vendor's acceptance of the evaluation criteria and vendor's recognition that subjective judgments must be made by the Evaluation Committee.

AWARD

Harris County anticipates awarding to a single vendor. However, Harris County reserves the right to award to more than one (1) vendor if in the best interest of Harris County.

No award can be made until approved by Harris County Commissioners Court. This RFP does not obligate Harris County to the eventual purchase of any product/service described, implied or which may be proposed. Progress toward this end is solely at the discretion of Harris County and may be terminated at any time prior to execution of an agreement.

CERTIFICATE OF INTERESTED PARTIES (FORM 1295)

Texas law requires all parties who enter into any contract with the County which must be approved by Commissioners Court to disclose all interested parties. Form 1295 must be completed in its entirety at the following website: <https://ethics.state.tx.us/filinginfo/1295/> prior to submitting your response. Failure to do so may result in disqualification of your response.

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Vendor should submit any agreement for products/services which may be required by the vendor's organization to enter into a contract with Harris County. The awarded vendor will be required to execute an agreement with Harris County which finalizes the terms and conditions set forth in vendor's proposal, best and final proposal, and any negotiations between vendor and Harris County. The agreement is subject to review and amendment by the Harris County Attorney's Office.

INSURANCE

Harris County requires that each proposal be accompanied by the company's current Certificate of Insurance. The Certificate MUST be on the standard industry ACORD form and signed by the agent. If the insurance on the certificate will expire in six months or less from the time the proposal is submitted, the company must include a letter on its own stationery that verifies it will continue insurance at the same levels beyond the expiration date on the certificate. The proposer does not need to commit to the same agent or carrier but must continue insurance. When said current policies expire, the proposer must provide new certificates, as no further agreement will be pursued until verification of coverage is confirmed.

The Certificate of Insurance must include coverage for each and every insurance requirement in this document particularly the Workers Compensation 110.110 requirements. Vendor shall procure and maintain appropriate insurance coverage, including as a minimum, public liability and property damage with adequate limits to cover Vendor's liability as may arise directly or indirectly from work performed under terms of this proposal. The certificate must identify Harris County as an additional insured, provide a waiver of subrogation and confirm the Hold Harmless status of the County.

SUBCONTRACTOR

Should the awarded vendor use any subcontractor(s) to perform the physical services required under this contract and the total contract amount proposed exceeds \$25,000, the vendor shall be required to obtain a payment bond for the total amount of the vendor's proposal. The payment bond shall remain in effect for the entire initial term of the contract. For the purposes of this RFP, a subcontractor shall include anyone performing any Work or Services under the resulting contract not directly employed by vendor. Subcontractor includes but is not limited to, personnel provided by staffing agencies or other means, personnel in direct contractual relationship with vendor, or those being paid as 1099 personnel. Where appropriate, it shall also mean trade vendors.

By law, any subcontractor used on any Harris County contract/job must be paid by the awarded vendor. Any cost associated with the payment bond must be included in the costs associated with this contract. A new payment bond will be required each year the contract is renewed. Harris County will provide the appropriate bond documents to the awarded vendor to complete and submit prior to commencing any work.

BOND

If successful vendor utilizes a subcontractor, successful vendor is required to furnish a payment bond in the amount of 100% of proposal within ten (10) days of the award. The payment bond must remain in effect for the duration of the contract including renewals. Upon award, Harris County Purchasing will send awarded vendor a payment bond application.

PAYMENTS

Vendor payment requests may be submitted on a milestone or progress-payment basis. Payments will be provided for monthly progress based on completion of agreed-to milestones. Invoices shall include a written progress report and the project schedule showing the completion percentages for each task and milestone. All payment requests will be accompanied by: monthly reports, backup tabulations, and copies of employee time sheets (if required) for hourly Time and Materials (T&M) tasks. The exact format for monthly invoices and other attachments will be agreed upon between the vendor and BMD during contract negotiations.

INVOICES

Vendor shall submit an invoice upon completion of each deliverable. Deliverables will be considered complete only upon written acceptance by Harris County. Each invoice shall include deliverable(s) completed and the price for each. No charges may be billed to Harris County unless such costs are explicitly included in the agreement.

VENDOR ELIGIBILITY, EMPLOYMENT COMPLIANCE, AND BACKGROUND SCREENING

Vendors shall not be in default or arrearage under any previous or existing contract(s) with the County, the State, or any other political subdivision of the State of Texas. The County reserves the right to disqualify any vendor, or any constituent

entity of vendor, that has pending litigation, claims or debt with the County, or if such proposal includes a proposed sub-contractor.

All contract employees utilized under this contract shall be employed directly by the Vendor to which the contract is awarded and/or its contracted sub-contractors.

- A fully qualified labor force shall be on board at the beginning of the contract and maintained throughout the duration of this contract. All contract employees shall receive close and continuous first line supervision by the Vendor.
- Vendor shall comply with all requirements related to federal immigration laws and regulations, to include but not be limited to, the Immigration and Reform Act of 1986, the Illegal Immigration Reform, and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 ("IIRIRA") and the Immigration Act of 1990 (8 U.S.C.1101, et seq.) regarding employment verification and retention of verification forms for any individual(s) who will perform any labor or services under the Contract.
- Vendor shall, as a condition of the Contract, also comply with the United States Department of Homeland Security's E-Verify system to determine the eligibility of: all persons 1) to whom the E-Verify system applies, and 2) who are hired by the Successful Proposer during the term of the Contract to perform duties within Texas; and ii) all subcontractors' employees 1) to whom the E-Verify system applies, and 2) who are hired by the subcontractor during the term of the Contract and assigned by the subcontractor to perform work pursuant to the Contract.
- Vendor shall require its subcontractors to comply with the requirements of this Section and is responsible for the compliance of its subcontractors. Nothing herein is intended to exclude compliance by Vendor and its subcontractors with all other relevant federal immigration statutes and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto.
- Vendor shall conduct a screening/background check on each contract employee prior to being assigned to work in any capacity at a County facility. Vendor shall notify the County of felony and misdemeanor background checks obtained from the County Clerk defining the findings of their screening/background checks. The County reserves the right to instruct the Vendor to remove any contract employee upon review of the employment information form and/or findings of the screening process. The Vendor shall maintain and provide the County a current contract employee list showing all contract employees assigned to work under this contract and shall immediately report any changes to the contract employee listing and shall furnish information reflecting the changes as they occur. Vendor agrees that all contract employees shall submit to and pass a police background investigation report, a drug test and/or a polygraph examination upon request. Note: The cost associated with the required background check is the responsibility of the awarded vendor and shall not be passed on to potential contract employee or the County.
- Please be aware that the County may use sources of information not supplied by the Proposer concerning the abilities to perform this work. Such sources may include, for instance, current or past customers of the organization, suppliers, articles from data processing, communications, and related publications, articles from other published sources such as industry newsletters or from non-published sources made available to the County.
- Ability to obtain a payment bond, if required.

SECURITY BREACH NOTIFICATION

Contractor shall have policies and procedures in place for the effective management of information security. In the event that Contractor discovers a "security incident," Contractor agrees to notify the County as soon as possible, but in no event shall notification occur later than twenty-four (24) hours after discovery. "Security incident" is defined by Sec. 2054.603 of the Texas Government Code to include (i) a breach or suspected breach of system security (as defined by Sec. 521.053, Texas Business and Commerce Code), and (ii) the introduction of ransomware (as defined by Sec. 33.023, Texas Penal Code) into a computer, computer network, or computer system. Contractor shall provide notifications required by this clause to the County's Chief Information Officer at 713-274-4444 or svcitchd@hctx.net.