

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION



Unified Communications as a Service

**RFI # 210104-120- ADDENDUM #1
January 20, 2021**

**Proposals Due: Extended Deadline to
January 29, 2021 by 2:00 PM (EST)**

Issued for:

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IMPORTANT UPDATES

Pender County is pleased to have a remarkable number of vendors interested in this RFI. However, due to the overwhelming response, compounded by the additional stressors of Covid-19, there will not be enough time to offer every Vendor a presentation slot as we had originally planned. **All presentations are cancelled until further notice.** It is our intention to schedule presentations for select Vendors based on responses, the needs of the county and available resources.

Please remember this is a true RFI for educational purposes and financial forecasting. **Pender County will not be selecting a Vendor or awarding a contract as a result of this process.** As required by Pender County’s local purchasing policy, an RFP will be issued later in the year.

UPDATED TIMELINE

January 4, 2021	Request for Information issued
January 12, 2021 by 5:00pm	Deadline for any questions on the RFI – email to tnewton@pendercountync.gov
January 12, 2021 by 5:00pm	Deadline to register for a time to present response – sign up at https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050E4DABA92CA3FD0-presentation
January 20, 2021	Answers provided to questions via an Addendum
January 29, 2021 by 2:00pm	Extended Deadline for responses to RFI – email to tnewton@pendercountync.gov
Cancelled	Presentations

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1: Page 5 “Allow end-users to change an assigned Auto Attendant via cloud-based portal. Normally “end users” don’t have permission to make Auto Attendant changes. Was this referring to system administrators?

A1: [System Administrators and Authorized County Staff, not general users.](#)

Q2: Page 6 “The solution must allow for unlimited conference call participants”.

Q: We’re not familiar with any systems that actually support true “unlimited” conference calling. There are always some limitations. Can you provide some practical attendee requirements? Conference calling is a licensed function so getting the necessary capacity required and not adding unnecessary licenses is the goal.

A2: [Conference call attendee would typically not exceed 50-100 participants. System must have capability to expand beyond if needed.](#)

Q3: Page 6 “The solution must allow for conference bridging”.

Can you provide an explanation for what is meant by this term; “conference bridging”? Do you want to be able to add participants to a conference call, actually bridge two separate conference calls in progress or some other conferencing setup?

A3: [To clarify, the ability to create a conference bridge that allows multiple \(internal and external numbers\) to call in to a conference bridge using a number. For example, Emergency Management would have a conference bridge number that is available for conference calls when needed. This number would not change and be used repeatedly.](#)

Q4: Is a HIPAA compliant password schema and policy satisfactory?

A4: [Solutions must comply with HIPAA data at rest encryption and password compliancy. Data center must reside in continental United States.](#)

Q5: If a robust reporting system is included that met your reporting requirements, but was not included in a Call Accounting System, is that satisfactory?

A5: [Yes. However, the reporting system must be able to provide many reporting capabilities. For example, number of calls by extension, department, etc. Time on call, number of voicemails in voicemailbox.](#)

Q6: Could you explain paging to a mobile application? Would chat, text or calling to the mobile be sufficient?

A6: Yes. Pender would like the ability to send pages to registered devices, including mobile applications. This could include audible messages, chat and text/sms.

Q7: Is there a paging system in existence today? If not, is paging through the phones sufficient or do you want a new paging system installed as part of this project?

A7: Pender does not currently have a paging system.

Q8. Could the County please clarify its expectations regarding the presentations scheduled for Feb. 2-4?

A8: Due to the overwhelming response, Pender has elected to cancel demonstrations.

Q9. What material is expected to be covered?

A9: See A8.

Q10. What is the expected format of the presentation?

A10: See A8.

Q11. Does the County have any specific requirements around what is to be exhibited?

A11: See A8.

Q12. *“The solution should integrate with Office 365 / Exchange Online.”* Can you define what integrations are desired?

A12: Ability to receive voicemail via email. We would like to explore any integration with MS Teams available too.

Q13. *“The solution must allow a user to pick up an external call, internal call, or a call on-hold. The solution must allow a user to pick up a call on-hold from any internal extension.”* Is this Call Park? Meaning, a user will place a call on a “Park” location where another user can either choose a predefined button or dial a “Park” code to retrieve the call? If not, can you add more detail as to what is desired?

A13: Yes, our current system allows users to place a call on hold and staff with the extension on their line can resume the call from their handset.

