

**COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUDIT
RFP 2018-I**

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners is requesting proposals from qualified and interested firms to perform a telecommunications audit for Columbia County. Proposals will be accepted until 2:00 p.m. on November 15, 2018 in the office of the Board of County Commissioners located at 135 NE Hernando Ave. Room 203, Lake City, Florida 32055.

Specifications and bid forms may be downloaded at the County web site, <https://webportal.columbiacountyfla.com/list-purchasing-projects.aspx>.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
2018-I Telecommunications Audit
Columbia County Board of Commissioners

RFP No. 2018-I TELECOMMUNICATIONS BILLING AUDIT SERVICES

The Columbia County Board of County Commissioners is seeking proposals from qualified vendors for telecommunications billing and line audit services for the Columbia County Board of County Commissioners and the five (5) County Constitutional Officers. Determination of each Respondent's qualifications will be based on the Respondent's proposal, which is to be completed and submitted in accordance with the RFP specifications. The contract, if awarded, shall incorporate the RFP specifications and all or part of the Respondent's proposal.

Terms, conditions, and specifications may be obtained by downloading this RFP from our website:
<http://www.columbiacountyfla.com/PurchasingBids.asp>

All questions pertaining to this Request for Proposals (RFP) should be directed, in writing, to Ray Hill, Purchasing Director, Columbia County 135 NE Hernando Ave, Lake City 32055, or by email to Ray_Hill@columbiacountyfla.com no later than 5:00 P.M. on November 9, 2018. Any addenda to this Request for Proposal (RFP) shall be distributed to vendors on the list Columbia County distributes for this RFP. **Proposers must submit one (1) original response marked "Original", four (4) copies marked "Copy" and one (1) flash drive** in a sealed envelope clearly marked on the outside with the proposal number, proposal title, and the Respondent's name so as to identify the enclosed proposals.

Proposals must be delivered to: **Columbia County Managers Office, 135 NE Hernando Avenue, Suite 203, Lake City, FL 32055,**

Proposals must reach said office no later than **2:00 P.M. on November 15, 2018**, at which time they will be opened. Proposals received later than the date and time as specified will be rejected. Late proposals will not be accepted under any circumstances. The Board will not be responsible for the late deliveries of proposals that are incorrectly addressed, delivered in person, by mail or any other type of delivery service. It is the sole responsibility of each Proposer to ensure their proposal is received in a timely fashion.

All proposals shall remain valid for a period of ninety days (90) beyond the deadline for submission and may be extended beyond that time by mutual agreement. The Board will automatically reject the response of any person or affiliate who appears on the convicted vendor list prepared by the Department of Management Services, State of Florida, under section 287.133(3)(d), Florida Statutes. COLUMBIA County declares that all or portions of the documents and work papers and other forms of deliverables pursuant to this request shall be subject to reuse by the County.

Each proposal will be reviewed to determine if the proposal is responsive to the RFP. Proposals deemed to be non-responsive will be rejected without being evaluated. A responsive proposal is one which has been signed and submitted by the specified Proposal deadline, and has provided the information required to be submitted with the Proposal. While poor formatting, poor documentation and/or incomplete or unclear information may not be cause to reject a proposal without evaluation, such substandard submissions may adversely impact the evaluation of a Proposal. Respondents who fail to comply with the required and/or desired elements of this RFP do so at their own risk. The Evaluation Committee shall review all proposals for compliance with the specifications and select a vendor(s) for recommendation.

The Columbia County Board of County Commissioners reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals or any parts thereof. The award, if an award is made, will be made to the most responsive and responsible Respondent whose proposal and qualifications indicate that the award will be in the best interest of Columbia County. The Board reserves the right to waive irregularities in the proposal.

