



MIDWESTERN HIGHER EDUCATION COMPACT

Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Services

Request for Proposal

Prepared by the
Midwestern Higher Education Compact
Technologies Committee
April 2014

SPECIAL NOTE: This Request for Proposal (RFP) does not obligate the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) or member states to award a contract and reserves the right to cancel this RFP if it is considered to be in its best interest. Proposals must be clear and concise. Proposals that are difficult to follow or that do not conform to the RFP format or binding specifications may be rejected. MHEC reserves the right to change the evaluation criteria or any other provision in this RFP by posting notice of the changes on MHEC's public website at <http://MHEC.ORG/RFPs>. For this RFP, posting on the captioned website above constitutes written notification to each vendor. Vendors should check the site daily and are expected to review information on the site carefully before submitting a final proposal.

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A. Introduction

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) through its Network Equipment and Services Subcommittee of its Technologies Committee is requesting proposals on behalf of MHEC Technologies Cost Savings Program. The purpose of this Request For Proposal (hereafter called the RFP) is to establish one or more MHEC Master Price Agreement(s) with qualified vendor(s) for Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Services in accordance with the specifications of this RFP.

For the purpose of this RFP, there are four product categories identified below which may be awarded, in part or in whole. Responders must only respond to categories in which they are the manufacture or certified supplier of the defined category. MHEC's intends to establish an award and/or multiple awards per category. MHEC reserves the right to eliminate any category from the final award.

Category 1: Network Equipment and Services

Category 2: Wireless Equipment and Services

Category 3: Voice and Services

Category 4: Wavelength Division Multiplexing and Services

At a minimum the vendor(s) proposed offering shall be available for the eligible participants in the twelve (12) Midwestern state region of the Compact. MHEC will also entertain proposals to expand proposed offering to states within the other three Compacts in the country; the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), and the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), subject to the respective Compacts' approval.

B. The Midwestern Higher Education Compact

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) is an instrumentality of twelve Midwestern states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin). The Compact was established in 1991 through a common statute enacted into law by each of the member states. The purpose of the Compact is to promote higher education through interstate cooperation and resource sharing.

A 60-member Commission composed of five delegates from each state who are appointed by their respective Governors, House Speakers and Senate Presidents governs the Compact. The Commission has been conferred very broad authority to enact solutions and enter into agreements on behalf of its member states. Once a state enacts the necessary legislation to become a member of the Compact, all of the public and private non-profit colleges, universities, community colleges and technical colleges in the state are eligible to participate in the solutions established by the Compact. The Commission receives its primary financial support from member state appropriations, from foundations having special interests in specific solutions, and from administrative service fees.

The primary constituents served by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact are the approximately 1000 public and private non-profit institutions in the member states whose combined enrollments total over 4 million students. In addition, where appropriate, state

government agencies and local school districts are also invited to participate in MHEC solutions. Faculty, staff, and students may also be eligible to purchase under a MHEC agreement, depending on the terms negotiated.

One of the Compact's top priorities is to establish public-private relationships to improve services to higher education, and reduce administrative costs for both providers and institutions. Since 1992, the Compact has engaged in several highly successful initiatives in cooperation with leading corporations. These relationships have been quite innovative, and have produced financial benefits for all of the involved parties. Beyond excellent pricing and terms, MHEC agreements deliver a primary benefit to institutions and vendors by avoiding the time and expense of the RFP process since MHEC has already completed the RFP and awarded the contract on behalf of all institutions in the twelve states.

C. The MHEC Technologies Committee

In 1992, the Commission established the MHEC Telecommunications Committee to develop innovative approaches to expand access to telecommunications services, while reducing costs to institutions. Similarly, in 1999 the Commission established a Computing Resources Taskforce to identify opportunities to improve access to computing products and services and to reduce administrative costs. Both the Telecommunications Committee and the Computing Resources Taskforce were able to develop successful solutions that benefited higher education, K-12 schools and state and local governments. In January 2003, MHEC convened a joint meeting of these two committees. Since emerging technologies are blending into both the computer and telecommunications areas, the two 12-state committees were joined together and renamed the MHEC Technologies Committee. From this larger committee, smaller working group committees continue to focus on specific solution initiatives. As one, the Network Equipment and Services Subcommittee is responsible for developing this RFP.

