

RFP 2023-02 Unified Communications as a Service and Contact Center as a Service (UCaaS and CCaaS), Questions and Answers, Amendment 1

- 1Q. Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada)
A. Not outside of North America. Canada- Yes
- 2Q. Whether we need to come over there for meetings?
A. Yes
- 3Q. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA?
A. Must have a presence in the US
- 4Q. Can we submit the proposals via email?
A. All proposals must be submitted via email to: BERSprocurement@bers.nyc.gov
- 5Q. Please reconfirm the due date for this procurement by providing it in response to answers to questions.
A. The due date for this RFP is by EDT Friday June 23, 2023.
- 6Q. When is the anticipated contract start date?
A. Immediately
- 7Q. When is the anticipated award date?
A. Couple of weeks after the bids are reviewed
- 8Q. Are bidders permitted to deviate in any way from any manner of quoting fees you may be expecting? For example, if there is a pricing page in the RFP, can bidders submit an alternate fee structure?
A. Preferred to see fees based on requirement list.
- 9Q. If there is no pricing page in the RFP, do you have any preference for how bidders should quote fees or can bidders create their own pricing categories?
A. As long as all fees are listed clearly with their related categories.
- 10Q. Please describe your level of satisfaction with your current or recent vendor(s) for the same purchasing activity, if applicable.
A. N/A
- 11Q. If this is a term contract subject to renewal, what is the term and the maximum number of option periods?
A. 1 and 3 years
- 12Q. Has the current contract gone full term?
A. N/A

- 13Q. Have all options to extend the current contract been exercised?
A. N/A
- 14Q. Who is the incumbent, and how long has the incumbent been providing the requested services?
A. N/A
- 15Q. To what extent will the location of the bidder's proposed location or headquarters have a bearing on any award?
A. Very important
- 16Q. How are fees currently being billed by any incumbent(s), by category, and at what rates?
A. N/A
- 17Q. What estimated or actual dollars were paid last year, last month, or last quarter to any incumbent(s)?
A. N/A
- 18Q. Is previous experience with any specific customer information systems, phone systems, or software required?
A. No
- 19Q. What is the minimum required total call capacity?
A. None
- 20Q. What is the minimum simultaneous inbound call capacity?
A. 80
- 21Q. What is the maximum wait time?
A. It depends on events - Around 30 minutes
- 22Q. What is the maximum hold time?
A. None
- 23Q. What percentage of inbound calls must be answered by a live operator?
A. Depends on the nature of the call
- 24Q. What percentage of calls must be resolved without a transfer, second call, or a return call?
A. It depends on the call.
- 25Q. What is the maximum percentage of calls that can be terminated by the caller without resolution?
A. None – all calls should end with some type of resolution
- 26Q. Is there a minimum or maximum number of operators and supervisors?
A. None
- 27Q. What are the call center's hours of operation?
A. 8:30 am to 4:30 pm EST

- 28Q. What is the required degree of dedication for the call center? (Can call centers work on other contracts at the same time as this one)?
A. N/A
- 29Q. What is the required degree of dedication for the operators? (Can operators work on other contracts at the same time as this one)?
A. N/A
- 30Q. Are callers required or allowed to connect with a message verification system or pre-recorded message before connecting to a live operator, or must a live operator be the initial contact?
A. Callers reach a menu that directs them to either general info or to be connected with an agent.
- 31Q. What was your average monthly call volume over the past year?
A. 12,000
- 32Q. What is the current number of seats for operators and supervisors at your existing call center?
A. 20 shared
- 33Q. What is the current average wait time for phone calls?
A. 6 minutes
- 34Q. What is the current average handle time for phone calls and other types of communications?
A. 8 minutes
- 35Q. What is the current average after-call work time for operators?
A. N/A
- 36Q. Over the past year, what is the percentage of calls received in English versus non-English?
A. Not quantified
- 37Q. Over the past year, what percentage of calls received were in Spanish?
A. N/A
- 38Q. What time of day, days of the week, or times of the year do calls typically peak?
A. 9:00am – 10:00am – and Tuesday is the busiest day of the week.
- 39Q. What is BERS' expectation on the vendor's work location? Can the vendor work on this opportunity remotely with in-person attendance as needed? Or can resources be split, with technical teams working remotely, and client-facing resources onsite?
A. Preferred onsite but resources can be split.
- 40Q. Does the contract include ongoing maintenance and support? If so, what is the planned contract period in both base and/or any option years?
A. Yes. 1 to 3 years
- 41Q. Does the current BERS Contact Center system use any CRM or backend interfaces that must be interfaced with in the future solution? If so, what are these interfaces and the uses for them?
A. Yes. Through network setup. Rest APIs

42Q. At this point in time is there a go-live date that you all have in mind for the project?

