**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Administrative and Financial Services**

*Office of Information Technology*



**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**RFI# 202005090**

**Wide Area Network Transport**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RFI Coordinator** | *All communication regarding this RFI must be made through the RFI Coordinator identified below*.  **Name:** Ellen Lee **Title:** IT Procurement  **Contact Information****:** Ellen.Lee@maine.gov |
| **Informational Meeting** | **Date:** 6/19/2020 Time**:** 10:00-12:00, local time  **Location:** Remote – via video conference. Please respond with interest to RFI coordinator for invitation. |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be submitted to the RFI Coordinator identified above by:*  **Date:** *6/26/2020,* no later than 5:00 p.m., local time. |
| **Response Submission** | **Submission Deadline:** 7/23/2020, no later than 5:00 p.m., local time  **Submit to:** Ellen.Lee@maine.gov |

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# **PUBLIC NOTICE**

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**State of Maine**

**Department of Administrative and Financial Services**

**RFI# 202005090**

**Wide Area Network Transport RFI**

The State of Maine, Department of Administrative and Financial Services (OIT) is seeking information on Wide Area Network (WAN) Transport solutions that are scalable, reliable, and high-performance to meet the needs of our agency customer’s business operations.

A copy of the RFI, as well as the Question & Answer Summary and all other related documents to this RFI, can be obtained at the following website: <http://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/rfis>

An Informational Meeting will be held on June 19, 2020 at 10:00 via a remote video conference. Please respond to RFI Coordinator for invitation.

Responses must be submitted to**:** [ellen.lee@maine.gov](mailto: ellen.lee@maine.gov) and be submitted by 5:00 pm, local time, on July 23, 2020.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**RFI DEFINITIONS/ACRONYMS**

The following terms and acronyms shall have the meaning indicated below as referenced in this Request for Information:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term/Acronym** | **Definition** |
| **RFI** | Request for Information |
| **RFP** | Request for Proposal |
| **State** | State of Maine |
| **Department** | Department of Administrative and Financial Services |
| **SOM** | State of Maine |
| **FOAA** | Maine Freedom of Access Act |
| **Respondent** | Any individual or organization submitting a response to this RFI. |
| **WAN** | Wide Area Network |
| **OIT** | Office of Information Technology |
| **DAFS** | Department of Administrative and Financial Services |

**State of Maine - Department of Administrative and Financial Services**

**RFI# 202005090**

**Wide Area Network Transport**

# **PART I INTRODUCTION**

## A. Purpose and Background

This Request for Information (RFI) is an information gathering and market research tool, not a formal solicitation of a specific requirement (such as in a “Request for Proposals” document). The Department of Administrative and Financial Services (“Department”) is seeking information regarding the vendor’s ability to provide a scalable, reliable, and high-performance WAN transport solution to meet the needs of our agency customer’s business operations. This is an opportunity for interested parties to help the Department better understand a marketplace and/or specific subject matter.

The WAN transport service should be provided by a vendor who will be responsible for design, configuration, and Proof-of-Concept development associated with a resulting contract. The vendor will also be responsible for logistics, including testing and support in the initial turn-up and ongoing maintenance of the WAN transport network. Vendors interested in submitting to this RFI should have proven experience in the design, development, and implementation of modern WAN protocols, such as Multiprotocol Label Switch (MPLS) and Software-Defined (SD-WAN) services, etc.

## B. Current Conditions

The State of Maine’s (SOM) current Wide Area Network (WAN) infrastructure is based on Carrier Ethernet Service (CES) technology that ranges in bandwidth from 1.5 MB to 1 GB at various locations throughout the State, in service to all SOM agencies. Maine has some urban footprint; however, many State agency customers are in rural areas that are serviced by decades-old copper wiring for telecommunications services. This old, outdated infrastructure has created several challenges in terms of bandwidth constraints, service reliability, and Service Level Agreement (SLA) compliance. Bandwidth constraints are a problem as more agency applications have moved to cloud and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) models that demand more bandwidth, and frequent service outages from weather events and infrastructure age has resulted in marked impact to agency business operations.

The CES backhaul consists of two, redundant 2 GB paths to SOM’s two Main Distribution Frames (MDFs), both located in Augusta. Due to the legacy nature of the current CES service, both locations cannot be upgraded beyond their current provisioned limits, resulting in a high over-subscription rate for the SOM WAN. This is especially problematic for SOM’s high-bandwidth agency customers in urban areas.