Q14. *“Call waiting.*

-The solution must allow for a Call Waiting Queue feature to be enabled.

-Enable / Disable feature for a DID or Group of extensions.

-Announce the estimated wait time.

-Announce the user’s position in the queue.

-Allow the users to leave a message rather than wait in the queue.”

Is there an intention for this functionality being used outside of contact center agents?

Q14: No, this would be used in a Call Center.

Q15. *“Caller ID The solution must allow users to view the phone number and its associated staff name for all internal calls. The solution should also allow users to view the phone number of the caller of inbound calls. Additionally, outbound can be configured to announce individual DID numbers, the company’s main number, the department’s main number, or it can be blocked entirely.”* Is it necessary to be able to change the outbound caller ID on the fly or on a call-by-call basis?

A15. The solution must allow admins to “mask” the phone number that appears to callers. For example, if a staff member in Health calls a patient, the number that the patient would see would be the main number.

Q16. Auto Attendant

A. *“Accommodate multiple language menus.”* What languages are required?

A16A: English and Spanish at this time.

B. *“Offer capability to store multiple voicemail greeting for Direct Lines.”* Can you further detail this? Is this at the Auto Attendant level or user mailbox level? For example, is the requirement for a user to have a recorded “vacation” greeting they could enable without having to rerecord their primary greeting?

A16B: Greetings for Auto Attendants such as after-hours, holiday, etc. For user mailbox such as vacation and primary greeting.

C. *“Offer capability to set an auto-timed “out of the office” greeting.”* Is this at the auto attendant level or user level? Is the requirement for holiday greetings for the auto attendant or for users to have a “vacation” greeting that will expire when back in the office without user interaction?

A16C: Scheduled messages for both auto attendant and user mailbox level is requested. Our current system allows users to set an alternative voicemail message that expires on a specific date/time. In addition, Pender can set after-hours and holiday greetings for auto-attendants.

D. **Conference Calls** *“The solution must allow for unlimited conference call participants.”* What is the largest anticipated single conference bridge?

A16D: Conference call attendee would typically not exceed 50-100 participants. System must have capability to expand beyond if needed.

E. **System Administration** *“Allow controlled access to long-distance facilities beyond normal class of service restrictions.”* Can you define “beyond normal class of service restrictions”?

A16E: Ability to allow authorized staff to call long distance, including international if needed.

F. *“Allow assignment authorization codes to individuals, projects, and customers in order to charge expenses directly to the appropriate departments.”* Who would actually be charging the departments? Pender County?

A16F: Pender wishes the ability to disperse usage cost to departments. Ideally, the monthly bill received would be “cost allocated” and sorted by department for internal billing.

G. **Reporting** *“Support real-time monitoring & offer real-time graphs and/or statistics, such as phone usage and peak hours.”* Is the intention of this requirement for overall summary real-time monitoring/reporting for all users or specific groups as in a contact center queue?

A16G: Both users, shared lines (main department lines) and contact center queues. The purpose is to provide management information on usage and peak hours.

H **Paging** *“Sending SMS messages to the subscribed users.”* Will any of the subscribed users be Non-Pender County employees?

A16H: Only system subscribers would receive pages. However, the need may arise for non-County employees to receive pages.

Q17. *“Pre-recorded paging announcements such as the opening and closing announcements or emergency alerts.”* Is this a requirement for mass notification of all subscribed users and external Non-Pender County employees?

A17: Regarding paging, this would be County employees and subscribed devices. The notification of non-Pender employees would be an emergency alert system. Pender currently uses CodeRed. If you have a proposed Emergency Alert system, please state this and provide costs.

Q18. Integration “Does the proposed solution provide integration to emergency communication software?” Is there a specific emergency communication software? Can integration to this software be more defined? For instance, is there a public or private API?

A18: Pender currently uses CodeRed. If you have a proposed Emergency Alert system, please state this and provide costs.

Q19. Wireless Handsets “Wireless handsets are desired in locations that require employees to leave their station, walk to another room, and answer the phone up to 30 feet away. Such devices may use wireless internet or require a base station for network access.” Will this cordless phone be paired with a deskphone with (1) extension or will the cordless phone function as a stand-alone phone?

A19: The cordless phone would function as a stand-alone phone. In this use case, the requesting department could pick up the handset and walk about the area. This would be the department’s main line and a shared device to be answered by the staff on-site.