A. No

43Q. Which items from this list of UCaaS requirements are compulsory?

A. Most of them if not all

44Q. Can the proposer provide alternate RFP language, or propose different terms and conditions, for consideration by the NYC BOE?

A. No

45Q. Does the NYC BOE have an instance of MS Teams that can be leveraged for this project?

A. Not now

46Q. What model(s) of Cisco telephones are being provided and must be supported?

A. Cisco 8831, 8841, 8851.

47Q. Could you go into further detail on the Office 365 integration requirements?

A. Use Teams for messaging, calling, and collaboration. Visual voicemail playing in outlook.

48Q. Would NYC BOE be willing to extend the due date to provide more than one week between the responses to questions and the due date for the RFP submission?

A. We will not extend the due date. The due date is EDT Friday June 23, 2023.

49Q. Can you please tell me what is the current CRM that you are using today?

A. N/A at this time

50Q. How many different databases are you looking for the IVR to access user data?

A. Limit not set.

51Q. How many queues do you currently have in your contact center?

A. 1

52Q. Do you know what type of analytics you are looking for in your meetings?

A. Provide usage data for a team owner, and more granular view showing a specific team; also showing data usage for a specific channel. Users should be able to filter views to see data for a specific time period.

53Q. Due to the complexity of the bid response would NYC BERS entertain a possible due date extension of 4-weeks for this RFP?

A. We will not extend the due date. The due date is EDT Friday June 23, 2023.

54Q. (RFP Section 3) Are the "CCaaS Features" and "UCaaS Features" tables intended to be just an acknowledgement of system capability, or should all these items be included in the pricing and scope of the RFP response? If they are intended to be included in the proposal response, can an amended version of the "Scope of Services" be requested to make it clear what should be scoped and priced out?

A. Preferred to have all items included.

55Q. (RFP Section 3) In the “CCaaS Features - Cloud Business Phone” table, can you clarify what is meant by and provide some context/use case for the item “Non-contact center subject matter experts”?

A. Phone that allows to make calls over IP and store the contents in the cloud

56Q. (RFP Section 3) In the “CCaaS Features - Cloud Business Phone” table, can you clarify the item “Native CRM”? Is this meant to ask whether the proposed solution includes a built-in CRM, or whether the proposed solution has native integrations to CRM products? Can you provide the CRM in use today?

A. CCaaS can easily integrate with the most common CRMs. We don't have a CRM today.

57Q. (RFP Section 3) In the “CCaaS Features - Cloud Business Phone” table, can you clarify the item “Media storage (hot/cold)”?

A. Data can be accessed online and archived

58Q. (RFP Section 3) Can you describe the integration desired/required with Microsoft Teams? Can you clarify its positioning and use within the context of this RFP?

A. Vendor needs to provide the integration

59Q. (RFP Section 3) Under table “ UCaaS Features – Cloud Business Phone”:

- a. “Tier 1 phone number and extension” – will you be open to non-tier 1 PSTN providers like the vendor themselves or does it have to be bought from a tier 1 provider?
A. Preferred T1 provider
- b. “Financially backed SLA across the platform” – can you clarify the requirement? Is it credits for missing SLAs or something else?
A. Credits for missing SLA
- c. “IP agnostic access” – can you clarify this ask? Is it related to the supported devices or something different?
A. Yes. To the supported device.
- d. “UC call recording” – is there a required retention period for UCaaS calls that are not done by CCaaS agents?
A. Minimum One year
- e. “Citrix Certification” – Can you clarify if an actual certification is needed or will vendor supported compatibility be sufficient?
A. Preferred Citrix certification.
- f. “Barge-Monitor-Whisper” – is this feature required outside of the contact center agents for all the user population?
A. Contact Center agents.
- g. “Transfer calls directly from the chat roster” – can you clarify this item?
A. Call transfer from chat
- h. “UC media – hot storage” + “Cold storage” – can you clarify this item?
A. The contents can be stored online and offline and should be accessible.
- i. “AI-driven analytics for conversation insights” – does this relate to regular UCaaS users or contact center agents?
A. Contact center