The Commission believes that the services and scalability of the initiative envisioned by the Network Equipment and Services Subcommittee will offer unique advantages and benefits to private sector partners and to participating colleges and universities that cannot be readily achieved through individual actions. Mega-group participation will enable significant streamlining of marketing, administration and service functions; improved service support and training options; and operational efficiency across a variety of Eligible Participants and their individual scenarios. In order for this solution to be successful, it must be profitable for both the providers and the institutions. The Commission is committed to making that happen.

D. Objective

The MHEC Network Equipment and Services Subcommittee intends to source one or more solution providers for the categories of Networking, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Services for Eligible Participants. In addition to the applicable products, any proposed solution needs to have as options: the maintenance, technical support, and training necessary to allow the institution to fully utilize the purchased solution. Because institutions have differing network, wireless, voice, and wavelength division multiplexing hardware and related service's needs, the solution must be flexible enough to meet those varying needs. Amongst different types of institutions, and even within a single institution, differences in requirements exist. Therefore, the solution should allow adaptation to the specific needs and circumstances of each Eligible Participant as well as streamline and simplify the procurement and distribution process for them.

Furthermore, respondents are encouraged to offer innovative solutions, recognizing that to compete effectively they need to deal with a range of institutions: some will search for a rock bottom price because they have sufficient internal resources and expertise to provide their own pre- and post- sales support and servicing; whereas other institutions (perhaps having no technology support staff whatsoever) may need complete support. Some institutions will be willing to buy exclusively from one vendor; others will not. Some institutions will be willing to standardize purchases, do bulk buys, or provide local warranty services, while others will be unable to do so. Each of these factors provides the vendor an opportunity to show initiative and ultimately prove they are the best choice as a supplier.

The successful respondent(s) will be responsible for delivery of all products and services awarded. Respondents may propose the use of servicing subcontractors or resellers. However, MHEC will consider the respondent(s) to be the sole point of contact with regard to contractual matters, including pricing structure, delivery, warranty, and payment of any and all charges resulting from the purchase of products and services specified in this proposal, unless a separate contract addendum to the master price agreement is executed with said subcontractors or resellers.

If subcontractors or resellers are utilized, MHEC encourages the consideration of minority owned and/or economically disadvantaged businesses.

MHEC has a successful history of creating renewable and reviewable purchasing vehicles for its institutions. Its ability to foster relationships with vendors puts it in a unique position to bring the best value to all involved. Through this RFP we intend to establish a purchasing vehicle for our eligible participants that will:

1. Represent enough volume that the pricing or discount is aggressive enough to make this the most attractive purchasing vehicle available to our institutions.
2. Use that volume to provide vendors with a more predictable business model so that they may reliably invest in providing those services that establish relationships and to reestablish in our institutions the value of value-added services so that vendors also have a more predictable space in which to market advanced fee-based services.
3. Allow MHEC to bring its educational, collaboration, and communications capabilities to bear in assisting vendors to build relationship with our smaller institutions without incurring substantial cost.

MHEC is seeking vendors and manufacturers who are willing to work with MHEC to provide creative solutions that will be effective within the confines of the purchasing regulations to which member institutions are bound.

The Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Services solution will be offered to eligible institutions. The solution will:

1. Be designed as a renewable multiple-year offering the capability of serving the entire MHEC region;
2. Offer Eligible Participants a streamlined and simplified procurement process that meets their Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Service's needs;
3. Make available a comprehensive Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Services solution that is flexible

enough to adapt to the specific needs and circumstances of each Eligible Participant;

4. Offer the highest quality Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Services products;
5. Help to avoid repeated RFPs from Eligible Participants (testing the market), since the solutions offered are expected to clearly provide the best value in the region;
6. Assist eligible participants in the conversion, installation, training and support of the respondents products as necessary;
7. Enable Eligible Participants, consortia of institutions, and systems currently under separate contract with the selected vendor(s) to convert to the MHEC Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Services solution;
8. Be structured to enable institutions, consortia of institutions, and systems in MHEC member states to participate as they deem appropriate and in their own best interests;
9. Offer the selected vendor(s) the opportunity to deal with groups of Eligible Participants in unique ways, facilitated by MHEC.
10. Offer the selected vendor(s) opportunities to address the MHEC Commission on topics of mutual interest.

Depending upon the responses received and the solutions presented, the Network Equipment and Services Subcommittee may select more than one vendor to work with in developing and implementing a Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Services solutions.

