

From: **Whittaker, Frank M** <frank.m.whittaker@wv.gov>
Date: Tue, Oct 12, 2021 at 3:51 PM
Subject: Re: Emergency Contract Request
To: Lore, Andrew C <andrew.c.lore@wv.gov>
Cc: Lyle, Tara L <tara.l.lyle@wv.gov>, Jessica L Hovanec <jessica.l.hovanec@wv.gov>, Atkins, Mark A <mark.a.atkins@wv.gov>, Totten, Mark L <mark.l.totten@wv.gov>

Andrew,

Your request for an emergency contract to allow time for transition of the last state agencies to the current VoIP contract is approved. This emergency approval is for the period of October 21, 2020 through January 20, 2022. Please follow all emergency procedures outlined in the Purchasing Division Procedures Handbook, and return all documentation to Jessica Hovanec for processing within 30 days of this approval.

Thanks you,

Frank Whittaker
Assistant Director
Purchasing Division

On Tue, Oct 12, 2021 at 10:11 AM Lore, Andrew C <andrew.c.lore@wv.gov> wrote:
Good morning, Frank,
I wasn't sure who to send this to. I've sent them to Mark in the past, but we aren't seeking a SWC this time. And I think Jessica Hovanec is OT's new buyer, but haven't gotten confirmation on that. Would you mind passing this along to appropriate folks? Thanks in advance!

Andrew Lore
WVOT Procurement Manager/ISMII
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STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY

State Capitol
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Mary Jane Pickens
Acting Cabinet Secretary

Joshua D. Spence
Chief Information Officer

TO: Mike Sheets
Director, Purchasing Division

FROM: Andrew Lore *AL*
WVOT Procurement Manager/ISMII, West Virginia Office of Technology

CC: Jessica Hovanec
Senior Buyer, Purchasing Division

SUBJECT: **Emergency Replacement Contract for Statewide Contract CMA VoIP13EEE,
Hosted Voice and Contact Center Services**

DATE: October 12, 2021

The West Virginia Office of Technology (WVOT) is requesting a three-month emergency contract be issued to replace CMA VoIP13EEE, Hosted Voice and Contact Center Services. This emergency contract, tentatively called VoIP13EEEE, will be awarded to Verizon Business for the continuation of existing services and be effective October 21, 2021, through January 20, 2022. The approximate monthly cost is currently \$27,000; however, that cost is only expected to decrease as the two remaining entities migrate to the Segra Hosted Voice Contract, VoIP19, or to an alternate solution.

Differently than in past requests, the WVOT is asking that this emergency contract not be a Statewide, only a contract between the WVOT and Verizon Business. Because of the relatively low usage and cost, and the WVOT's role in ordering, billing, and payment, this three-month contract does not meet the traditional definition of a Statewide; however, as with past requests, the WVOT is requesting that the new contract incorporate VoIP13 and all of its emergency iterations to form the basis of the agreement.

Background and Context for the Request

The WVOT has worked diligently with the VoIP13EEE agencies to transition their services to VoIP19; however, during the implementations and migrations, some agencies chose not to utilize the VoIP19 contract for either technical or functional reasons. The agencies that have chosen not to use VoIP19 were given months' notice, and most have implemented their own contracts or solutions. The only two entities remaining, the WV Tax Department and Tax Appeals, were made aware of the decision to not replace VoIP13EEE and initially had different responses: Tax had no intention of migrating to Segra at this time and Tax Appeals did migrate to Segra.

In Tax's case, the WVOT informed Tax that it would need to sponsor its own solution if it was not utilizing the Segra platform. Afterwards, Tax reversed course and decided that it would migrate to the Segra solution – that final decision came in late September and the WVOT is still waiting on Tax's TCR form. In order to streamline the migration process and expedite number porting, most agencies only port published numbers ('porting' refers to keeping the same telephone number in instances where the carrier changes). Most agencies port a handful of important numbers and then receive new numbers from Segra. Tax, however, is insistent on porting all of its numbers – 335 numbers for 434 phones. While Tax's decision to use VoIP19 is encouraging, the decision came too late for the complexity of the migration and for the time remaining. In three months' time, the WVOT and Segra believe that Tax's migration can be completed.

