

# Procuring a New ESInet An NG911 Systems Approach



Leaders in Public Safety Communications®

# ESInet Procurement: The First Time Around

- 2007 – The State E911 Advisory Committee Recommendation
  - Explore a Private Managed Emergency Services IP Network for 911
- 2008 – Released an RFI, Due in March
  - Results helped advise what the RFP should include
- 2008 – Released an RFP, Due in November
  - 60 calendar days allotted for the first-ever statewide ESInet
  - 10 calendar days allotted for contract negotiations
  - RFP Coordinator was a predecessor, also on the evaluation team
  - 34 page RFP for the first-ever statewide ESInet
  - Minimal legal assistance

# ESInet Procurement: The First Time Around

- 2009 – Implementation was Started by CenturyLink w/ Intrado
  - New concepts caused delays totaling nearly a year
- 2012 – Last PSAP cut-over to ESInet
- Effectively we purchased an IP-based Selective Router Network
  - Based on interim protocols - RFAI
  - Legacy SRs remained until Phase III – End Office Migration
    - Moving the originating network providers from legacy SRs to our network
    - From 2012-2014
  - All PSAPs CAMA converted until 2014

# ESInet Procurement: The Second Time Around - An NG911 Systems Approach -

- First, discard any/all pre-conceived notions
  - Start with a blank sheet of paper
- Hind Sight is 20/20
  - Use the past as your path forward
- Try to start with a level playing field
  - Start with Standards – 911 can not be a custom designed service
  - Design without regard for cost – if possible... But Know Your Limitations
- Look at what you have and know what you want
  - What is 1) REQUIRED 2) NEEDED 3) WANTED

# ESInet Procurement: The Second Time Around - An NG911 Systems Approach -

- Include your Stakeholders and other professionals
  - They know what they require, need & want from you
- Make sure to consult with your purchasing authority
  - Don't forget the others who may be involved
  - Your CIO, IT Department, Cyber authorities
- Consider hiring specialize legal counsel
- Then write down what you want you ESInet to do

# ESInet Procurement: The RFP

- Build your RFP to include everything, plus the kitchen sink
- Don't make them have to guess about what you want!
  - Be clear about what you want them to do for you
    - Have your counsel help you write this, don't skimp on detail
  - Make sure you include clear tech specifications – take your time here
  - Also make sure you include the Service Level Agreements you want
    - This is your system, tell them your expectations
- Include a final version of your contract
  - No samples here – FINAL!
  - Let them come back and tell you about issues they have with it

# ESInet Procurement: The Rules and Time

- Be clear about how you want the proposals done
  - Tabbed binders, thumb drives, or whatever
  - Get them to submit: a Letter of Submittal; an Executive Overview; a Management Proposal; a Technical Proposal; a Cost Proposal, Also an Issues List; No Redlines, Brochures, Edits; but ID issues
- Try to give them enough time to come up with the right solution
  - But remember this is your procurement timeline – not their timeline
- Choose an RFP Coordinator – a good one
  - This will be you mouth-piece with the vendors
    - Don't do it yourself! Hire a consultant; Talk the contracting officer into it; Get your non-staff IT Department to do it; Just not you or your permanent staff
    - This will preserve your ability to be involved in the process without tainting it
- Set a Quiet Period – to help preserve the process integrity

# ESInet Procurement: The Other Preliminaries

- Hold a Pre-Proposal Conference EARLY!
  - Tell them/Reiterate What You Want and Why
  - Have them submit questions and answer what you can at the conference
  - This is YOUR Conference – One-way Communications
- Encourage the submission of questions, but answer all at once
  - Keep close control of this
    - Answer them all generically – redact direct references to the incumbent in the questions and answers.
- Get references directly from the source – not through the bidder
  - Have them sent to your coordinator at least one week before closing
- Stick to your schedules!
  - If you say 5pm but it comes in a 5:05pm – SORRY!
    - This is for process integrity – Treat all the same



# ESInet Procurement: Whew! The RFP is Closed!

- Get Organized
  - Layout and document the entire evaluation process
  - Appoint others to help
    - Leadership Stakeholders, Technical Stakeholders, Other Stakeholders
    - Get non-911 “fingerprints” on your evaluation
    - Execute NDAs and Confidentiality Agreements
  - Above all else ensure the entire process is fair and clean
- Proposal Evaluation
  - Consider multiple stages
    - Basic Review; Board or Panel Review; Interviews; ATP Development, Design Reviews, Compliance Reviews; Contract negotiations
  - Give yourself time to make the right decision!
  - Document every step - Keep it fair and clean

# ESInet Procurement: The Evaluation

- Stage 1 – Basic Proposal Review & Mandatory Requirements are met
- Stage 2 – The Board or Team Evaluation
  - Choose multi-functional members – leadership, technical, other
  - Include at least one member from outside the 911 community
  - Conduct this as an “Objective” review
    - We had the vendors check boxes within the RFP itself and return it unedited
      - Comply; Comply with Exceptions; Non-Comply
      - A simple application converts their answers to a score sheet. The team then validates and comments if needed
- Stage 3 – The Interviews
  - Same Evaluation Team is primary audience but include procurement team
  - Allow reasonable amount of time but stick to schedule
  - Allow time for issues list discussions NOT as part of Vendor Presentation
  - This is not contract negotiations! Only clarification.

# ESInet Procurement: The Evaluation Continued

- Stage 4 – PSAP Visits, ATP Finalization, Security Review/Compliance Risk Assessment, SOW Draft Development
  - They don't know what they don't know – force them to show you
  - Various levels of Security plan validation
  - Have an End of Stage meeting to determine if they will be successful
- Stage 5 – Technology Services Agreement Negotiations
  - Last chance to ensure SLAs, Schedules, Plans, Procedures and Prices
  - DO NOT DO THIS YOURSELF – HAVE COUNSEL INVOLVED!
- Have the Vendor sign the TSA, then Announce the Winner
  - This ensures that you & the vendor are satisfied and intend to move ahead
- Allow time for Debriefings
- Allow time for the unthinkable – Protest

# Procuring an ESInet – The Second Time

- We learned that we didn't save time for Public Disclosure Requests
  - Washington has very liberal public disclosure laws
  - Take the time to ensure you maintain security of your new system!
  - Get additional eyes on the redactions you will support
- Re-cap:
  - Dream Big! Ask for what you and your stakeholders require, need and want!
    - Spend time/money for legal assistance
  - Build your RFP to reflect what you've decided
    - Include clear technical specifications, the SLAs you want/need, a complete final contract
  - Evaluate deliberately, carefully and fairly
    - Use stakeholders and SMEs as much as possible
- Deliberately leverage emerging NG911 technology