

Purpose of Request

Cybersecurity Consulting Services

The City of Linden is requesting proposals from qualified individuals and firms to provide Cybersecurity Consulting Services. Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria set forth in this RFQ. One or more individuals/firms may be selected to provide services.

General Information & Summary

Organization Requesting Offer

City of Linden, 301 North Wood Avenue, Linden NJ 07036

Submission Deadline

Friday, November 6, 2026 at 10:00 A.M.

Electronic Submission Only

All offer submissions must be received by the City of Linden through the MuniVendor eProcurement platform. No physical/paper nor any other electronic response type will be accepted.

Contract Period

January 1, 2027 through December 31, 2027

Contract Form

The successful offeror shall be required to execute the City's form contract, which includes the indemnification, insurance, termination and licensing provisions. It is also agreed and understood that the acceptance of the final payment by the Offeror shall be considered a release in full of all claims against the City arising out of, or by reason of, the work done and materials furnished under any contract awarded.

City of Linden Facts & Figures

The City of Linden is a municipal government entity. The City was incorporated in 1925 and operates pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:61-1 et seq. The City's population is approximately 45,752 and it consists of approximately 11 square miles of area. The City employs approximately 671 people in about 25 departments and agencies. It owns various municipal buildings, parks and recreation facilities. The City's operating budget is approximately \$144,053,553.31. The City provides significant and diverse services to its residents, including those in the senior, disabled, veterans and other communities.

Contact People

- With questions relating to this specific RFQ, contact Nicholas Pantina by email only at npantina@linden-nj.gov.
- With questions related to procurement, contact Jessica Slawinski by email only at jslawinski@linden-nj.gov.
- All questions must be submitted by email only no later than Monday, October 26, 2026.

Nature & Scope of Services

The City of Linden is seeking to qualify technology companies for cybersecurity training, support and strategic vision for the City of Linden and the Linden Fire Department. A response time of less than one hour is required for critical failures 24/7/365.

Scope of Cybersecurity Oversight & Management Services

The offeror shall assign dedicated personnel to perform the following ongoing oversight and management services:

- Security Posture Assessment & Reporting: The offeror's personnel will continuously assess the City's overall cybersecurity health, producing monthly and quarterly reports for City leadership that include risk scores, identified gaps, and progress on security initiatives.
- Network Security Management
 - Firewall & WAF Administration: Personnel will conduct regular reviews, auditing, and hardening of the City's perimeter firewall (e.g., FortiGate) and any Web Application Firewall (WAF) rulesets. This includes configuring and optimizing security policies, blocking known malicious IPs, and ensuring only necessary ports and services are exposed to the internet.
 - Intrusion Prevention/Detection (IPS/IDS) Tuning: Actively monitor and fine-tune IPS/IDS signatures to minimize false positives and ensure detection of modern threats targeting municipal networks.
 - Network Segmentation Review: Assess and recommend improvements to network segmentation (VLANs) to limit lateral movement in the event of a breach, ensuring critical systems like public safety and finance are logically separated from general user networks.
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- Endpoint Security Management
 - Endpoint Detection & Response (EDR) Oversight: Personnel will monitor the City's EDR platform alerts, investigate potential incidents, and ensure EDR policies are configured for optimal protection against ransomware and advanced malware.
 - Policy Configuration & Hardening: Assist in creating and enforcing security policies for all endpoints (servers, workstations, mobile devices), including application whitelisting, device control, and encryption enforcement.
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- Vulnerability Management Oversight: Personnel will oversee the City's vulnerability management process. This includes reviewing scan data from existing tools, prioritizing vulnerabilities based on risk to City operations, and working with City IT staff to track remediation through to completion.
- Compliance Management: Personnel will manage the City's alignment with industry

frameworks (e.g., NIST CSF, CIS Controls). This involves mapping existing controls, identifying gaps, generating compliance reports for auditors, and maintaining documentation for reviews.

- **Policy & Procedure Development:** The vendor's experts will assist in the development, review, and maintenance of the City's IT security policies, ensuring they are up-to-date and relevant.
- **Incident Response Support:** In the event of a security incident, the offeror's personnel will be available to provide expert guidance to the City's IT team, assisting with containment, eradication, and recovery efforts, as well as post-incident analysis.
- **Third-Party Risk Assessment:** Personnel will conduct assessments of the cybersecurity posture of key vendors and partners who have access to City systems or data.
- **Log Management & SIEM Monitoring:** Personnel will review and analyze aggregated logs from firewalls, servers, and endpoints (via a SIEM if available) to identify suspicious activity, advanced persistent threats, and potential policy violations.