SECTION I. DESCRIPTION/SCOPE OF SERVICES

1. **GENERAL:** The Columbia County Board of County Commissioners, for itself and the five (5) County Constitutional Officers, (hereinafter, the "County") is soliciting the services of a qualified Respondent with a proven track record in auditing, negotiating, and recovering overpayments related to the billing of telephone and data communication services. The County intends to enter in a contract with a Respondent that has extensive knowledge of and experience in the telecommunications industry, including proven experience dealing with a wide variety of telecommunications carriers in the United States.

The County is issuing this RFP to provide vendors with the information, guidelines, and instructions needed to prepare and submit a proposal. The selection of the successful Respondent will be based on the proposal that is, in the sole opinion of the County, determined to be in the best interests of the County. Among the factors the County will consider when evaluating the proposals are the qualifications and relevant experience of the Respondents, key personnel (based on verifiable references), the proposed work plan, schedule, and support requirements, and the fee structure. The successful Respondent shall be required to review and audit invoices and negotiate, on the County's behalf, for recovery of any amounts determined to be owed to the County.

2. **SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED:** The successful Respondent will perform an inventory analysis and billing audit of all telecommunication related invoices. The billing audit will include, but will not be limited to:

- Analysis of telecommunication contracts.
- Analysis of telecommunication bills, both current and past bills (up to one year) so that corrections can be made retroactively if necessary.
- Analysis of network topology.
- Identification of billing discrepancies between the bills and contracts.
- Identification of billing discrepancies related to service levels.
- Validation of inactive phone numbers.
- Drafting and monitoring of billing disputes.

Once the County has reviewed and agreed with the successful Respondent's findings, the successful Respondent will assist in obtaining any refunds owed and be prepared to act on the County's behalf when presenting the findings to the County's telecommunications vendors. In addition to recovering refunds, the successful Respondent will identify possible cost saving recommendations that will result in a reduction of ongoing expenses. The County will determine whether these recommendations are in the County's best interests and may choose not to implement any or all of the recommendations

3. PERSONNEL / STAFFING: The County expects the successful Respondent to set up a team whose manager will be the single point of contact for the County. The manager will coordinate and supervise all County telecommunications billing audit activities. All team members should have significant experience in the telecommunications industry and with telecommunications billing audits. In order to maintain quality and continuity, the successful Respondent must make every effort to keep staff turnover on the County's engagement to a minimum. If such changes are unavoidable, the County must receive adequate notice of impending changes. Respondents should identify the key personnel (team) to be assigned to the County for completion of this engagement. At a minimum, Respondents should identify the individuals on the team and their title, role on the team, qualifications, experience in the telecommunications industry, and experience in providing similar telecommunications billing audit services.
4. TIMELINE AND COUNTY RESOURCES: Respondents should provide a detailed timeline of their process and clearly identify, for each step of the process, how much support they will require from the County. The timeline should identify the functions/positions that the successful Respondent will need to work with, details of the tasks to be performed, and the estimated time County staff will be required to commit to this project.
5. MONITORING REQUIREMENTS: The County expects the successful Respondent to report on all phases of the review and audit process. Where available, reports are desired by the County identifying progress, cost savings, and refund status. Respondents should provide examples of reports available to the County.
6. DELIVERABLES: Two (2) complete sets of reports with supporting data shall be furnished to the Project Manager. File format shall be electronic PDF files.
7. FEE STRUCTURE: The County desires to establish transparent financial terms. The County requires all proposals to be based on the percentage of verifiable refunds and savings recovered by the County as a direct result of the billing audits. Respondents should present their fee structure in a clear and concise manner. Alternative proposals may be presented for the County's consideration in addition to, but not in lieu of, the aforementioned requirements.
 - a. Respondents should provide a detailed definition of all types of claims that they will process against telecommunications carriers, along with their respective fee structure for each claim type.
 - b. In no event will the identification of billing errors determine payment. No payments shall be made by the County until refunds have been received or savings have been realized. Fees will only be payable after credit claims have been processed by respective carriers and upon actual recovery of those credits by the County. The County will remit the proposed contractual percentage of any verified refund within 45 days after receiving a refund from any of the County's telecommunications providers.

