

Maine Learning Technology Initiative

Historical Information - Questions and Answers for RFP #1205143, January-February, 2006

Question 1

Would it be possible to obtain the RFP in Word format? As section 4.3.1 requires that the response include all language provisions and numbering, directly quoted and included in the proposal.

Answer 1

The Request for Proposal is available in both Word (.doc) and PDF (.pdf) format from the RFP web page at, <http://www.maine.gov/mlti/rfp/>

Question 2

Is the bidder's conference on Friday Jan 27, 2006 a mandatory event?

Answer 2

The bidder's conference is not a mandatory event, however, as stated in section 2.5 of the RFP, "Attendance at the Conference is strongly recommended, but it is not required."

Question 3

When and where is the Bidders' Conference?

Answer 3

As stated in the Letter to Vendors section of the RFP, A Bidders' Conference will be held on January 27, 2006 at 9:00 A.M. The location of the Bidders' Conference will be:

Thorne Hall, Daggett Lounge
Bowdoin College
Brunswick, ME 04011

Question 4

What are the challenges for the MLTI Project based upon experiences from the first deployment?

Answer 4

We believe that the RFP adequately outlines the issues to be addressed by this RFP. For more information related to the evaluation of the program, bidders may wish to reference <http://www.maine.gov/mlti/resources/research.htm>.

Question 5

Will the network infrastructure that was installed for the first MLTI deployment remain in place?

Answer 5

The existing network infrastructure is the property of each local School Administrative Unit. The infrastructure will not be removed at the end of the current MLTI contract. As noted in section 3.1.1 of the RFP, "...the State of Maine seeks to procure installed or upgraded wireless networks for all participating middle schools as necessary,..."

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Question 6

What kind of cabling is used in the existing wireless network? What is the status of the existing wiring infrastructure in each school, is it working today?

Answer 6

The cabling used for the wireless network was category 5e. All schools have a working network infrastructure. Bidders should note that some schools have been constructed or renovated since the initial installation of the networks. In these instances, schools have installed cabling according to local standards, which may or may not be the same as the installed MLTI network specifications. The Department does not have definitive data on which schools may have altered the wiring infrastructure since installation. The Department has no data on these new or modified networks.

Question 7

Must the Provider replace existing cabling as part of the wireless network solution?

Answer 7
No.

Question 8
Are there any enterprise or statewide software agreements that K12 schools can take advantage of?

Answer 8
Yes, statewide software purchasing agreements are managed by the University of Maine System's Procurement Division as well as by a non-profit statewide educational technology consortium, the Association of Computer Technology Educators of Maine (ACTEM).

For more information regarding these agreements, bidders may contact Kevin Carr (207-973-3307, kevin.carr@maine.edu) or Derek Husson (207-581-2617, Derek@umit.maine.edu) at the University of Maine system, or Craig Dickinson, Business Manager, ACTEM, cdickinson@actem.org.

Vendor (contact person)
Microsoft Select Agreement (Carr)
Adobe CLP Agreement (Carr)
Symantec Anti-virus (Husson)
Sophos Anti-virus (Dickinson)
Apple Computer (Dickinson)
Filemaker Pro (Dickinson)
Crick Software (Dickinson)

Question 9
Does the vendor need to provide an asset tag sticker that is affixed to the wireless device? Should it conform to a specific format?

Answer 9
Section 3.6.5.2 of the RFP states, "The Provider is encouraged to include external physical markings or property tags of some type that provide a unique, visual appearance to identify the device as part of this program." If the bidder chooses to include an asset tag sticker for each device, the Department would like to maintain distinctive asset tags from the first deployment. Therefore, at the minimum, asset tag numbers should be unique when compared to the current deployment.

Question 10
Must the vendor create and supply the software image for the devices? Who is responsible for determining how the device is configured (e.g., system settings and configurations)?

Answer 10

The bidder's solution should be complete and include a software image as described in Section 3.3.3 of the RFP. The bidders should include supporting detail on the relevancy of this software, "...each bidder must identify all of its application software and describe how it will support educational use and how it will align tools and resources with Maine's Learning Results." Bidders should also see Section 3.6.2 for a description of device configuration details. The Department seeks recommendations from bidders in their proposals, but also expects that all final decisions regarding software and configuration would be made in consultation between the Department and the successful bidder, and that these decisions would be memorialized in the Agreement between the Department and the successful bidder.