60Q. (RFP Section 3) Under table " UCaaS Features – Video and Audio Conferencing":

- a. "Controller mode" – can you clarify this item?
 - A. Control modes that can be applied to conference (host delegation, participant permissions, meeting lock, host delegation, and etc..
- b. "Conference call-out" – do you need to support call out to international phone numbers?"
 - A. Preferred.

61Q. The following appears in a Yes/No

- a. Non-contact center subject matter experts Question- Please provide further clarification
 - A. Agent does not need to be an expert to run the CCaaS
- b. What is IP agnostic access?
 - A. Not attached to an IP. Can work across systems
- c. What version of Citrix is in use?
 - A. Latest version
- d. What level of Microsoft O365 licensing is in use?
 - A. Premium +What version of Citrix is in use? A. Latest version
- e. Phone paging - please describe how this works today. Is there an overhead paging system in place?
 - A. Broadcast for UCaaS
- f. For conferencing, please describe what moderator controls are in use today.
 - A. N/A
- g. How important is integration with existing Cisco equipment?
 - A. Preferred

62Q. What CRM system(s) does BERS have in place? What are the APIs or other integration mechanisms exposed by your CRM(s)? Please provide links to the API / Integration documentation.

- A. Third party vendor application (Vitech). We currently use rest APIs to connect to our back-end system hosted on AWS.

63Q. What are you looking to achieve with greater queue bandwidth? What is the "bandwidth" limitation of your current contact center queueing environment?

- A. Minimize wait time in the queue. Current system is on-prem and lacks features.

64Q. By scripts / institutional knowledge, are you looking for a knowledge management system for your agents? If not, what are you looking to achieve?

- A. Not too sure about knowledge management system. Response time is the key and call management triage.

65Q. Are you interested in AI Bots for voice and digital channels?

- A. Yes

66Q. What type of AI functionality are you looking for Outbound Predictive dialing?

- A. Looking for an AI standard functionality that can be used in the back end to answer questions.

67Q. What is the business purpose and objective of your outbound campaigns? How many outbound campaigns do you run in total? concurrently? Are your outbound campaigns voice only or do you use outbound digital channels? If outbound digital channels which digital channels?

- A. Primarily to inform our customers regarding pension events and updates. Campaigns are triggered by events, therefore I cannot tell how many.

68Q. Is your current Cisco on-premise VoIP environment dedicated for the 130 UC seats? Or is this UC environment shared with other city organizations? Will the new UC environment be used exclusively for BERS? Or do you intend to add other organizations to the UC environment in the future?

A. They are dedicated. Yes. No

69Q. What features would BERS want in phase 1 Contact Center implementation for go live? Is Workforce Management needed in phase 1? Speech analytics?

A. No. Speech analytics is needed.

70Q. Is your current E911 system managed by either RedSky or Intrado?

A. I am not too sure who is the provider.

71Q. May BERS provide vendors additional information regarding telco plans? The requirement for PSTN access is noted, but can BERS provide more information such as PBX passthrough and connectivity?

A. I am looking for a cloud solution if anything is needed from our side, we will provide it.

72Q. Would BERS consider an extension to the question submission deadline?

A. No

73Q. Would BERS consider an extension to the bid submission deadline?

A. No

74Q. Do you have a list of must have requirement features to determine if we can offer them such as Omni, Predictive Dialer, Natural language and speech recognition? Unfortunately, these few for example can't be provided by Sangoma. We'd like to get clarity on what is needed.

A. I don't have a separate list. What you listed above should be a part of your solution

75Q. How are you currently getting your dial tone? Pri, SIP, etc.... SIP

A. SIP

76Q. Can you provide a current network diagram of how you are set up now?

A. No as it is an on Prem solution.

77Q. What Data circuits do you currently have in place?