- c. For recommendations and/or negotiations that result in future savings for the County, the County will pay the successful Respondent the proposed contractual percentage within 45 days after receiving the invoice that includes the verifiable savings.
- d. The fees described in 7.b and 7.c of this Section will be the total compensation for services under this RFP. No additional fees (e.g. travel, research fees) will be paid to the successful Respondent as part of this service.
- e. Respondents should provide an average time to complete the analysis of invoices, time to place a claim with a carrier, and average time to get the claim processed. It is understood that processing claims through some carriers may be longer than others. So, for comparison purposes, Respondents are invited to provide the County with the average time that they would take to process similar claims through two (2) selected carriers of Respondent's choosing.

SECTION II. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- A. All proposals, when opened, shall become the property of the County.
- B. Pursuant to Section 287.133, Florida Statutes, a person or affiliate who has been placed on the convicted vendor list following a conviction for a public entity crime may not submit a bid, proposal, or reply on a contract to provide any goods or services to a public entity; may not submit a bid, proposal, or reply on a contract with a public entity for the construction or repair of a public building or public work; may not submit bids, proposals, or replies on leases of real property to a public entity; may not be awarded or perform work as a contractor, supplier, subcontractor, or consultant under a contract with any public entity; and may not transact business with any public entity in excess of the threshold amount provided in Section 287.017, Florida Statutes, for CATEGORY TWO for a period of 36 months following the date of being placed on the convicted vendor list.
- C. Proposals are due and must be received in accordance with the instructions given in the announcement page of this RFP.
- D. The County shall have no liability and will not reimburse Respondents for any costs or expenses associated with the preparation and submittal of any proposals.
- E. Respondents, their agents and associates shall NOT solicit any County Official. Respondents and their agents and associates shall NOT contact any County Official other than the individual listed in Section XIII of this RFP for additional information and clarification.
- F. Due care and diligence has been exercised in the preparation of this RFP, and all information contained herein is believed to be substantially correct. However, the responsibility for determining the full extent of the service required rests solely with those making a proposal. Neither the County nor its representatives shall be responsible for any error or omission in the proposals submitted, nor for the failure on the part of the Respondents to determine the full extent of the exposures.

- G. All timely proposals meeting the specifications set forth in this RFP will be considered. Each Respondent shall clearly indicate any deviations from these specifications in its proposal. The terms and conditions contained herein are those desired by the County and preference will be given to those proposals in full or substantially full compliance with them.
- H. Each Respondent is responsible for full and complete compliance with all laws, rules, and regulations including those of the Federal Government, the State of Florida, and the County of Columbia. Failure or inability on the part of the Respondent to have complete knowledge and intent to comply with those laws, rules, and regulations shall not relieve any Respondent from its obligation to honor its proposal and to perform completely in accordance with its proposal.
- I. The County reserves the right, in its discretion, to waive minor informalities or irregularities in any proposals, to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part, with or without cause, and to accept the proposal, if any, which in its judgment will be in its best interest.
- J. Award will be made to the Respondent whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the County, taking into consideration those proposals in compliance with the requirements as set forth in this RFP. The County reserves the right to reject any and all proposals for any reason or make no award whatsoever or request clarification of information from the Respondents.
- K. Any interpretation, clarification, correction or change to this RFP will be made by written addendum issued by the Columbia County Purchasing Department. Any oral or other type of communication concerning this RFP shall not be binding.
- L. Proposals must be signed by a representative of Respondent who is legally authorized to commit the Respondent to the delivery of the goods and/or performance of the service(s) contemplated by this RFP.
- M. The successful Respondent agrees to maintain, on a primary basis and at its sole expense, at all times during the life of any resulting contract the following insurance coverage, limits, including endorsements described herein. The requirements contained herein, as well as the County's review or acceptance of insurance maintained by the Respondent is not intended to and shall not in any manner limit or qualify the liabilities or obligations assumed by Respondent under any resulting contract.
 - a. Commercial General Liability insurance on an "occurrence" basis in an amount not less than \$1,000,000 combined single limit Bodily Injury and Property Damage Liability.
 - b. Business Automobile Liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000, providing Bodily Injury Liability and Property Damage Liability.
 - c. Workers' Compensation insurance applicable to its employees, if any, for statutory coverage limits in compliance with Florida Laws including Employers' Liability which meets all state and federal laws.
 - d. Professional Liability/ Errors or Omissions insurance as appropriate for the type of business engaged in by the respondent shall be purchased and maintained by the Respondent with minimum limits of not less than \$1,000,000 combined single limit.

