Request for Proposals

The Population Reference Bureau (PRB) is soliciting proposals for information technology (IT) support services. Proposals are due February 6, 2025.

Context

PRB is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with approximately 50 employees. PRB has an office in Washington, DC. Most staff are based in the Washington, DC metropolitan area though we do employ staff across the US and abroad, notably in Senegal and Kenya.

PRB implements contracts and awards funded by the U.S. Government, grants from private foundations, and a host of projects funded by other entities.

Basic facts about our IT infrastructure follow:

- On-premise server with local AD synced to Azure. Network file access via VPN. Network files are backed up via dedicated backup device and cloud.
- Employees predominantly use Dell laptops. PRB does not issue work phones, tablets, or other devices. PRB uses VOIP via Microsoft Teams instead of physical phones.
- Most users run Windows 10 or 11. PRB heavily relies on Microsoft products including Office 365, Teams, and SharePoint.

Requirements

PRB requires a reliable IT support vendor who can offer efficient, consistent, and high-quality services tailored to the needs of an international nonprofit organization like PRB. Specifically, we require:

Operations:

- **24/7 helpdesk support** available all hours of the day, any day of the week, with reasonable response times especially for employees based in other time zones that do not overlap with US business hours (Kenya, Senegal). This includes user support with technical issues, software installation, creating/updating user accounts in active directory, managing user permissions, mailing list memberships, etc. We expect about 900-1,000 user tickets per year.
- **In-person availability** to come to PRB's main office at 1111 19th St NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036, to perform routine tasks (e.g., laptop provisioning, router malfunction, etc.) and as requested, for example to support large meetings, orient new staff, or resolve issues that require presence. We generally expect full-time in-person presence to be required Tuesdays to Thursdays, though not all of this time needs to be spent on PRB business and we are open to considering flexible arrangements.
- **Server management** including backups, patches, and updates.
- **Network management**, including regular checks, updates, and maintenance of network devices, monitoring of network performance, periodic review and adjustments to improve performance and security, and procurement and installation of replacement hardware when necessary.
- **Endpoint management,** including provisioning laptops, continuous updates/patches, ongoing support (e.g. software installation), and endpoint protection (e.g. antivirus, anti-malware).
- **Backup and recovery**, including routine backups of essential data.

- **License management** for Office 365, Power BI, Teams Phone, and other applications.
- **Inventory management** of all IT assets, including maintenance of a current IT asset register.
- **Regular quarterly business reviews** to review service performance across key metrics, align on evolving business needs, review changes in the IT landscape, discuss and monitor key risks, etc.
- **Compliance-related monitoring** support, for example to ensure compliance with Section 889 or the TikTok ban.

Incident Response:

- 24/7 monitoring and 24/7 availability to respond to incidents and disasters.
- Develop and maintain an incident response plan that describes procedures for detecting, responding to, and recovering from IT incidents (breaches, outages, etc.), roles and responsibilities, escalation procedures, communication protocols, and incident documentation (root cause, resolution, corrective actions).
- Develop and maintain a disaster recovery plan that includes steps for restoring critical services and data following a major disruption, including backup strategies, recovery time objectives, and testing.
- Conduct regular training and drills to ensure preparedness.

Cybersecurity:

- Elevate PRB's cybersecurity posture. Propose, implement, and monitor measures to prevent unauthorized access, data breaches, and other cyber threats.
- Implement cyber security measures according to industry best practice. This includes encryption, proactive update/patch management, MFA, firewalls, intrusion detection and prevention, spam filtering, anti-virus, periodic security audits, and testing.
- Continuously train staff to recognize phishing, social engineering, and other common threats. Continuously test staff awareness (e.g. via mock phishing emails).

Other:

- Support IT strategic planning. Propose and implement IT policies, standards, and procedures, including to ensure PRB is set up to comply with data security, cybersecurity, and other legal and contractual requirements.
- Occasionally help vet IT needs on proposals PRB submits to prospective funders.
- Respond to IT-related questions that arise in the context of annual compliance audits and insurance renewals.

Ad-hoc Services:

- TBD additional services related to the scope of work, for example cloud migration, office move, website hosting support, etc.

Selection Criteria

Vendors must be incorporated in the United States and have technicians in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

Small businesses are strongly encouraged to apply.