Q20. Would a Bluetooth handset with a Bluetooth headset (that would allow for users to be approx. 30 feet from the handset) be an option?

A20: In this use case, the Bluetooth handset would be an option but not a headset.

Q21. Call Recording Would call recording be required for all users? Or just the users with a contact center license?

A21: Both Call center and enabled for individual users for quality of service review.

Q22. How many hosted voice seats will you need?

A22. The County has 580 DID’s

Q23. How many of those seats need to have contact center licenses?

A23: This need is undetermined at this time. Please quote for per agent/per supervisor if applicable.

Q24. What version of Cisco Call Manager are you using today?

A24. 12.5

Q25. What model phones are you using?

A25: See below

Model	Count	Lines	Type
Cisco 7937	5	1	Conference
Cisco 8831	8	1	Conference
Cisco 7811	2	1	Handset
Cisco 7911	57	1	Handset
Cisco 7821	10	2	Handset
Cisco 7940	39	2	Handset
Cisco 7941	75	2	Handset
Cisco 7942	140	2	Handset
Cisco 7945	28	2	Handset
Cisco 7841	41	4	Handset
Cisco 8811	2	5	Handset
Cisco 8841	1	5	Handset
Cisco 8961	1	5	Handset

Cisco 7960	26	6	Handset
Cisco 7961	3	6	Handset
Cisco 7961G-GE	1	6	Handset
Cisco 7962	25	6	Handset
Cisco 7965	33	6	Handset
Cisco 9971	3	6	Handset

Q26. Are you interested in reusing your current handsets if supported by the proposed hosted platform?

A26. If supported, yes. However, most handsets are very old and antiquated.

Q27. Any additional information or clarification around number of agents and call waiting queues or departmental groups for estimated wait time, position in queue and leaving messages in queue would be helpful. Same question applies number of users requiring full time call recording, video conferencing sizing and actual number of wireless headsets required.

A27. This need is undetermined at this time. Please quote for per agent/per supervisor if applicable.

Q28. Would the inability to provide some of the required features automatically disqualify you if you could provide a “work around” solution?

A28. As this is a Request for Information, responses for Work Around solutions is acceptable. Please specify the requirements and the work around for each.

Q29. Considering the unusual business conditions these days will the County support electronic submission of the Proposals?

A29. Yes, proposals may be submitted electronically to tnewton@pendercountync.gov.

Q30. How many times a year does the county need the capability to support conference calls beyond 100 Users? The RFI asks for “Unlimited”

A30. For conference calls, this would be during disasters. However, the need may arise to hold conference calls for public meeting that would allow external participants that can listed and possibly speak during Public Comment.

Q31. What is the actual maximum number of conference call participants needed?

A31. This need is undetermined. If there is a limit, please specify.

Q32. What level of integration with Office 365 / Exchange Online is sought?

A32. Azure AD integration preferred, Ability to receive voicemail messages via email, Teams integration preferred.

Q33. What level of integration with Azure AD or On-Prem AD is sought?

A33. The ability to use Azure AD or AD credentials for authentication, ability to use Azure AD for contacts and staff directory.

Q34. What emergency communication software is currently in use?

A34. The County uses CodeRed.

Q35. Would you also be able to provide a list of the (580) DID's? We checked some publicly published phone numbers for the County and they are portable but wanted to confirm the entire list if it's available.

A35. The full list would be available to the selected vendor. For the purposes of this RFI, please provide cost with the assumption that all can be ported. The current environment lists 487 handsets and 13 conference phones for a total of 500 users.

Q36. Are the 580 DIDs part of the 500 users so you would be looking for 80 extra DID lines?

A36. The total number of DIDs include departmental main lines and shared lines. The County wishes to Port the DIDs.

Q37. Conference Calls – Can you please elaborate on “the solution must allow for unlimited conference call participants”?

A37. Conference call attendee would typically not exceed 50-100 participants. System must have capability to expand beyond if needed. For conference calls, this would be during disasters. However, the need may arise to hold conference calls for public meeting that would allow external participants that can listed and possibly speak during Public Comment.

Q38. System Administration – Authorization codes – Are these temporary billing codes for charging directly to a particular department or would these employees be permanently charging to the same department?

A38. For purposes of charging departments for their usage.