All policies must be endorsed to provide the County with written thirty (30) days' notice of cancellation or restriction except for nonpayment of premium. The Vendor shall provide the County with certificates of insurance showing the existence of coverage required by this RFP.

1. Special Requirements / Evidence of Insurance:

- a. A copy of the Respondent's current certificate of insurance MUST be provided with the proposal submitted in response to this RFP. A formal certificate shall be provided upon execution of a contract and prior to performance of the work called for in this RFP. The Certificate(s) shall be signed by a person authorized by the insurer to bind coverage on its behalf. All Certificates of Insurance must be on file with and approved by the County before commencement of any work activities. The formal insurance certificate shall name Columbia County, a political subdivision of the State of Florida and its Elected Officials, Agents, Employees, and Volunteers as "Additional Insureds" on all policies except Workers' Compensation.
 - b. In the event the insurance coverage expires prior to the completion of the project, a renewal certificate shall be issued and delivered to the County 30-days prior to that expiration date.
 - c. It is the responsibility of the Contractor to insure that all subcontractors comply with all insurance requirements.
 - d. The successful Respondent shall procure and maintain, during the life of the contract, the insurance coverage listed in this RFP. The policies of insurance shall be primary and written on forms acceptable to the County and placed with insurance carriers authorized by the Insurance Department in the State of Florida that meet a minimum financial A.M. Best & Company rating of no less than "A Excellent: FSC VII".
 - e. The successful Respondent shall hold Columbia County, a political subdivision of the State of Florida, and its Elected Officials, Agents, Employees, and Volunteers harmless on account of claims for damages to persons and property arising out of the operations to complete the work called for in this RFP. The County reserves the right to require the successful Respondent to provide and pay for any other insurance coverage the County deems necessary, depending upon the possible exposure to liability.
 - f. All policies must include Waiver of Subrogation. Any liability aggregate limits shall apply "Per Jobsite/Per Job Aggregate". All liability insurance shall be Primary and Non-Contributory. Certificates of Insurance shall confirm in writing that these provisions apply.
- N. Each proposal must contain proof of enrollment in E-Verify. Minority Owned and Women owned businesses must submit a copy of the certificate to receive credit.
- O. Late proposals will not be accepted under any circumstances. If a proposal is received after the scheduled time of the proposal Opening Meeting, the sender will be contacted for disposition. The Purchasing Department, at the Respondent's expense, can return the unopened proposal envelope, or, at the Respondent's written request, can destroy it.
- P. Electronically submitted proposals and faxed proposals will not be accepted. Any blank spaces on the required proposal form or the absence of required submittals or signatures

may cause the proposal to be declared non-responsive.

- Q. The County is not responsible for correcting any errors or typos made on the proposal. Incorrect calculations may cause the proposal to be declared non-responsive.

SECTION III. ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. ADDENDA: In this RFP, the Board has attempted to address most situations that may occur. However, should situations arise that are not addressed, they will be dealt with on a case by case basis, at the discretion of the Board. If deemed necessary, the Purchasing Department will supplement this RFP document with Addenda. These Addenda will be posted on the County's website.

It is the sole responsibility of the Respondent to check the website for Addenda. If a mandatory pre-proposal meeting was held, as a courtesy, an e-mail will be sent to the e-mail addresses listed on the sign-in sheet.

