REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Information Technology Strategic Plan & Infrastructure Evaluation

for

Benton County

July 6, 2010

INTRODUCTION

Benton County is soliciting proposals from firms qualified to prepare an information technology strategic plan and perform an evaluation of the current information technology infrastructure. We will consider proposals from single firms or from multiple firms working as a team. The ideal firm(s) will have substantial experience in both areas. They will be excellent communicators and write clearly and concisely. They will have some experience in the public sector, and have worked with counties that are both larger and smaller than Benton. The procedures for awarding this project will follow the guidelines outlined in RCW 39.04.270 Competitive Negotiations. The proposals will be evaluated on the basis of price and the criteria listed below.

BENTON COUNTY CENTRAL SERVICES

Benton County Central Services is an internal services department that provides information technology and telecommunication support for Benton County. The department has ten professional/technical positions and two clerical positions located in offices at the Courthouse in Prosser and at the Justice Center in Kennewick. Both of these locations include substantial data centers. A third, smaller data center is located at the Kennewick Annex in Kennewick. The department supports workstations, software, printers, scanners, and phones about 700 active Benton County employees along with servers providing shared applications and storage.

Central Services manages two funds that are separate from the county general fund. One is used for operation costs and the other is for computer equipment replacement. All department expenses are charged back to the departments receiving the services in one or more of seven categories: Network, Desktop, Phone, BlackBerry, Applications, Mail, Administration.

CURRENT INFRASTRUCTURE

The network infrastructure consists of firewalls, core switches, and edge switches providing 100 mb connectivity to the desktop with 1000 mb connectivity to servers and between switches within the facilities. The same structured cabling is used both voice and data communications. Additionally, there are specialized firewall devices for email and Internet access. The data centers house 36 servers that provide nearly 20 applications specific to the various departments, as well as, shared storage including two storage area network arrays. County employees are located at eleven sites, ten of which are connected with fiber, wireless, or T1 circuits. Users authenticate to the network through Novell eDirectory. Within the county facilities, there are about 800 desktop computers and laptops, 400 peripheral devices, and 780 phones.

REQUESTED SERVICES

We are looking for a firm(s) to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the current information technology and telecommunications infrastructure and to help us create a strategic plan that will guide us through the next five years. Some of the specific areas that we would like to have addressed are:

- **Technical Infrastructure:** Review the current infrastructure and make recommendations meeting industry standards for application delivery, data storage, and security. In addition, analyze the benefits of moving our key customer-centric applications to software as a service and/or web based infrastructure.

- **Central Services Staffing and Department Organization:** Review our staff, structure, and organization, and identify areas for structural improvement. While we will entertain suggestions for new staff positions, the county's budget is limited and the preference is to avoid adding positions. We are also interested in developing an inventory of the current/desired skills, so that we can identify needs and plan for training.
- **Backups and Disaster Recovery:** Include recommendations for routine backups and recovery, including recovery involving a situation in which a building would be unusable.
- **Applications:** Several large applications used by specific departments are slated for purchase or upgrade in the next five years. We would like to explore options for acquiring these applications including their priority and the possible participation with comparable regional systems.
- **Regionalization:** With the growing broadband connectivity, we would like to explore opportunities to create and manage shared infrastructure and/or applications including large applications that will be acquired in the next five years. Recommend ways to effectively balance the power of central internal management of our applications and the cost-saving opportunities of outsourcing applications and hardware infrastructure.
- **Financial Models:** Review our current Charge-back and Equipment Replacement procedures and billings. Responsible management requires the availability of funds to replace both hardware and software for large and small systems. Currently, only hardware has an established source of replacement funding. Recommendations should accommodate a new biennium budget process.
- **Policies:** Review current policies and identify necessary policy directions and additions.
- **Help Desk and Asset Management:** Take a closer look at our limited help desk and asset management functionality and identify options for improvement.
- **Project Management, Prioritization, and IT Governance**: Recommendations based on departmental needs and goals.

Ideally, the evaluation would include comparisons to industry standards where comparable data is available for customer service, staffing, uptime, costs, etc., and would involve all of the primary internal stakeholders who would also contribute ideas for the future and recommendations for prioritization of projects. The county does have anticipated income streams for capital and operating funding, and the primary question that we are asking with the strategic plan is "What is the most effective way to use the resources that we now have available?"

DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables are to be provided by the firm(s). Additional deliverables may be identified during the initial meetings between the firm(s) and the County.

- A five-year strategic plan addressing the topics listed above and any others identified in the process of stakeholder discussions. This plan should be designed to succeed within our anticipated available budget and include recommendations for keeping it up to date.
- An evaluation of the current infrastructure with a two-year tactical plan for correcting and/or strengthening identified weaknesses by the end of 2012.

PROPOSAL CONTENT

All proposals are to include the following:
- Contact information for the respondent.
- Location of respondent corporate offices.
- Number of years respondent has in information technology consulting.
- Credentials of specific personnel that will be involved in the project.
- Statement of approach to be taken to each of the areas listed under Requested Services.
- Proposed phases or steps in producing the deliverables listed above.
- Summary of expected costs, including estimates for travel and per diem.
- List of references with contact information.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

Price will be a significant, but not the only, criteria in evaluating the proposals. Consideration will also be given to the following:
- Experience performing similar services for local government entities.
- Extent to which the proposal addresses the areas listed under Requested Services.
- Information collected from references provided.
- Responses to requests for additional information submitted to the respondents.

The award will be made to the qualified respondent whose proposal is most advantageous to the county with price and other factors considered. The county may reject any and all proposals.

COUNTY CONTACT

Questions about this RFP may be directed to:

Teri L. Holmes, Assistant Manager   Damien Essex, Info System Analyst
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Benton County Central Services
509-786-5603

All proposals must be received by 4:00 PM on the date indicated below. Proposals may be submitted electronically in PDF format. Late arrivals with postmarks after the deadline will not be accepted. All expenses for preparation of the proposal package are the responsibility of the respondent. All materials submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of Benton County and are subject to public disclosure under the provisions of Chapter 5.14 Benton County Code and applicable state and federal laws. Completed proposals must be submitted by mail or delivery to:

Benton County Central Services
PO Box 608
620 Market Street
Prosser WA 99350

Or by email to: central.services@co.benton.wa.us

SCHEDULE

EVENT	ON OR BEFORE…
RFP Published	July 6, 2010
Proposals submitted to County	August 3, 2010
Vendor selection	TBD
Begin project	TBD