E. Eligible Participants

All public and private non-profit colleges, universities, community colleges, technical colleges and higher education agencies in MHEC member states shall be eligible to participate in the MHEC Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Services Solution.

Optionally, participation may be offered to any or all of the following groups:

- K-12 schools and districts, including public libraries;
- cities, counties, hospitals, and local subdivisions;
- state agencies;
- faculty, staff, and students for any or all of the above groups

Contract benefits may differ for each of these optional groups.

MHEC will also entertain proposals to expand this solution to states within the other three Compacts in the country; WICHE, SREB, NEBHE, subject to the respective Compacts' approval.

- MHEC member states are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.
- SREB member states are Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

- NEBHE member states are Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont.
- WICHE member states are Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

F. The MHEC RFP Process

This RFP is issued by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact’s Network Equipment and Services Subcommittee. The person responsible for managing the procurement process is Mr. Nathan Jay Sorensen (612) 677-2767 or nathans@mhec.org who is the sole point of contact for the Subcommittee during the RFP process.

The purpose of the RFP is to provide interested parties with information to enable them to prepare and submit a proposal to provide a comprehensive Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Services solution under the auspices of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact. MHEC has determined that developing a region-wide Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Services acquisition strategy through one or more providers will benefit both the higher education community and the provider(s). The Subcommittee intends to use the results of this process to enter into a Master Price Agreement(s) to make the solutions available to the entire constituency of the Compact. Consequently, it will afford providers a truly competitive opportunity to advance product sales and services and to further penetrate a specific market niche.

G. The Request For Proposal (RFP)

In preparing responses to this RFP, prospective providers are asked to address

- the following questions detailing how they would provide the solution;
- the strategies that they would employ to assure the solution’s success, including potential rollout and marketing; and
- the qualifications and unique features that they would bring to the solution.

As used in this RFP, the terms “must”, “shall”, “should” and “may” identify the criticality of requirements. “Must” and “shall” terms are considered mandatory requirements whose absence will have a major negative impact on the suitability of the proposed solution. Items labeled as “should” or “may” are highly desirable, although their absence will not have as large an impact and as requirements labeled as mandatory. Depending on the overall response to the RFP, some individual mandatory items may not be fully satisfied, but it is the intent to satisfy most, if not all, mandatory requirements. The inability of a Respondent to satisfy a mandatory requirement does not automatically remove that Respondent from consideration; however, it may seriously affect the overall rating of the Respondent’s proposal.

Responses must be keyed to the section and paragraph numbers provided in this RFP.

H. Qualifications

1. The successful contractor(s) shall provide products, software, maintenance, installation, training and service solution as described in this RFP. Respondents shall completely review the requirements specified in this request for proposal. It shall be the respondent’s responsibility to make certain that all hardware, software, services, and support is included in their proposal to guarantee a fully functional enterprise Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Services.

It shall be the contractor's responsibility to verify that any software proposed will work as specified with the other proposed products.

2. The successful contractor must warranty all products and ensure that this product works to its maximum capacity for a minimum period of twelve (12) months after final acceptance by the Eligible Participant that purchased it.
3. The successful contractor must agree that additional Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Services products relative to obtaining the solution not covered herein may be added by an Eligible Participant to this contract without voiding provisions of the existing contract. The successful contractor with additional consideration may be allowed to furnish additional products and services to institutions covered within the MHEC region.
4. The bidder's order fulfillment process shall be considered an important process with regard to the existing business practices of Eligible Participants. To that end invoices must be received separately for campus business units. The contractor's order fulfillment system must work seamlessly in conjunction with common ERP system and/or member institutions purchasing card systems that Eligible Participants may choose to use.
5. Delivery of purchases will be made within 30 calendar days after receipt of order, or such other length of time as mutually agreed between the Participating Eligible Organization and the Vendor, F.O.B. destination (interior/ground floor or inside dock), and freight pre-paid and allowed, to any and all locations of the Eligible Participant. Bid prices must include all packing, freight, insurance charges and installation/operation manuals.
6. Contractor agrees to notify the Eligible Participant within five working days after receipt of the order if they are unable to deliver within the required time frame. Failure of the contractor to adhere to delivery schedules as specified or to promptly replace defective product shall be considered a default with Eligible Participant retaining any and all remedies available to it under the law. Respondents need note that all locations of any particular Eligible Participant may not be within the MHEC region.
7. As some Eligible Participants have locations outside North America, contractors must also provide expected delivery times outside of North America.
8. Purchase orders will be placed by each Eligible Participant, on their institution's Purchase Order Form or by using a credit card on the vendor-supplied purchasing web site, or other mutually agreed-upon means.
9. Contractors may choose to deliver products electronically where practicable. This option must be under the independent control of each Eligible Participant.
10. Contractor(s) must not substitute any item(s) that has been ordered by the Eligible Participant using this contract without the prior written or electronic approval by the appropriate purchasing officer of the Eligible Participant. The substitute item must be at the same or better technology level than the original product ordered, and pricing at the same or lower price. Failure to comply may result in return of merchandise at contractor's expense.
11. Successful contractor(s) must offer a "total satisfaction" return policy. The contractor must provide a thirty (30) day no-questions-asked return option, from the date of delivery to end-user.
12. Successful contractor(s) shall be responsible for replacing at no cost to Eligible Participants any damaged or inoperable-on-receipt products received under this contract within 30 days from notification by that Eligible Participant. This includes all shipping costs for returning non-functional items to the contractor for replacement.