Question 11
Can you comment at all in terms of funding that has been allocated for this program that is scheduled to start sometime late spring/summer to stay on track? Do you know when that budget is scheduled to be voted on?

Answer 11
The Department of Education's annual budget includes budget allocations for the program. As in any year, budget approval is tied to the Legislative schedule. There is no hard date for when the Legislature will vote on the State budget.

Question 12
Will the Department accept alternate viable solutions to those described by the RFP?

Answer 12
Please see Section 4.1, subsection I, which governs exceptions "to the terms and conditions, technical requirements or any other portion of this RFP."

Question 13
In the bid it asked for servers in every school. Is this a strict requirement of the RFP?

Answer 13

In Section 3.4.2.2, the RFP notes, "The proposed servers are presumed to be best located at the school, but the bidder may propose an alternate server location if it is a better solution."

Question 14

With respect to the software categories specified in Section 3.3.3.1, what are the dominant types of software used in schools by students and teachers?

Answer 14

Implementation of the program varies from school to school. Based on feedback from schools, the Department believes that all of the software categories included in Section 3.3.3.1 are of enough significant value to be mentioned in the RFP. Bidders should note that Section 3.3.3.1 says that these categories of software should be included, "...at a minimum...". Bidders are encouraged to include other educationally relevant software.

Question 15

How many access points and switches were installed in each school in the first MLTI deployment? Can you annotate if they are in working condition?

Answer 15

The linked files below contain more detailed information about the installed MLTI networks. The information contained in this document should be considered representative, but not strictly accurate as it reflects data obtained from initial installation reports. It does not include updated information as a result of local efforts to expand or reconfigure the network. In general, the Department believes that most schools have not altered the installed wireless network significantly, but the Department does not have accurate information about which schools have altered the installed network, nor in what ways the network was altered. The Department does not have data regarding the status of each access point but presumes that all access points are functioning.

Q 15 files:

.pdf version
.xls version

Question 16

Is the current asset management software the same or different than described in Section 3.6.6?

Answer 16

The current asset management software used in the MLTI project is similar to that described in Section 3.6.6.

Question 17

Would a completely electronic asset management system meet the requirements of Section 3.6.6? Or would you require a paper copy as well?

Answer 17

We believe Section 3.6.6 adequately describes the asset management requirement. Also, see Section 3.6.5.2 and Answer 9 in this document.

Question 18

Section 3.6.5.1 includes:

The Provider shall assume the risk of loss (e.g., fire, flood, theft, negligence) of the equipment provided, except that each local school unit shall be responsible for any replacement or repair costs due to the negligent or intentional act of the school, a teacher, a student.

Where do you draw the line between the Provider's responsibility and teachers/students responsibility?

Answer 18

We believe that Section 3.6.5.1 adequately describes the division between Provider responsibility and local school staff and student responsibility.

Question 19

Do you have an ideal device in mind? Or what the device should look like?

Answer 19

We believe that the RFP adequately describes the device. Bidders should take particular note of Sections 3.3.2 through 3.3.3.

Question 20

Is there a requirement for an optical device (like a CD-ROM)?

Answer 20

There is no requirement for an optical device. The Department expects the bidder's proposal to meet the necessary functional requirements as described in the RFP. If a bidder's solution requires an optical device to meet the functional requirements, then it should include an optical device.

Question 21

What asset tracking software is being utilized in the current MLTI program?

Answer 21

The MLTI Asset Manager is a custom solution provided by the current vendor, Apple Computer, Inc.

Question 22

Will the Provider's asset management solution be expected to include the current MLTI devices?

Answer 22

No.

Question 23

Is it acceptable to utilize a "train the trainer" model for teacher training, or is the Provider expected to do on-site training at each school?

Answer 23

We believe that Section 3.7 adequately describes the "Training, Curriculum Integration, and Consultation" requirements.