Q39. Paging – Can you provide additional information on sending SMS messages to the subscribed users? Is this emergency notification for county residents or group messages to all county employees on the phone system?

A39. For sending group messages to Pender County Employees. Emergency notification for county residents would be performed via CodeRed or a proposed replacement.

Q40. Channels of Communication:

Which of the following channels of communication is the county is interested in maintaining for their contact centers? Any additional?

- a. Voice
- b. Email
- c. SMS
- d. Fax

A40. All of the above is preferred. Chat additionally.

Q41. With a contact center, would you like your agents to handle any of the following caller-initiated channels of communication?

- a. Webchat
- b. AI (Voice or Chatbots)
- c. Social Media

A41. WebChat, AI & Social Media may be used in the future.

Q42. Current Channels of Communication Interaction Metrics:

1. Please provide the following if available:
 - a. What is your average call volume by Day, Month and Year?
 - b. What is the Average Handle Time of calls?
 - c. What is the number of outbound calls?
 - d. Are there spikes/peaks in call volume during the day or special calendar events? If so, when?
 - e. What is the number of abandoned calls?
 - f. Do you know average number of callers that wait in queue today?

A42. Pender has only recently setup a call center for Covid-19 and does not have these metrics to provide.

Q43. Modernization Channel of Communication:

A. SMS/Texting Messaging:

What is the projected number monthly or annually SMS/text messaging for the county at this time?

A43A. Unknown at this time, please provide costs for both if applicable.

B. AI (Voice or Chatbot):

Would you be interested in voice or chatbot?

A43B. Yes, this may be a future need.

Q44. Telephony Services:

Who is your current Telco provider? E.g. AT&T, Verizon, Century Link...

A44. AT&T

Q45. Is the county willing to entertain a different provider?

A45. As the numbers would be ported to the hosted solution, the vendor will be the provider or utilized their preferred provider.

Q46. How many Toll-Free Numbers? How many approximate DIDs would be allocated to the contact center?

A46. This is unknown at this time as the County does not have a Contact Center.

Q47. Will contact center agents need their own DIDs in addition to the ability to take inbound ACD routed calls?

A47. Yes

Q48. Does the Pender County have a preference of their Telephony circuits that will support connectivity (data traffic) from/to their data centers? E.g. PSTN, MPLS, EPLS, etc.

A48. The County intends this to be 100% Cloud-Hosted and maintained with no PBX equipment on-site.

Q49. How many business users (Non-contact center agents) are there?

A49. For quoting purposes, please assume 501 users.

Q50. How many conference phones do you have or would like to have?

A50. The County currently has 13.

Q51. How many analog fax machines?

A51. The County currently uses RighFax

Q52. Are there any speaker/paging systems within Pender County? If so, what is the make/mode of the systems and their locations?

A52. No

Q53. Agents and Supervisors:

How many contact center agents do you anticipate?

A53. Undetermined at this time. Provide per agent/supervisor costs.

Q54. Will each agent be handling both inbound and outbound calls?

A54. Yes

Q55. Will you have any agents working from home? If so, how many?

A55. Pender wishes the ability. Undetermined.

Q56. Do any of your agents utilize VDIs to access intranet or work desktops?

A56. No VDI at this time.

Q57. How many (possible) contact center supervisors?

A57. Undetermined at this time, please provide per supervisor cost(s).

Q58. Will agents in need both physical SIP phones **and** softphone w/wireless headset capability?

A58. Potentially both depending on use case.

Q59. IVR/VRU:

Do you have a call tree outlining your current auto attendant options that you can provide? Are you interested in modernizing your current auto attendant/IVR mode?

A59. This would be provided to the selected vendor. An example: Caller receives greeting with defined prompts, presses 1 and is routed to an extension or a hunt group.

Q60. Is Pender County interested in a virtual IVR for mobile device users?

A60. We are not familiar with this. Please explain.

Q61. Call and/or Screen Storage:

Would you require screen-recording for contact center agents? If so, what is the retention period for screen recording in days?

A61. Not at this time.

Q62. Are you interested in exporting recordings (call and/or screen) periodically to a customer owned server? If so, how often would this take place?

A62. If the option exists please explain and provide costs.

Q63. Reporting:

Are Real-time and Historical Reporting required?

A63. Yes.

Q64. What application/software are you currently using for reporting?

A64. PhoneEx

Q65. Customer Surveys:

Are you interested in providing surveys re: interactions?

