STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
FOR
DIAL-IN 511 IVR TRAVELER INFORMATION SERVICES

RFI # 40100-50090
7/1/2022

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The State of Tennessee, Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) issues this Request for Information ("RFI") for the purpose of gathering information to update/upgrade the technology for the TN 511 Travel Information Service. This is an opportunity for interested parties to help our office better understand the current marketplace offerings. Based on the information gathered from this RFI, TDOT may develop a procurement strategy and initiate a formal procurement solicitation at a later date. We appreciate your input and participation in this process.

The objectives of this RFI include:

- Identify vendors that provide dial-in 511 services on behalf of other state DOTS
- Inform TDOT about features respondents offer in the dial-in 511 services they provide
- Identify specific standards or metrics that pertain to the quality of Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology
- Obtain information about the number of calls received by the dial-in 511 systems operated by respondents

2. BACKGROUND

TDOT's current version of the 511 Travel Information Service platform offers users with real-time data for Tennessee's traffic conditions, weather forecast, rest areas, public transportation, airports as well as the capability to link them with other state's 511 services. The caller may select options either by voice or touch-tone. This service contributes to the safety of Tennessee motorists.

TDOT is currently evaluating the efficacy of its dial-in 511 service in a study that looks at the practices of other state DOTs, current practices at TDOT, and the value the dial-in 511 service provides to travelers in Tennessee. This information will aid TDOT in deciding whether to continue the 511 service at the end of the current contract (July 2024) and, the TDOT does decide to continue its 511 service, what requirements to include in the procurement of the next contract for that service.

Because some states brand their entire package of traveler information services as “511”, this RFI will refer to “dial-in 511” in the questions provided below since the dial-in 511 element is the primary focus of this outreach
3. **COMMUNICATIONS:**

3.1 Please submit your response to this RFI to:
Gregg Bennett  
TDOT Procurement and Contracts Division  
J.K. Polk Bldg.  
505 Deaderick Street  
Nashville, TN 37243  
P. 615-741-9125  
TDOT.RFP@TN.Gov

3.2 Please feel free to contact the Tennessee Department of Transportation with any questions regarding this RFI. The main point of contact will be:
Gregg Bennett  
TDOT Procurement and Contracts Division  
J.K. Polk Bldg.  
505 Deaderick Street  
Nashville, TN 37243  
P. 615-741-9125  
TDOT.RFP@TN.Gov

3.3 Please reference RFI # 40100-50090 with all communications to this RFI.

4. **RFI SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>TIME (Central Time Zone)</th>
<th>DATE (all dates are State business days)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. RFI Issued</td>
<td></td>
<td>July 1, 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. RFI Response Deadline</td>
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<td>July 21, 2022</td>
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5. **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

5.1. Please note that responding to this RFI is not a prerequisite for responding to any future solicitations related to this project and a response to this RFI will not create any contract rights. Responses to this RFI will become property of the State.

5.2. The information gathered during this RFI is part of an ongoing procurement. In order to prevent an unfair advantage among potential respondents, the RFI responses will not be available until after the completion of evaluation of any responses, proposals, or bids resulting from a Request for Qualifications, Request for Proposals, Invitation to Bid or other procurement method. In the event that the State chooses not to go further in the procurement process and responses are never evaluated, the responses to the procurement including the responses to the RFI, will be considered confidential by the State.
5.3. The State will **not** pay for any costs associated with responding to this RFI.

6. **INFORMATIONAL FORMS:**

The State is requesting the following information from all interested parties. Please fill out the following forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RFI # 40100-50090</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TECHNICAL INFORMATIONAL FORM</strong></td>
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1. Respondent Legal Entity Name:

2. Respondent Contact Person:
   - Name, Title:
   - Address:
   - Phone Number:
   - Email:

3. Brief description of experience providing similar scope of services/products.

4. Have you implemented this type of solution for any government entity or quasi-governmental entity at the state level? If so, please provide the requested information listed below.
   - Name of State/Region
   - Years of dial-in 511 IVR services provided to the client
   - Contact person in each State/Region who is familiar with the day-to-day operation of the 511 service, including name, phone number and email
   - Number of calls received on the peak call day in 2021 for each State/Region
   - Number of calls handled simultaneously by each State/Region’s 511 service

5. In general, IVR services vary widely in ability to “understand” speech, accommodate different accents, accommodate natural speech, etc. What specific IVR technologies (software, protocols, standards, etc.) are used in the 511 systems provided for states/regions and what are the features of that technology. Please note if a particular technology is proprietary to your company (in which case it could not be a requirement in a future RFP), or if it is accessible to multiple potential contractors (in which case it could be considered as a requirement).

6. What text-to-speech technologies are used for dissemination of floodgate messages? What are the features of that technology? Please note if a particular technology/software is proprietary to your company (in which case it could not be a requirement in a future RFP), or if it is accessible to multiple potential contractors (in which case it could be considered as a requirement).

7. When floodgate messages need to be issued, Transportation Management Center Staff are usually at their busiest dealing with the problems at hand. What are suggestions for making the creation of text-to voice floodgate messages as easy as possible during such times?

8. What measures are provided to prevent toll free traffic pumping?

9. Please give 5 examples of best practices in the provision of dial-in 511 services.

10. Are there industry-standard metrics that address the effectiveness of IVR technologies. Please describe in detail?
11. What are the maximum branches that your company can add to a call tree?

12. What reports can your company generate in collected data i.e., volume, traffic, weather events?

13. All expected services are to be transitioned seamlessly to ensure no interruption of services to the traveling public. Please provide an estimated timeframe it would take to transition services. Please note any issues that TDOT needs to consider regarding a transition from one vendor to another.

14. If TDOT later issues a Request for Proposal for 511 IVR services, what requirements should TDOT include in its scope of services?

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### COST INFORMATIONAL FORM

1. Describe what pricing units you typically utilize for similar services or goods (e.g., per call, minute, line, per hour, etc.):

2. Describe the typical price range for similar services or good (including one-time and ongoing fees)

3. Please provide an estimated cost for system setup, noting any assumptions. Please provide an estimated annual cost for a system receiving 340,000 call per year, again noting any assumptions about number of lines available or other variables. As noted above responses to this RFI create no binding obligations and confer no rights on any party. Responses are for informational purposes only.

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### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Please provide input on alternative approaches or additional things to consider that might benefit the State:

2. Please describe how your product handles some of the unique pronunciations of Tennessee roadways, such as Demonbreun, Lafayette, Santa Fe, etc.