Carrier demarcation at all sites are not monitored, which means Network personnel need to investigate site outages that delays time to resolution.

In summary, the current SOM CES WAN is providing challenges as follows:

* Individual site bandwidth limited, or too costly to upgrade.
* Overall WAN backhaul saturated, limiting bandwidth options.
* Rural sites experience frequent carrier outages due to age/technology of infrastructure.
* Lack of monitoring insight into carrier equipment costs time to problem resolution.

**C. Challenge Statement**

The RFI is intended to explore an overarching question:

How can your proposed solution provide a Wide Area Network (WAN) transport solution that is scalable, reliable, and high-performance to meet the needs of our agency customer’s business operations?

## D. General Provisions

1. All contact with the State regarding this RFI must be made through the RFI Coordinator. No other person/ State employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding this RFI.
2. This is a non-binding Request for Information. Therefore, no award shall be made as a result of the RFI process.
3. Issuance of this RFI does not commit the Department to pay any expenses incurred by a Respondent in the preparation of their response to this RFI. This includes attendance at personal interviews or other meetings and software or system demonstrations, where applicable.
4. Issuance of this RFI in no way constitutes a commitment by the State of Maine to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP).
5. All responses should adhere to the instructions and format requests outlined in this RFI and all written supplements and amendments, such as the Summary of Questions and Answers, issued by the Department.
6. All submissions in response to this RFI will be considered public records available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) (1 M.R.S. §§ 401 et seq.): [State of Maine Freedom of Access Act](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/1/title1sec401.html)
7. All applicable laws, whether or not herein contained, shall be included by this reference. It shall be Proposer’s/Vendor’s responsibility to determine the applicability and requirements of any such laws and to abide by them.

# **PART II INFORMATION SOUGHT**

The Department seeks solutions to the State’s RFI that provides a Wide Area Network (WAN) solution that is scalable, reliable, and high-performance to meet the needs of our agency customer’s business operations. SOM welcomes responses to this RFI, including creative suggestions and feedback to enhance and expedite all future processes while providing efficient, reliable and high-quality outcomes. The technology offering in the Vendor’s response should include modern WAN services such as MPLS or SD-WAN. SOM Respondents are not required to submit responses pertaining to every question, but the Department encourages interested parties to respond to any or all relevant aspects of the RFI.

The Department seeks detailed yet succinct responses that demonstrate the Respondent’s experience and/or familiarity with the subject matter. **As this is not a competitive RFP process,** **Respondents must not provide any specific cost or customized pricing documentation in their response.**

1. **General Information**

Provide a brief overview of yourself and your organization, if applicable.

* 1. Please identify yourself and any organization you represent in this RFI.
     1. Name of respondent
     2. Organization and affiliation
     3. Address (organizational, if responding on behalf of an entity)
     4. Contact information (phone number(s) and email address)
  2. Please identify your experiences in providing your proposed solution.