Scope of Security Awareness Training & Phishing Simulation Services

The platform must include a robust, ongoing training program to address the human element of cybersecurity. Services shall include:

- **Initial Security Awareness Training:** A comprehensive baseline training module for all new employees covering essential topics such as password hygiene, social engineering, malware, and data handling procedures.
- **Ongoing, Continuous Training:** A library of engaging, up-to-date micro-training videos (3-5 minutes in length) to be assigned to employees on a monthly basis.
- **Phishing Simulation Campaigns:** A system to create and deploy simulated phishing emails, smishing (SMS), and vishing (voice) attacks. The platform must:
 - Offer a wide variety of customizable templates relevant to municipal operations.
 - Automatically assign remedial training to users who fail simulations.
 - Provide detailed metrics on click rates, repeat offenders, and program effectiveness over time.
 - **Role-Based Training:** It would be helpful if there could be specialized training modules for users with elevated privileges or access to sensitive systems (e.g., Finance Department, Police Records, IT Administrators).
- **Response Time SLAs**
 - Capability to provide 24/7 remote, on-site, phone and email support for all departments.
 - **Critical/Emergency Support (24/7)**
 - Initial Response - fifteen (15) minutes or less.

- Remote Support Response - thirty (30) minutes or less.
- On Site Response - one (1) hour or less.

Technical Proposal Specialized Requirements

- A preference will be given to a firm that is a certified Small Business Entity (SBE) with the State of New Jersey.
- Offeror must have five (5) years of minimal experience working with government agencies providing these or similar services.
- Offeror must be familiar with the City of Linden.
- Offeror's staff must be able to meet the required response times.
- At least one of the offeror's team members assigned to the City of Linden must hold at least one of the following certifications.
 - Masters of Science in Cybersecurity
 - CompTIA A+
 - CompTIA Network+
 - CompTIA Security+
 - Cisco Certified Network Associate
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- Additional Qualifications - please respond yes or no to each of the following:
 - Offeror has at least 5 years experience training government employees in proper cyber-hygiene.
 - Offeror has at least 5 years experience administering a cybersecurity training platform in use by government employees.
 - Offeror can demonstrate at least 5 years of experience implementing, managing and administering least privilege access control for government networks.
 - Offeror has at least 5 years experience supporting Google Workspace enterprise administration, services and infrastructure.
 - Offeror has at least 5 years experience supporting Microsoft 365 administration, services and infrastructure.
 - Offeror has at least 5 years experience installing, supporting and maintaining Microsoft operating system-based computers.
 - Offeror has at least 5 years experience installing, supporting and maintaining Apple operating system-based computers.
 - Offeror has at least 5 years experience installing, supporting and maintaining both

Apple and Android operating system-based smartphones.

- Offeror has 5 years experience supporting government technology services and/or has provided technology services to other municipalities and will provide references where they are currently providing similar services.
- Offeror will provide credentials, references and/or certifications where applicable and/or appropriate for all the above upon request.
- Offeror has 5 years experience configuring domain controllers.
- Offeror has 5 years experience configuring front-end rights and permissions.
- Offeror has 5 years experience providing remote support using Microsoft Terminal Services.
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Cost Proposal

Offerors should submit a cost proposal which would include any proposed retainer, the services to be provided for the retainer, if services will be provided at a flat rate, if all or any services will be billed through hourly rates and what are the established rate(s). The City does not provide payment for or reimbursement for travel expenses.

Offer Evaluation

The City will select the most advantageous offer(s) based on all of the evaluation factors set forth at the end of this RFQ. The City will make the award(s) that is in the best interest of the City. Each offer must satisfy the objectives and requirements detailed in this RFQ. The successful offeror(s) shall be determined by an evaluation of the total content of the offer submitted. The City reserves the right to:

- Not select any of the offers;
- Select only portions of a particular offeror's offer for further consideration; (However, offerors may specify portions of the offer that they consider "bundled".)
- Award a contract for the requested services at any time within the calendar year after review of the offeror's qualifications and approval of same by the City; Every offer should be valid through this time period.
- The City shall not be obligated to explain the results of the evaluation process to any offeror.
- The City may require offerors to demonstrate any services described in their offer prior to award.
- The City reserves the right at the City's sole discretion to refuse any offer submitted.

