

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Managed Email Security Solution



Due Date: Friday, August 28th @ 5:00 PM (Central)

Housing Authority of the Cherokee Nation

Department: Information Technology

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Introduction:

The Housing Authority of the Cherokee Nation (HACN) was created in 1966 to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing within the Cherokee Nation. Today, HACN continues that original mission of providing housing assistance through several diverse programs (www.hacn.org).

HACN is an entity of the Cherokee Nation and functions independently from the Cherokee Nation federal government. HACN operates on a separate infrastructure in all aspects. HACN has approximately 250 staff and covers the same 14-county reservation area of the Cherokee Nation in Northeastern Oklahoma.

General Provisions

Purpose of the REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): HACN is soliciting detailed proposals from interested parties with qualifications, credentials, and previous experience providing services for organizations similar in size and scope. The complete scope of work and specifications are included in this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP).

Other Licenses and Registrations Requirement: All consultants are required to hold any and all necessary applicable professional licenses and registrations required by law. Proof of professional licenses are required with the proposal. Obtaining and ensuring compliance with all licensing and registering requirements is the complete responsibility of the contractor.

Cherokee and Indian Preference: HACN will be accepting proposals from Indian and Non-Indian parties. Indian preference will be given only to Vendors who provide proof of current certification from the Cherokee Nation Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) located in Tahlequah, OK. Proof of TERO certification must be included with the submission. The awarded contract is subject to Section 7(b) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, which requires in part that to the greatest extent feasible, preference in the award of contracts and subcontracts shall be given to Indian Organizations and Indian Owned Economic Enterprises.

Conflict of Interest and Restrictions: If any contractor, contractor's employee, subcontractor, or any individual working on the proposed contract may have a possible conflict of interest that may affect the objectivity, analysis, and/or performance of the contract, it shall be declared in writing upon discovery, via contact information posted in this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP). HACN will determine in writing if the conflict is significant and material and if so, may eliminate the contractor from submitting a proposal.

Verbal Instructions: Interested parties shall not initiate or execute any negotiation, decision, or action arising from any verbal discussion with any HACN employee. Only written communications from the designated Contact Person at HACN may be considered a duly authorized expression on behalf of HACN regarding this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP). Additionally, only written communications from interested parties are recognized as duly authorized expressions on behalf of the vendor. The same instructions shall apply to any subsequent award and agreement communications.

Binding Contract: This REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) does not obligate HACN or the selected contractor until a contract is signed and approved by both parties. If approved, it is effective from the date of final approval. HACN shall not be responsible for work done, even in good faith, prior to final approval of the proposed contract. Any and all costs incurred by contractor's preparing and submitting a proposal are the contractor's responsibility and shall not be charged to the HACN or reflected as an expense of a resulting contract.

Cancellation of the REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): HACN retains the right to cancel, modify, amend, or withdraw, the REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) process at any time, at HACN's sole discretion. HACN shall not be responsible for costs incurred by contractors for proposal preparation.

Disclosure of Proposal Contents: HACN will not disclose the list of vendors that have responded to the posted REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP), or any content from a submission, throughout the review process. Once a contract has been awarded, the winning vendor will be listed with the original post online (cherokeebids.org).

Acceptance

Submissions will be accepted from Indian and Non-Indian Vendors. HACN reserves the right to determine if the submission meets stated requirements, in the best interest of the HACN, to further the discussion with scheduled demonstrations and interviews. To be considered, submissions must be received by the specified date and time. HACN reserves the right to reject any and all submissions.

Method of Award: After reviewing all submissions received and HACN has determined the ability to move forward, a purchase order will be awarded to the responsible Vendor whose submission is determined to be the lowest, in the best interest, and most responsive in accordance with the HACN Procurement Policy.

Non-Appropriation Termination Clause: Must be agreed to with multi-year contracts. The HACN's obligation for payment under any contract/agreement is contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds from which payment for services can be made. Funds are available for the Fiscal year budget only when appropriated or authorized by the Tribal Council of the Cherokee Nation and/or the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Cherokee Nation. The HACN's designated officer shall use their best efforts to obtain the annual appropriations of the Base Payments throughout the Lease/Contract Term.

No legal liability on the part of the HACN for any payment may arise until funds are made available by the designated officer of the HACN for performance and until the CONTRACTOR/VENDOR receives notice of availability from the HACN's designated officer through issuance of a purchase order (PO).

Deadline for Receipt of Proposals & Submission Details: Responses must be submitted to the contact listed. It is the Vendor's responsibility to ensure delivery of responses by the due date listed. Responses received after the deadline will not be considered.

- ✓ **Email method only** for submissions and communications (Baylee.Scott@hacn.org)
- ✓ Questions (Project specific or Provisions listed within) must be submitted no later than end of day **8/13/2026**.

- HACN will list all questions and answers and Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) all initial inquiries, within 3 business days.
 - Clarifications to questions received will be posted on our website at www.cherokeebids.org no later than 2 PM on 8-18-26. No questions will be answered verbally.
- ✓ Response Submission Deadline no later than **Due Date: Friday, August 28th @ 5:00 PM (Central)**

Managed Email Security Solution

The Information Technology of the Housing Authority of the Cherokee Nation is seeking a REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) from interested parties for a **Managed Email Security Solution** as specified below. To be considered a responsive submission, the mandatory response sheet must be fully completed and submitted no later than **Friday, August 28th @ 5:00 PM (Central)** to Baylee.Scott@hacn.org.