1. **Feedback Requested**
2. Provide at least three (3) case-studies of where your proposed WAN technology has been successfully implemented. Include key advantages of the project, and challenges to the successful implementation.
3. Given the description of SOM’s current WAN environment, what approach would you use for implementation? Would the solution be phased in, a complete replacement, or a combination of both?
4. What is your experience working with Government organizations, that support multiple agency objectives?
5. The State of Maine is a rural, Northern New England state where network transport operations encounter several geographical, weather, and distance challenges in providing scalable, reliable, and high-performance services to meet the needs of our agency customer’s business operations. Please answer the following questions to help SOM understand how you will meet expectations:
   1. How will your company meet our stringent SLA requirements that include:
      1. 99.999% network uptime.
      2. Low network latency and response times <= to 10ms.
      3. Quick time to problem resolution.
      4. Guaranteed site bandwidth including times of contention to include natural disasters and time of contingencies.
      5. Insight into WAN site carrier equipment, by way of a customer “portal” or management access through a mechanism like Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP).
      6. SOM network is segmented from other customers’ network providing full redundancy to prevent overall network congestion.
   2. Will your company be able to engineer a solution that provides security and performance additions, such as end-to-end encryption between sites, Maximum Transmission Unit (MTU) settings on the WAN transport that SOM specifies, and Quality-of-Service (QoS) options to prioritize selected network traffic and enable efficient access to cloud-based services?
   3. Will your solution provide high-availability options, such partial to full mesh design options to requested sites?
   4. Does your company commit to infrastructure investments that ensures carrier backhaul and demarcation equipment is current, vendor-supported with a working plan to implement necessary upgrades when required? Also, do your employees have regular training and hands-on experience to support and operate this equipment?
   5. Does your company provide flexibility in last-mile technologies, such as offering services over xDSL, T1, cable modem, fiber optics, cellular GSM/CDMA, or satellite uplink to meet SOM’s agency location needs? Regardless of the technology used to connect a site, will the handoff provided to connect SOM’s routers be a standard copper or fiber Ethernet connection? Will any of these options “tie-in” to the SOM network without the need for specialized equipment on SOM’s part?
   6. Can site demarcation equipment be installed at building locations determined by SOM?
   7. Does your company provide a dedicated account management and engineering/support team that is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, when needed?
   8. Does your company provide an intuitive billing system, that can provide billing codes that tie back to service orders for payment or rebill?
   9. Can your company provide assurance that services cancelled are removed from billing on the date of their termination, as well as any child accounts associated with these services?
   10. Can your company provide routine adds, moves, and changes without additional fees on top of the cost of the service?
   11. Explain how your solution would transport SOM traffic through regional carriers.
   12. How would your solution prioritize video, and voice traffic over other traffic?

**![A picture containing nature, rain

Description automatically generated]()**

# ***MAP OF STATE OF MAINE (SOM) LOCATIONS***

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**PART III KEY RFI EVENTS AND PROCESSES**

1. **Informational Meeting**

The Department will sponsor an Informational Meeting concerning this RFI beginning at the date, time and location shown on the RFI cover page. The purpose of the Informational Meeting is to provide interested parties with additional information related to this RFI, field questions, and clarify any questions as to this RFI request.

## Questions

**1. General Instructions**

1. It is the responsibility of each interested party to examine the entire RFI and to seek clarification, in writing, if they do not understand any information or instructions.
2. Interested parties should use **Appendix B** – Submitted Questions Form – for submission of questions.
3. The Submitted Questions Form must be submitted by e-mail and received by the RFI Coordinator, identified on the cover page of this RFI, as soon as possible but no later than the date and time specified on the RFI cover page.
4. Submitted Questions must include the RFI Number and Title in the subject line of the e-mail. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.

**2. Question & Answer Summary**

Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the following website: http://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/rfis. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain a copy of the Question & Answer Summary. Only those answers issued in writing on this website will be considered binding.

## Submitting the Response

1. **Responses Due**

Responses must be received no later than the date and time listed in the timeline above.

1. **Delivery Instructions**

Responses must be submitted to the RFI Coordinator, via e-mail, listed on the cover page of this RFI document.

1. **Response Format**

Responses to this RFI may be developed in a manner that suits the respondent. A list of key questions is included within the RFI and all submissions, regardless of format will be reviewed. Respondents are asked to be brief and to respond to as many questions as possible within the RFI. Number each response to correspond to the relevant question or instruction of the RFI to allow comparison and clarity.

# **PART IV REVIEW OF RESPONSES RECEIVED**

# **General Information**

1. The Department will review responses received for the purpose of gathering information and market research only. The Department will not score or rate responses received.
2. The Department reserves the right to communicate and/or schedule interviews/presentations with Respondents, if needed, to obtain clarification of information contained in the responses received and/or additional information to enhance marketing research efforts.

**APPENDIX A**

**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Administrative and Financial Services**

## RESPONSE COVER PAGE

**RFI# 202005090**

**Wide Area Network Transport**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Lead Point of Contact - Name/Title:** | | |  | | |
| **Organization Name (if applicable):** | | |  | | |
| **Tel:** |  | | **Fax:** |  | |
| **E-Mail:** |  | | **Website:** | |  |
| **Street Address:** | |  | | | |
| **City/State/Zip:** | |  | | | |

**APPENDIX B**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Administrative and Financial Services**

**SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM**

**RFI# 202005090**

**Wide Area Network Transport**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Organization/Responder’s Name:** |  |

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| --- | --- |
| **RFI Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
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*\* If a question is not related to any section of the RFI, state “N/A” under “RFI Section & Page Number”.*

*\*\* Add additional rows, if necessary.*