Question 24

What type of financing structure does the State require to achieve the \$300 per month? What type of end of lease option is required at end of lease (for hardware)? Fair Market Value or \$1.00 Buyout (Full Pay-out)? What type of payment frequency does the State require? Monthly, Quarterly, Annual?

Answer 24

Please refer to Section 2.13.2.2 of the RFP.

Question 25

The State has indicated a 48 month term - would the State evaluate a shorter term/different options to achieve the same result?

Answer 25

Please refer to Section 2.18 of the RFP. Also, please see Section 4.1, subsection I which governs exceptions "to the terms and conditions, technical requirements or any other portion of the RFP."

Question 26

Did the State sign financing (lease) agreements for the Apple solution? If so, what type of financing structure was used?

Answer 26

Yes, the State leased the Apple solution. A copy of that lease may be downloaded here (140kb, .pdf).

Question 27

Relative to section 3.2.2 Alternative Deployments, how will you define the "service components that are susceptible to disaggregation"?

Answer 27

This determination will be made based upon the Department's understanding of the bidder's solution as described in the response to the RFP.

Question 28

Relative to Section 3.2.2 Alternative Deployments, in the first phase (Apple), how many schools implemented an alternative deployment that received state funds? What was the average \$/seat that the State provided for these alternative deployments?

Answer 28

All public middle schools opted-in to the MLTI project, and all schools implemented the proposed (Apple) solution. No schools

elected an alternative deployment.

Question 29

How many Apple iBooks were lost or stolen during the past 4 years?

Answer 29

Ninety iBooks have been reported lost or stolen to the Department MLTI Project office since the beginning of the program. Of those reported lost or stolen, 28 were recovered.

Question 30

How is the software for the current MLTI program licensed; a) perpetual or b) annuity licenses?

Answer 30

Software licensing on the current MLTI program is managed by the current Provider. The current program utilizes both perpetual and annuity licenses.

Question 31

Moving forward, do you have a preference for either perpetual or annuity licensing?

Answer 31

The Department does not have a preference.

Question 32

My company utilizes a technology that I'm afraid the Department is not aware of, and it may not have seen this technology used before in a 1 to 1 initiative. Would it be possible for me to explain the technology to the Department prior to or separate from a bid proposal?

Answer 32

No. The Department expects all Proposals to be complete and include enough detail for the Department to understand the bidder's solution. Bidders should note Section 2.6 which includes, "The Department reserves its right to require and conduct oral presentations with bidders. At the Department's option, oral presentations by bidders may be requested for the purpose of explaining or clarifying characteristics or significant elements related to the proposals."

Question 33

Are the school principals, middle school technical coordinators and librarians accounted for in your 3,700 teacher machines estimate? Please provide an estimate of the number of machines needed for each of the four years?

Answer 33

Estimated teacher and staff totals included in Section 3.3.1.1 include school principals, middle school technical coordinators and librarians. Section 3.3.1.2 includes student totals for each of the four years.

Question 34

Will schools have the option of opting out of having Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS) installed on wireless access points?

Answer 34

We believe Section 3.5.6 adequately addresses the requirements for UPS devices.

Question 35

Can you provide statistics on call volume to the Help Desk?

Answer 35

From July of 2002 through June of 2003, with grade 7 deployed, average monthly call volume to the Help Desk was 296 calls per month. From July 2003 to December 2005, with grades 7 and 8 deployed, average monthly call volume to the Help Desk was 767 calls per month.

Under the terms of the current MLTI agreement, the Apple Help Desk is available to every student and teacher issued an iBook plus each school's technical coordinator and each school's principal. The current Help Desk covers questions on software and hardware usage, MLTI protocols, wireless network questions, troubleshooting, repair dispatching, and anything else related to the MLTI solution.

Bidders should note that the Department of Education expects bidders to evaluate their own needs related to providing a support program that meets the requirements as described in the RFP. Section 3.8.1 of the RFP states:

Each bidder must address—at a minimum—the items above [Section 3.8], as well as the requirements of Section 3.5 (Performance and Quality), in fully describing here its proposed support program to demonstrate that its approach will provide solid, effective support for the users of the solution.