Introduction

Email continues to be the primary attack vector for cyber threats, including phishing, business email compromise (BEC), malware, ransomware, account takeovers, spoofing, and social engineering attacks. HACN seeks a managed solution that provides comprehensive protection, continuous monitoring, advanced threat detection, rapid response, and expert analysis across its Microsoft 365 email environment.

HACN is seeking a strategic cybersecurity partner that can help reduce organizational risk through proactive detection, investigation, containment, and remediation of email-based threats while providing visibility, reporting, and security expertise that augment internal IT resources.

The proposed solution should deliver both technology and managed services to protect users, prevent compromise, and improve the organization's overall email security posture.

Organization Infrastructure

HACN operates a distributed technology environment supporting:

- Approximately 270 users, 1000 Devices
- 23 office locations across 14 counties in Northeast Oklahoma
- Microsoft specifically with M365 (E5), Azure AD / Entra ID
- MS Intune and Defender
- Azure VPN Tunnel to Azure hosted business applications

The Information Systems Department is responsible for infrastructure, applications, cybersecurity, and end-user support. HACN seeks to enhance its cybersecurity capabilities through a managed email security service that provides continuous protection and expert response capabilities.

Objective

The selected solution should enable HACN to:

- Detect and prevent phishing and spear-phishing attacks
- Identify and stop business email compromise (BEC)
- Protect against malware, ransomware, and malicious attachments
- Prevent account compromise and unauthorized email activity
- Detect domain spoofing and impersonation attempts
- Provide 24x7 monitoring and expert analysis
- Reduce the operational burden on internal IT staff
- Improve visibility into email threats and attack trends
- Support compliance with cybersecurity best practices and frameworks, including NIST

Strategic Considerations

HACN seeks a solution that:

- Reduces the likelihood of successful phishing attacks
- Provides meaningful threat intelligence and visibility
- Minimizes operational workload on internal staff
- Supports a proactive cybersecurity posture
- Aligns with NIST Cybersecurity Framework principles
- Provides measurable improvement in email security effectiveness

The selected vendor should function as a strategic cybersecurity partner, helping HACN strengthen its defenses against increasingly sophisticated email-based threats while providing the expertise and resources necessary to improve organizational security and resilience.

Scope of Services

The proposed solution must include the following capabilities:

- **Email Threat Detection**

The solution must provide advanced detection capabilities for:

- Phishing attacks
- Spear-phishing attacks
- Business Email Compromise (BEC)
- Executive impersonation
- Vendor impersonation
- Domain spoofing
- Malware
- Ransomware
- Malicious links
- Malicious attachments
- Credential harvesting attacks

- **Email Protection**

The solution should provide:

- Inbound email protection
- Outbound email monitoring
- Attachment scanning and sandboxing
- URL analysis and protection
- Safe link capabilities

- QR-code threat detection
- Real-time threat analysis
- Post-delivery threat detection and remediation

- **Identity and Account Protection**

The solution should support:

- Detection of compromised accounts
- Suspicious login analysis
- Impossible travel detection
- Anomalous email activity detection
- Internal account abuse monitoring
- Credential theft detection

Integration with Microsoft Entra ID is highly preferred.

- **Managed Detection and Response Services**

Vendors must provide:

- Continuous monitoring of email security events
- Alert triage and investigation
- Threat hunting activities
- Incident escalation procedures
- Threat notification and communication
- Security analyst support
- Response recommendations

Preference will be given to vendors providing 24x7 Security Operations Center (SOC) coverage.

- **Automated Response Capabilities**

The solution should support automated response actions including:

- Email quarantine
- Email retraction after delivery
- User account containment
- Blocking malicious senders
- Blocking malicious domains
- Blocking malicious URLs
- Alerting designated HACN personnel

- **Reporting and Visibility**

The proposed solution should provide:

- Operational Reporting
 - Daily and weekly threat summaries
 - Alert statistics
 - Incident summaries
 - Threat trends
- Executive Reporting
 - Monthly executive summary reports
 - Threat landscape overview
 - Key risk indicators
 - Attack statistics
 - Security recommendations

- Dashboard Capabilities
 - Real-time visibility
 - Threat tracking
 - Historical reporting
 - Export capabilities

- **Integration Requirements**

The proposed solution must integrate with:

- Microsoft 365
- Exchange Online
- Microsoft Entra ID
- Microsoft Defender (if applicable)
- Existing security infrastructure

Preference will be given to solutions that maximize existing Microsoft investments and minimize redundant licensing or administrative overhead.

- **Implementation and Onboarding**

The vendor shall provide:

- Project implementation services
- Configuration assistance
- Testing and validation
- Administrator training
- Knowledge transfer
- Documentation

The proposal should include an implementation plan with milestones and required HACN resources.