PRB will evaluate vendors and proposals based on the following criteria:

- Range of services provided, and extent to which they address PRB's requirements. Includes any guarantees on response times and hours of operation.
- Ability to provide consistent, responsive, high-quality support including the use of context information and previous solutions to address repeat issues.
- Management approach and IT management tools/systems, e.g. dedicated account manager, sophisticated ticketing system, ease of access of reports (e.g., IT inventory), effective knowledge management to ensure technicians learn from other technicians' solutions.
- Experience and expertise, including experience working with similar organizations and experience meeting cybersecurity requirements mandated in U.S. government contracts (standard compliance requirements but also e.g., Section 889, TikTok ban).
- Willingness to contractually commit to performing a smooth handover to any successor contractors, should PRB in the future switch service providers.
- Feedback from current and past clients via reference checks and PRB's independent research.
- Price and pricing model. We assume vendors will propose a fixed monthly fee for ongoing operational support, possibly additional fees when technicians are requested to be in the PRB office, and billing rates for general ad-hoc services.

Proposal Instructions

Contract

PRB intends to award a contract to the responsible vendor whose proposal provides best value to PRB.

This contract is expected to have a base period of one year and up to seven option periods of one additional year each (for a total duration of 8 years).

We reserve the right to make multiple awards based on this solicitation. We also reserve the right not to award a contract to any offeror, or to award the contract to other than the lowest-price offeror.

The successful offeror will be required to sign the Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment Certification; (see 44 CFR Part 18).

Process

Interested vendors should submit questions and proposals via email to jmandes@prb.org by the following dates and times. Questions and proposals received after those dates and times will not be considered.

- Questions due by 5:00pm Eastern on **January 16, 2025**
- Proposals due by 5:00pm Eastern on **February 6, 2025**

Due to the potentially sensitive nature of questions, responses will only be shared with all vendors who have submitted questions or indicated their interest to bid by the deadline for questions. Responses will not be posted publicly.

PRB expects to invite the most promising offeror(s) to present their proposal, clarify any open questions, and revise their proposal based on this additional information.

Requirements

We strongly encourage interested vendors to write specific, clear, and concise proposals that directly address our requirements. We value content over presentation.

Proposals **must include** the following information. Incomplete proposals will not be considered.

1. **Completed version of the following table**:

Full legal name of the organization	
Physical address	
Country in which the organization submitting the proposal is incorporated	
Date on which the organization was incorporated	
Names, titles, and email addresses of all company officers (CEO, CFO, COO, or similar)	
Small business designation, if applicable (e.g., small business, woman-owned small business)	
Small business NAICS code(s), if applicable	

2. **Brief company profile** explaining relevant experience, e.g. experience with nonprofits, with similarly sized organizations, with compliance of U.S. government contract cybersecurity requirements, relevant certifications, etc.

3. **Description of proposed services**.
    a. Describe what services will be offered and note the extent to which those proposed services meet, do not meet, or exceed PRB's requirements. Feel free to propose a broader set of services if you consider it appropriate for PRB.
    b. We are interested in understanding the range of ad-hoc services you are in theory able to provide above and beyond the SOW above.
    c. Include detail on supporting systems, particularly regarding helpdesk channels of communication (phone, email, ticketing, live chat, remote assistance, etc.).
    d. Include any assumptions you are making.

4. **Management approach.** Briefly describe your management approach, for example: Do you have multiple teams providing services (helpdesk, cybersecurity, network monitoring)? How do you ensure effective collaboration? What KPIs, if any, do you use to monitor performance (e.g., average ticket resolution, customer satisfaction, etc.)?

5. **Key individuals.** Names and resumes/CVs of key individuals who would support this contract, if applicable, e.g. account manager or virtual CIO.

6. **Price and pricing model**. Please explain pricing in detail so PRB can understand how pricing may change based on key variables like the number of employees supported. Provide details about the pricing model (e.g. a split into fixed monthly payments and ad-hoc services billed by the hour) and explain your assumptions (e.g., what is included and what is not). Note any conditions, contingencies, nonprofit discounts, annual escalation factors/limits, surcharges on hardware/software purchases, etc. The following pricing model makes sense to us, but feel free to deviate:
   a. Fixed price for services described in scope of work, paid monthly, assuming technician is in PRB offices Tues through Thurs
   b. Fixed hourly rate for any additional in-office presence of technician when requested by PRB staff to support meetings
   c. Set of fixed hourly rates for TBD ad-hoc services

7. **Two or more references** from current or past clients. If you want us to check with you before reaching out to references, indicate that in the proposal.