A. We have multiple circuits.

78Q. How many locations do you have and are the users spread out or on different floors?

A. 3

79Q. Are you currently running a Single Data Center environment?

A. No

80Q. What kind of switches do you currently have?

A. Cisco

81Q. What current CRM are you using?

A. Not a full-fledged CRM. Vendor customized application

82Q. I understand that you are currently using Cisco call manager, what are some of your pain points?

A. Features

83Q. What is your target installation date?

A. ASAP

84Q. Would you be willing to let us meet for an on-site discover meeting?

A. Depends on the RFP selection process.

85Q. Would you like a quote to rent or buy the equipment from us?

A. Cost dependent

86Q. Data migration from on-prem server (legacy) is required. Are we expected to migrate just call center data or case and CRM data as well?

A. N/A

87Q. Should the chosen implementation partner be expected to perform data cleansing also or will the agency perform the task and provide clean data file(s) to be uploaded to the new environment?

A. No

88Q. Do you require office 365 integration beyond outlook for email and contact lists?

A. Teams

89Q. There is a requirement that the UCaaS and CCaaS should be from the same vendor. As one of the SI's responding, with a wealth of experience with implementing call center solutions, could this proposed utilizing Salesforce's platform (which runs on Amazon), integrated with a proprietary cloud, where both are built and interfaced by leveraging Amazon infrastructure and its toolsets?

The platforms & products integrated would create a single, seamless solution.

This solution brings a wealth of configurability and flexibility while having state of the art omni-channel capabilities. It also would leverage both out of the box and custom AI/ML learning models to expand the value proposition.

A. preferred to deal with one vendor

90Q. Can you confirm the total number of call agents/users expected to interact with the system? Our understanding is 17 Call Center agents and 3 Supervisors managing 500 calls a day.

A. Numbers 17, and 3 are correct. 500 calls per day is just an average today.

91Q. What information would your agents like to have when accepting a call?

A. Must have the record info of the caller on the screen.

92Q. What information would your agents like to have when opening a case via phone?

A. Not too sure about this

93Q. Will there be users external to the system expected to field calls through landlines/hard phones?

A. Possibly yes.

94Q. Any other services needing to be considered in scope where the users are external to the system? If so, how do they interact and access technology environment(s)?

A. Login to Citrix as our remote platform to get to the network.

95Q. For a multi-channel communications layer, can you describe what other forms of communications you'd like to leverage in the future (other than telephone contact) that the agency would approve to be scoped in the new system (e.g., SMS, Chat, etc.)?

A. Video and audio conferencing, web portal, social media.

96Q. Are your customers asking questions that other customers could answer?

A. Both ways.

97Q. Are your customers asking questions that could be answered by a bot (e.g. password reset, view reward status, where's my order, etc)?

A. Yes.

98Q. Page 9 mentions "Non-contact center subject matter experts" as a feature for the CCaaS solution. Can you elaborate on the feature you're evaluating here?

A. No need to be an expert to run the system.

99Q. How do you currently engage with your 50,000 active members? What are your outreach channels (email, SMS, social, etc.)?

A. emails, and web posts

100Q. How would you like to engage with your members moving forward?

A. Use every possible channel to get to our members

101Q. Do you have a need for conducting outreach to prospective members?

A. Yes

102Q. If so, how frequently do you conduct outreach to prospective members and/or active members and what's the volume of emails/messages sent?

A. It all depends on events that come through the pipe. Could be multiple times a year.

103Q. Do you provide 24/7 coverage for your contact center?

A. No

104Q. Do you have a large number of repetitive questions?

A. Maybe not too many. I cannot say at this time.

105Q. Is most of the information for the repetitive questions located elsewhere (e.g. your website)?

A. They could be anywhere.

106Q. Is there interest to leverage conversation AI to help automate some of the contact center workflows?

What are the languages that need to be supported?

A. English and possibly Spanish

107Q. Could you please confirm how many DIDs you will require?

A. Around 250

108Q. Is it safe to assume you'll want to port existing phone numbers? If yes, could you please provide the DID ranges?

A. Yes. Will provide the info when time comes.

109Q. Could you please confirm how many call center queues you will require?

A. I am not sure at this moment