Respondents must acknowledge receipt of Addenda by completing the respective section on the bid/proposal submittal form.

2. AFFIRMATION: By submitting a proposal, the Respondent affirms that: (i) the proposal is genuine and not made in the interest of or on behalf of any undisclosed person, entity or organization and is not submitted in conformity with any agreement or rules of any person, entity or organization; (ii) the Respondent has not directly or indirectly induced or solicited any other person, entity or organization to submit a false or sham proposal; (iii) the Respondent has not solicited or induced any person, entity or organization to refrain from submitting a proposal; and (iv) the Respondent has not sought by collusion to obtain for himself/herself/itself any advantage over any other person, entity or organization or the County.
3. COUNTY EMPLOYEES/ CONFLICT OF INTEREST: All Respondents must disclose the name of any officer, director or agent who is also an employee of the Columbia County Board of County Commissioners. All Respondents must disclose the name of any County employee who owns, directly or indirectly, any interest in the Respondent's business or any of its branches.
4. JOINT PROPOSALS: In the event multiple Respondents submit a joint proposal in response to this RFP, a single Respondent shall be identified as Primary Respondent. The Primary

Respondent must include the name, address, and contact information of all parties making the joint proposal. The Primary Respondent shall provide all bonding insurance requirements, execute any contract, sign the proposal and have overall and complete accountability to resolve any dispute arising within the contract. Only a single contract with one Respondent will be acceptable. Invoices will only be accepted from and paid to the Primary Respondent. The Primary Respondent shall remain responsible for performing services associated with the proposal submitted in response to this RFP.

SECTION VI. PROPOSAL FORMAT CRITERIA

The following criteria are shown and shall include all Respondent & sub-contractor information and must be submitted in a tabbed format. For a proposal to be eligible, the format must be strictly followed. During this RFP process, any intentional omissions, alterations or false representations will be grounds for rejection of any proposal. A public entity crimes statement may be requested of any successful Respondent.

To facilitate effective evaluation by the County, proposals shall be a maximum of fifty (50) pages.

Late proposals will be returned unopened or will be destroyed, if requested by the Respondent in writing. Evaluation and selection will occur in accordance with the tentative schedule provided in Section XII or at a time and place to be determined.

Proposals must answer each heading and any sub-heading and be constructed in the following tabbed format:

TAB –A Introduction

- 1. Executive Overview / Transmittal Letter (optional)**-Please explain Respondent's status: fully independent, a branch office, subsidiary, member of affiliate network, etc. If Respondent is a subsidiary, list the parent company and Respondent's relationship to it. Please identify persons authorized to represent and commit the Respondent, including address and telephone number.
- 2. Proposal Submittal Form** - This page does not count toward the 50 page allowance.
- 3. Proof of Insurance** - This page does not count toward the 50 page allowance.
- 4. Index** - This page does not count toward the 50 page allowance.

TAB –B Evaluation Criteria

- 1. Project Understanding and Approach** **---(MAXIMUM 20 POINTS)**
 - a) Describe the Respondent's understanding of the project scope.
 - b) Describe, in detail, the Respondent's approach to the proposed telecommunications audits.
 - c) If any tools or equipment are to be installed on County premises or attached to the

- County network, give the specifications and requirements of each.
- d) Provide sample reports that will be provided to the County.

2. Relevant Respondent Experience & Capabilities **---(MAXIMUM 20 POINTS)**

- a) Description and history of Respondent. If applicable, indicate any company name changes within the past seven (7) years and the date of the change.
- b) Indicate the number of years that the Respondent has been providing the services requested.
- c) Describe in detail the Respondent's experience in providing similar services to governmental and private entities within the last three (3) years. Include years of experience with the entity, size of each entity, monies recovered, cost reductions as a result of billing audits, etc.
- d) Indicate how many claims the Respondent processed, with how many carriers, the total amount of funds recovered and future savings recognized over the past 18 months.

