

Towns of Danvers, Middleton, Topsfield, Hamilton, Wenham,  
Manchester-by-the-Sea, and Essex

# **Request for Information**

IT Managed Services for Multi-Town Collaborative

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Notice to Respondents

Respondents to this Request for Information (RFI) are invited to respond to any or all of the questions in this document. Responses to this RFI will assist Danvers, Middleton, Topsfield, Hamilton, Wenham, Manchester By The Sea, and Essex (“Towns”) in understanding the current state of the marketplace with regards to the solicited information and inform the development of a potential solicitation for a Request for Responses (RFR), Request for Quotes (RFQ), or Request for Proposals (RFP) in the future. This RFI does not obligate the Towns to issue or amend a solicitation or to include any of the RFI provisions or responses in any solicitation. An RFI response is entirely voluntary, and will not affect the Towns’ consideration of any proposal submitted in response to any subsequent solicitation, nor will it serve as an advantage or disadvantage to the respondent in the course of any RFR, RFQ, or RFP that may be subsequently issued or amended.

### 1.2 Background and Purpose

The Towns of Danvers, Middleton, Topsfield, Hamilton, Wenham, Manchester-by-the-Sea, and Essex have entered into a partnership to explore procuring IT services on a regional basis. Currently all of these Towns, with the exception of Danvers, have a patchwork of IT solutions without any standardization or in-house staff. The Towns are currently in the process of building a regional fiber network with Danvers as the hub. The vision for the future is that Danvers would be able to host infrastructure for virtual servers and equipment related to disaster recovery capabilities. To further this Information Technology collaboration the six remaining Towns are seeking a vendor who could provide standardized IT managed services in a collective manor for six towns – Middleton, Topsfield, Hamilton, Wenham, Manchester-by-the-Sea, and Essex. Danvers town IT staff would provide oversight of the work and some strategic guidance.

The Towns are issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to solicit information regarding options for comprehensive, enterprise-wide Information Technology managed services for six towns with a combined population of approximately 40,000. Due to the patchwork approach in the six towns there are a variety of systems in place, many of which have not been inventoried.

For purposes of the RFI, respondents should describe solutions appropriate to support the IT needs for the listed Towns. Respondents should also describe their approach to service similar municipalities and how their approach could be adapted regionally to support multiple municipalities. This should also include any relevant information to support potential expansion to other towns or school systems which could eventually join the collaboration.

Release of this RFI presents an invitation for interested parties to offer the Towns with information regarding the services, support, and systems that could be applied to the use cases described here. The primary goal of this RFI is to gather information from qualified parties to support and inform future IT initiatives and procurements undertaken by the Towns. This RFI does not constitute a solicitation for

bids or proposals and will not result in contract award for these services based on information provided in response to this request.

Respondents are by no means constrained in providing information to this request and are encouraged to provide further information in support of the stated purpose that may be responsive, relevant, and considered noteworthy. The Towns reserve the right to use any information obtained through this process to draft a procurement document in the future that requests responses in a more formal and binding nature than this request.

### 1.3 Use Case

The Towns are comprised of six distinct municipalities with populations ranging from 3,500 to 10,000. As is common for many towns this size, each does not have any IT professionals on staff and instead relies upon contractors or volunteers to provide IT services. This has led to a patchwork approach and deficiencies in several areas. Some regional improvements in infrastructure have been made with progress toward a regional municipal fiber network. Additionally, Danvers is currently providing disaster recovery and hosting services to the Town of Essex. However, the Towns are in need of standardized support, hardware, software, and guidance.

Each Town has its own governing system and budget. Any vendor would need to propose a pricing structure that could be reasonably divvied up by Towns having different needs and usage in a logical, relatively simple method. The towns have begun discussions regarding a cost sharing agreement through an Inter-Municipal Agreement.

The vendor would be expected to act as a partner with Danvers IT staff as well as maintain relations with the administration of the other listed Towns. We invite respondents that offer an all-inclusive service that provides all of the traditional needs of a municipal IT department on a scale that spans the several towns. We also invite vendors to respond who supports some, but not all of the needs identified. We are looking for vendors that can be quality partners, both with the towns and the other vendors that currently support that the towns.

One function of a potential vendor(s) would be a comprehensive inventory of desktop and laptops, server hardware, storage appliances, software applications, network hardware, and printers. Please include information about any experience providing this service and potential pricing.

An appropriate vendor(s) would have the capabilities of onsite break fix/helpdesk support, Office 365 migration support, server maintenance and support, network management, monitoring and inventory, phone system support (potential interest in hosted VOIP solutions), lifecycle management, and strategic planning. As there is regularly the need for on-site support, the Towns would expect a response time of less than 45 minutes for on-site support.