Alternatively, Tax Appeals did migrate to the Segra platform and was receiving its service through VoIP19. One feature of Segra's solution, however, was not acceptable to Tax Appeals: audio-conferencing. For Tax Appeals' cases, they require an audio-conferencing solution that can accommodate up to 10 dial-in callers at a time, with specialized features to keep the parties from discussing matters without the judge present. After working on multiple alternate solutions for Tax Appeals, none of which met their need, the WVOT was informed that Tax Appeals would be migrating back to Verizon's solution in order to utilize the audio-conferencing feature. Tax Appeals has six users and fifteen phones.

Initially, the WVOT's intent had been to support Tax in its request for an emergency contract, but because Tax Appeals has decided to re-transition to Verizon, the WVOT is requesting the contract. After the three months, Tax Appeals will be responsible for its own solution should it wish to continue utilizing Verizon's platform.

The basis for the emergency request is three-fold:

1. The State has awarded a hosted voice contract, VoIP19, to Segra, which will replace the services offered under VoIP13EEE entirely;
2. The State would, if another Vendor was awarded a contract, spend months transitioning to the new solution only to migrate to Segra's platform and;
3. The COVID-19 outbreak has caused a slight delay in new implementations to Segra's platform.

1. VoIP19 Replaces These Services Entirely

It may appear the State of WV is not seeking competitive bids for these services, but, in fact, it has already done so. In January 2019, the State awarded a statewide contract for hosted voice and contact center services, VoIP19, to Segra (previously Lumos). As detailed in VoIP19, Segra was to migrate the State's 10,000 VoIP phones to its platform within twenty-four (24) months, after a 90-day transition; this put Segra's 'start date' for implementations in May 2019, concluding in May 2021.

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, Segra has successfully transitioned all the required phones except for the WV State Tax Department (and those that have chosen not to migrate). Because the Tax Department has chosen to migrate to Segra's solution, albeit belatedly, Segra's solution does replace VoIP13EEE as intended.

2. Migrating the Services to Another Provider

The State has already awarded a replacement contract for hosted voice and contact center services, VoIP19. Awarding a contract to a third-party would only slow Tax's inevitable transition to VoIP19.

If the State were to proceed with bidding-out an RFP (and it would have to be an RFP in order to evaluate the solutions), it would essentially be re-advertising VoIP19.

Suspending that for a moment, the time required for a vendor to design and implement a solution, migrate VoIP13EEE's services, and establish its reliability makes an alternative to Verizon's solution untenable. Using experience as a guide: it would take months to establish a new agreement; then the Vendor and the WVOT would spend approximately three months working to finalize the solution's architecture; the Vendor would start meeting with agencies to obtain the necessary information; agencies would then buy phones from the Vendor; and an install would occur. All the while, months have elapsed and it is now time for these agencies to migrate to Segra's platform, restarting the process.

Segra is on-track to implement the Tax Department's phones within the requested three-month window; there was simply not enough notice to make that transition happen by October 20, 2021.

3. The COVID-19 Pandemic Has Slowed Transitioning Slightly

As with most things, the COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted the State's and Segra's ability to migrate as quickly as possible. Restricted access to facilities, face-to-face meetings and large gathering bans, work-from-home policies, and other necessary measures have slowed Segra's progress slightly. Despite these challenges, Segra has managed to migrate all the requested phones, save for the Tax Department. While the original plan was to have all 10,000 VoIP phones implemented to Segra's platform by May 2021, COVID's impacts, coupled with agencies' last-minute decisions, have resulted in that date being understandably pushed-out.

Conclusion:

Based on the award of VoIP19, an unreasonable hardship caused by a new, third-party provider, and delays caused by COVID-19, the WVOT is requesting a three-month Emergency Contract be awarded to Verizon Business for the continuation of the State of WV's hosted voice and contact center services, in which time the State will finish transitioning to its successor, VoIP19. Should you have any questions, or require any additional information to support this request, please do not hesitate to contact me.