RFQ Limitations

This RFQ is not intended to be an offer, order or contract and should not be regarded as such, nor shall any obligation or liability be imposed on the City by issuance of this RFQ.

Use of Information - Non Disclosure

Any specifications, drawings, sketches, models, samples, data, computer programs, documentation, technical or business information and the like ("Information") furnished or disclosed by the City to the offeror in connection with this RFQ shall remain the property of the City. When in tangible form, all copies of such information shall be returned to the City upon request. Unless such information was previously known to the offeror, free of any obligation to keep it confidential, or has been or is subsequently made public by the City or a third party, it shall be held in confidence by the offeror, shall be used only for the purposes of this RFQ, and may not be used for other purposes except upon such terms and conditions as may be mutually agreed upon in writing.

The work contemplated is professional in nature. It is understood that the Consultant acting as an individual, partnership, corporation or other legal entity, is of professional status, licensed to perform in the State of New Jersey and licensed for all applicable professional discipline(s) requiring licensing and will be governed by the professional ethics in its relationship to the City. It is also understood that all reports, information, or data prepared or assembled by the Consultant under a contract awarded pursuant to this RFQ are confidential in nature and Contractor will not make such reports, information, or data available to any individual or organization, except to the City, without the prior written approval for the City.

General Terms & Conditions

- The City reserves the right to reject any or all offers, if necessary, or to waive any informalities in the offers, and, unless otherwise specified by the offeror, to accept any item, items or services in the offer(s) should it be deemed in the best interest of the City to do so.
- In case of failure by the successful offeror, the City of Linden may procure the articles or services from other sources, deduct the cost of the replacement from money due to the offeror under the contract and hold the offeror responsible for any excess cost occasioned thereby.
- The offeror shall maintain sufficient insurance to protect against all claims under Workmen's Compensation, General, Professional and Automobile Liability.
- Each offer submitted must be submitted by the person authorized to do so (the "Organization's Authorized Official").
- The contract shall be in effect through December 31, 2027 unless otherwise stated.
- In accordance with Affirmative Action Law, P.L. 1975, c.127 (N.J.A.C. 17:27) with implementation of July 10, 1978, successful proposers must agree to submit individual employer certifications and numbers or complete Affirmative Action employee information report (form AA-302). Also, during the performance of this contract, the contractor agrees as follows: (a) The contractor or subcontractor where applicable, will not discriminate against any employee because of age, race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, marital status or affectional or sexual orientation. The contractor will take affirmative action to ensure that such applicants are recruited and employed and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their age, race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sex or handicap. Such action shall include, but not be limited to the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment or recruitment advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and section for training, including apprenticeship. The contractor agrees to post in conspicuous places, available to

employees and applicants for employment, notice to be provided by the Public Agency Compliance Officer setting forth provisions of this non-discrimination clause: (b) the contractor or subcontractor, where applicable, will in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the contractor, state that all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sex or handicap; (c) the contractor or subcontractor, where applicable, will send to each labor union or representative or workers with which it has a collective bargaining agreement or other contract or understanding, a notice, to be provided by the agency contracting officer advising the labor union or worker's representative of the contractor's commitments under this act and shall post copies of the notice; (d) the contractor or subcontractor, where applicable, agrees to comply with any regulations promulgated by the treasurer pursuant to the P.L. 1975, c.127, as amended and supplemented from time to time.

- By submission of the offer, the offeror certifies that the service to be furnished will not infringe upon any valid patent, trademark or copyright and the successful offeror shall, at its expense, defend any and all actions or suits charging such infringement, and will save the City harmless in any case of any such infringement.
- No offeror shall influence, or attempt to influence, or cause to be influenced, any City officer or employee to use his/her official capacity in any manner which might tend to impair the objectivity or independence of judgment of said officer or employee.
- No offeror shall cause or influence, or attempt to cause or influence, any City officer or employee to use his/her official capacity to secure unwarranted privileges or advantages for the offeror or any other person.
- Should any difference arise between the contracting parties as to the meaning or intent of these instructions or specifications, the City's Law Department decision shall be final and conclusive.
- The City of Linden shall not be responsible for any expenditure of monies or other expenses incurred by the offeror in preparing or submitting its offer.
- The checklist, affidavits, notices and the like presented in this Request for Qualifications are a part of this Request for Qualifications and shall be completed and submitted as part of your offer.