The Towns are interested in information about everything from desktop support to network management, to centralized hardware/services purchasing, to lifecycle planning, to standardizing desktops, laptops, phone systems and other hardware to desktop and laptop imaging. Additionally, The Towns are interested in a vendor and services that are capable of providing strategic planning and

providing pro-active advice regarding the future needs of the Towns considering the desire for a regional, standardized environment.

#### 1.4 Respondent Submissions and Questions

Interested parties should describe potentially applicable services, systems, and software that would help the Towns meet their needs. The Towns are requesting information from interested parties that provide brief and concise expository responses to the following questions as they relate to each use case referenced above.

**Question 1:** What approach would you recommend for this collaboration? What IT provider solution(s) would you suggest for the Towns?

**Question 2:** What are the foreseeable direct costs associated with the recommended solution? These costs may include:

- Initial assessment and startup costs
- Minimum standards for server/network hardware
- Desktop/Laptop lifecycle management
- Initial detailed analysis of environment
- Any other fees or cost not specifically mentioned here

**Question 3:** Which of these identified needs do you support with your services? Please indicate if there are any tier or levels of your support, from which municipalities may select.

- Ongoing onsite desktop support
- Ongoing helpdesk support and triage
- Ongoing network management and monitoring
- Ongoing server maintenance and monitoring
- Office 365 migration support
- Workstation standardization
- Workstation and server lifecycle planning
- IT strategic planning
- IT needs and asset assessment and inventory

**Question 4:** What ongoing costs would you anticipate for this recommended solution?

**Question 5:** What pricing structure would you recommend for this collaboration?

**Question 6:** How could the recommended solution be scaled to meet the needs of multiple other public sector organizations (e.g. school systems) and/or other towns in the event that they wanted to join the collaboration?

**Question 7:** How do you see your approach change if at all to support a consortium rather than individual municipality?

**Question 8:** Can you provide recent examples of managed government services that utilize a similar model?

**Question 9:** What did we miss? Respondents are invited to provide additional relevant information. Marketing materials are disfavored.

**Question 10:** What other considerations should the Towns be aware of that are not addressed in this RFI? What blockers or challenges should the Towns be attuned to during this process?

### 1.5 Posting

Please note that this RFI is issued solely for the purpose of obtaining information. Nothing in this RFI shall be interpreted as a commitment on the part of the Towns to procure or enter into a contract with any Respondent.

Respondents are responsible for entering content suitable for public viewing, as all of the responses and questions are accessible to the public. Respondents must not include any information that could be considered personal, security sensitive, inflammatory, incorrect, collusive, or otherwise objectionable, including information about the Respondent's company or other companies.

### 1.6 Form of Respondent Submission

Respondents should submit one (1) electronic PDF response by the date and time set forth in the below schedule. Late responses may be disregarded.

All responses must include a cover page on formal letterhead with the official name, address, and contact information of the firm or entity submitting the response with both contact information and signature provided. Subsequent information provided should be limited to addressing the questions solicited in Sections 1.4. A final conclusion page may be provided summarizing the overall response to the RFI. Please consecutively number all pages of the response.

## 2. ESTIMATED CALENDAR

Event	Date
RFI Release Date	October 27, 2020
Respondent Questions Submitted to <a href="mailto:tanya.shallop@middletonma.gov">tanya.shallop@middletonma.gov</a>	November 11, 2020, By 5:00 PM EST
Email Response to: <a href="mailto:tanya.shallop@middletonma.gov">tanya.shallop@middletonma.gov</a>	November 11, 2020, By 5:00 PM EST
Respondent Informational Virtual Meetings	TBD

### 3. OPTIONAL VIRTUAL INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

In addition to written RFI responses, the Towns may invite any or none of the Respondents to make optional, focused, in person demonstrations of experience, offerings, methodologies and expertise applicable to this RFI. Any such demonstrations must relate directly to the Towns' needs outlined in this RFI and Respondents must not use this time for standard marketing sales presentations. The Towns retain the right to conduct informational session(s) associated with this RFI and retains the right to request additional information from Respondents, including further explanation or clarification from any and all Respondents during the review process. The Towns may request onsite vendor visits.

### 4. REVIEW RIGHT, PUBLIC RECORDS, AND COST

Responses to this RFI may be reviewed and evaluated by any person(s) at the discretion of the Towns, including independent consultants retained by the Towns now or in the future.

All responses to this RFI will be a public record under the Commonwealth's Public Records Law, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 66 Section 10, regardless of confidentiality notices set forth on such writings to the contrary.

All responses and other documents submitted in response to the RFI become the property of the Towns. The Towns are under no obligation to return any documents submitted by a vendor. The Towns may use any portion of any submission to formulate any future procurements.

By submitting a response, Respondents agree that any cost incurred in responding to this RFI, or in support of activities associated with this RFI, shall be the sole responsibility of the Respondent. The Towns shall not be held responsible for any costs incurred by Respondents in preparing their respective responses to this RFI.