Vendor Qualifications

Vendors must demonstrate:

- Experience delivering Managed Email Detection and Response services
- Experience supporting organizations of similar size and complexity
- Strong knowledge of Microsoft 365 security architecture
- Relevant cybersecurity certifications
- Industry-recognized security operations experience
- Ability to provide customer references

Preference will be given to vendors with public sector, tribal government, or housing authority experience.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include:

- Company Overview
 - Company background
 - Years in business
 - Relevant experience

- Technical Solution
 - Solution architecture
 - Detection methodologies
 - Response capabilities
 - Integration capabilities
- Managed Services
 - SOC operations
 - Staffing model
 - Escalation procedures
 - Coverage hours
- Implementation Plan
 - Deployment approach
 - Timeline
 - Resource requirements
- Reporting
 - Sample reports
 - Dashboard screenshots
 - Executive reporting examples
- Pricing: Provide detailed pricing including:
 - Licensing
 - Managed services
 - Implementation services
 - Professional services
 - Optional services

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on capability, integration, cost, experience, and alignment with HACN requirements (see Evaluation Factors listed below).

Review of Submissions

Acceptance of Conditions Governing the Procurement: Vendors must indicate their acceptance of conditions governing this procurement in their cover letter.

HACN is Tax exempt. Please include acknowledgement of Tax exemption status.

Non-Appropriation Termination Clause: Vendors must indicate their acceptance of the non-appropriations clause with multi-year contracts.

Incurring Cost: Any costs incurred by the vendor in preparation, transmittal, or presentation of any proposal, or material submitted in response to this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) shall be the

responsibility of the vendor. The vendor is responsible for all costs associated with travel for on-site demonstrations upon the request of HACN.

Responsiveness: Prior to evaluation, each submission shall be reviewed to determine whether it is responsive. Nonresponsive submissions shall be eliminated and will not be evaluated. Factors that may result in a submission being declared nonresponsive are:

- 1) Not providing evidence of meeting the Minimum Requirements.
- 2) When applicable, Not attending mandatory meetings or site visit.
- 3) Substantive and material conflicts of interest which were not declared and/or were declared and determined to be significant enough that the HACN requested the potential contractor not submit a REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP).
- 4) Substantive and material noncompliance to requirements listed or adherence to submission guideline.
- 5) Not providing a price or timeline, if applicable.
- 6) Not meeting established deadlines

Evaluation Process: An evaluation committee consisting of HACN employees shall evaluate responsive submissions. Each member of the evaluation committee shall independently evaluate each submission. The evaluation will be based on the evaluation factors and values stated in this REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP). Discussions, presentations, and/or site visits, if held, may result in individual evaluation committee members changing their scores.

Review Cycle: HACN is aware that a final proposal may require product demonstrations, detail interviews, and further discovery meetings. Here is what to expect during the review process following the submission due date **Friday, August 28th @ 5:00 PM (Central)**. HACN reserves the right to extend or alter timelines if deemed necessary or beneficial to the HACN project:

Stage 1: The week following the submission deadline, the review committee will review all proposals and a project coordinator will schedule an introductory call that will allow a time for a detailed discussion and product demonstrations, to further define the scope of the project and allow vendor/contractor to revise proposals and estimated cost.

- Deadline for revised proposals and estimates will be the end of the second week (14 days) following the submission deadline.

Stage 2: (Week 3) After deadline for revised proposals and estimates, the review committee will review all submissions and choose the top 3 vendors accepted to continue to stage 3. Notifications will be sent to all contacts by end of week.

- Accepted proposals and estimates will be scheduled for a final meeting for the following week (week 4), to detail and finalize the scope of work and pricing.

Stage 3: (Week 4) Deadline for FINAL PROPOSALS, QUOTES/BIDS will be the end of the fourth week.

- Final review and vendor selection to be completed on the following week (week 5). Notifications will be sent to all contacts at conclusion.

Evaluation Factors: The evaluation factors listed below and must be clearly stated and addressed and stated in the submission. The Evaluation Factors and the value of each are:

EVALUATION FACTORS	Points
TERO Certification (certificate must be included)	Bonus 5
Threat Detection Capability	20
Microsoft 365 Integration	15
Managed Detection & Response Services	15
Automated Response Capabilities	15
Reporting & Visibility	10
Implementation and Ease of Administration	10
Vendor Experience & References	5
Strategic Fit and Service Model	5
Cost and Overall Value	5
TOTAL	105 possible

MANDATORY RESPONSE SHEET

BASE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) Includes: (Check List)

- _____ Proposed Solution(s)
- _____ Company & Project Team Information (Experience & Qualifications)
- _____ Pre-Interview Estimated Costs
- _____ Contracts/Agreements/Support Assurances
- _____ References (with valid email/phone contacts)
- _____ Acceptance of Conditions Governing the Procurement
- _____ Acceptance of HACN is Tax exemption status
- _____ Acceptance of Non-Appropriation Termination Clause (applicable for multi-year contracts)

INDIAN PREFERENCE

TERO Certified Vendor: _____ Yes _____ No
 (Proof of certification **must** be included) Front & Back

SUBMITTED:

 Supplier Name & Phone Number

 Supplier Address

 Authorized Signature