3. Experience and Ability of Staff **---(MAXIMUM 20 POINTS)**

- a) Identify the key personnel (team) to be assigned to the County for completion of this engagement. At a minimum, identify the individuals on the team, their titles and role on the team, qualifications, experience in the telecommunications industry, and experience in providing similar telecommunications billing audit services.

4. Current and Projected workload/Schedule **---(MAXIMUM 10 POINTS)**

- a) Provide a detailed, proposed timeline for completing the audit process. Identify for each step of the process, how much support will be required from the County.
- b) Identify the functions with which the Respondent will need to work, details of the tasks to be performed, and how much support will be required from County staff in each of these functions.
- c) Current workload versus capacity of Respondent.

5. Reference Letters **---(MAXIMUM 10 POINTS)**

- a) Provide not less than three (3) reference letters from clients for which the Respondent has performed similar work.
- b) For each reference:
 - c) Overview and brief description of the service provided, type of business (e.g. government), contact name, phone number, e-mail address and address if not listed on the reference letter.
 - d) Volume of the bills that were analyzed.
 - e) Describe the results achieved.
 - f) The names of the company or companies with which Respondent negotiated to obtain the above refunds or savings. (e.g. Siemens, CenturyLink, SUNCOM, etc.)

6. Location / Accessibility **---(MAXIMUM 0 POINTS)**

- a) Location of the office assigned to perform the job.
- b) Explain how the County can access Respondent's contact, and the estimated response time.

7. Fee Schedule

---(MAXIMUM 20 POINTS)

Respondent should include detailed supplemental information regarding the proposal as outlined above that will enable the County to evaluate the proposal. The Respondent should include any information not covered above that may further indicate the auditor's suitability for performing the requested service. However, for ease in initially evaluating the proposals, the following questions must be answered completely:

1. One-time contingency payment as a percent of verifiable refunds obtained: _____%
2. Ongoing payment for any verifiable and executed savings the County will obtain after completion of audit: _____%
3. Ongoing payment for a specified time frame _____ year.

Refer to Fee Structure in Section i.

TAB –C Other information at the Respondent's discretion

---(NO POINTS)

Promotional material, sample contract may be submitted along with the proposal; however, these materials will not be considered a substitute for the proposal.

Promotional material counts toward the 50 page allowance.

Presentations:

After preliminary ranking based on the above criteria, presentations may or may not be requested by the Evaluation Committee or the Board of County Commissioners. The Committee may invite all or only the preliminarily top ranked Respondents. A one (1) week notice will be given to the Respondents invited to give presentations.

SECTION VII.**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

10/23 and 10/30	Advertise
11/9/2018	Question Cutoff
11/15/2018	Responses Due
11/27/2018	Recommendation Committee Meeting
12/20/2018	Recommendation to the Board for Approval
1/15/2019	Contract Begin Date

SECTION VIII.**CONTACT INFORMATION**

All questions, comments, and requests for information shall be made in writing, preferably by e-mail, to the Purchasing Department. (RFI) Request for Information: **Cut-Off Date is November 9, 2018.**

Columbia County BCC-Purchasing Department
Ray Hill
P.O. Box 1529
Lake City, FL 32056
Tel: (386) 719-2028; E-mail: ray_hill@columbiacountyfla.com

SECTION IX.

PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL FORM

COMPANY

DATE

Respondent has examined and carefully studied the RFP Document and the following Addenda(s) (receipt of all which is hereby acknowledged):

Date	Number	Date	Number
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

REPRESENTATIVE'S NAME (print)

REPRESENTATIVE'S SIGNATURE

ADDRESS

CITY / STATE / ZIP CODE

TELEPHONE NUMBER

FAX NUMBER

LICENSE NUMBER (If applicable)

E-MAIL ADDRESS

ATTACHMENT 1
NUMBERS TO BE AUDITED