A65. Yes, satisfactory surveys after the end of a call center call.

Q66. If so, do you want to survey all channels of media (voice, SMS, and email) routing to the contact center?

A66. Yes, if available.

Q67. Data Center:

How many data centers does the county leverage?

A67. Undisclosed. This solution must be 100% cloud-based.

Q68. Integrations:

CRM: Are you currently using a CRM to track utilities customers or local businesses?

A68. No

Q69. Does the county leverage a Mainframe?

A69. No

Q70. Data:

What type of data would the caller be providing when they interact with the IVR/VRU?

A70. The County currently does not use an IVR

Q71. Does the county require a secure call flow for processing payments?

A71. No

Q72. Workforce Optimization:

Is Pender County interested in a Workforce Optimization solution that is all inclusive to the proposed contact center solution?

A72. Please provide information on such solution.

Q73. Make and model of Conference phones? If supported, would it be acceptable to reuse?

A73. Cisco 7937, Cisco 8831, Cisco 7811; Yes if they are supported

Q74. Does each of the 25 buildings have their own Internet access? What is the Architecture of the WAN? 1 Gig fiber network.

A74. No, a combination of fiber, WAN and VPN exists.

Q75. Has the county experienced any Voice congestion issues on the existing 1GiG fiber network?

A75. No

Q76. Does the county have the capability of segmenting the Private fiber and establish VLANs for Voice and data applications?

A76. This is currently in place.

Q77. Is it possible to obtain a full Wan Network topology?

A77. For security purposes, this will not be made publicly available.

Q78. Call Waiting – The bullet points defining Call Waiting are more aligned with call Center functionality, for “Calls in Queue.” Is this what you are seeking?

A78. Yes that is correct.

Q79. How many Contact/Call Center Agents does the county have?

A79. The County currently has 13 but wishes to expand.

Q80. Can you further define your requirements for a Call Accounting System? Is this for assigning project codes? Or Bill back? With unlimiting Local and LD calling most have found it unnecessary for LD Bill back.

A80. For billing departments for usage.

Q81. **Reporting** - “The County of Pender is very concerned about the metrics for call length, number of calls unanswered going to voicemail and dropped calls.” This requirement is typically associated with Call Center or Queue groups. This is not a requirement for individual users, would that be a correct statement?

A81. For all users, especially Call queues.

Q82. **Call Recording** – How many of the users require recording capability? Do the call recording need to “Court Admissible”?

A82. The ability for all users. Yes, Court Admissible for Departments such as DSS, Sheriff’s Office, etc.

Q83. **911** – In addition to sending the call to 911, would the county also want an administrator or other designated extension to be notified that an 911 call was place from this extension, to provide onsite personnel to respond, such as a security officer?

A83. For locations with a security officer, this would be ideal.

Q84. **Integration** – Is there a specific emergency Communications software you are trying to integrate with. Is this for tie into the 911 center?

A84. Integration with CodeRed is desired. Integration with 911 center is not a desire at this time.

Q85. The RFI states Pender County has 25 buildings located across the entirety of the County. Can you provide the site addresses for the locations where handsets will need to be deployed? We need to know how many distinct addresses to include in the quote for the optional professional services.

A85. Please visit: <https://www.pendercountync.gov/directory/building-locations/>

Q86. Can you tell us what Microsoft license you currently have?

A86. G3, G1, F3 and Kiosk

Q87. Please see below screenshot from the RFI (page 10 of 11). Item #2 is listed as a question in the “PREFERRED FEATURES & QUESTIONS” section. We are not CJIS compliant and want to ensure that this will not automatically disqualify us from being considered.

<p>Security</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Describe the security measures in place for you solution to include Administration Portal, Self-Service Portal and End-To-End security for subscriber units to your cloud service.2. Does your solution meet CJIS, HIPPA and PII compliance? Does this also include your data center, employees with access to your data center/systems and any 3rd party vendors?

A87. The Sheriff’s Office receives calls and voicemails related to Criminal Justice Information. Recordings must be stored in CJIS compliant systems and data centers.

Q88. Do you want a separate provider for fax service or could the UCaaS provider also include this? Most of the UCaaS providers also provide fax now at no extra charge.

A88. We welcome all responses and proposals. The County welcomes responses and proposals for both projects. In addition, the County welcomes any opportunity to save tax payer money by including services for free.

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