13. Any price reductions from manufacturer from the time of submission of a purchase order to product delivery must be passed on to the Eligible Participant that issued the purchase order.
14. Successful contractor(s) shall retain and maintain all records and documents relating to this Contract for six years after final payment by the Eligible Participant hereunder or any applicable statute of limitations, whichever is longer, and shall make them available for inspection and audit by authorized representatives of the Eligible Participant, including the procurement officer or designee, at all reasonable times.
15. MHEC reserves the right, but is not obligated, to request that each respondent provide a formal presentation of its proposal at a date, time and place to be determined. If required by the MHEC Network Equipment and Services Subcommittee, it is anticipated that such presentation will not exceed two (2) hours. No respondent will be entitled to be present during, or otherwise receive any information regarding, any other presentation of any other respondent.
16. MHEC reserves the right to require a Financial Capacity report consisting of the following:
 - a. Sources of financing (shareholders, venture capital, etc.)
 - b. Bank references and name of auditing firm
 - c. Last two annual reports and all quarterly reports since the last annual report
 - d. Identification of the Parent Corporation and any subsidiaries
 - e. List of all current higher education customers in the MHEC region, and all customers for whom similar work was performed during the past 2 years.
17. Successful contractor(s) must provide corporate executive level sponsorship to establish and maintain fundamental familiarity/understanding with MHEC and MHEC's Eligible Participants.
18. Respondents must offer services in all twelve (12) MHEC member states. For service to be considered offered in a state it must be offered in the whole state.
19. Contractor must indicate country of manufacture and country of assembly.
20. Increasingly, Eligible Participants are committed to promote environmentally sound procurement, usage and disposal methods which are in compliance with State, County, and Municipal regulations. Many Eligible Participants have a recycling program for starch and Styrofoam packing peanuts. Our preference is to receive starch peanuts whenever possible. The Contractor shall not use INSTAPAK™ or mix starch and Styrofoam peanuts under any circumstances. Each product shall be separately pre-packed in accordance with commercially accepted methods. Small products may be packaged in protective envelopes (Mail-Lite or Bubble-Jet packs).
21. Performance of the successful contractor(s) will be closely monitored by an oversight committee for the Master Price Agreement throughout the contract period. Individual institutions have the ability to control their own ordering process under the contract's Master Price Agreement. If deliveries prove to be unsatisfactory, or other problems arise, MHEC reserves the right to delete product or services from the Master Price Agreement and/or cancel Master Price Agreement for cause, and may award to the next acceptable respondent, or cancel and request new proposals. Similarly, if deliveries prove to be unsatisfactory or other problems arise under the agreement for an Eligible Participant, the Eligible Participant retains all of its remedies for a default. Failure of MHEC or the Eligible Participant to exercise their rights of termination for cause or other remedies for default due to a respondent's failure to perform as required in any instance shall not constitute a waiver of termination rights or other default remedies in any other instance.

22. MHEC has incurred, and will continue to incur, costs and expenses in the development, implementation, administration and marketing of this program. To help recover some of these costs, the Technologies Committee requires an administration fee in this program. All responses shall include an administration fee component in your proposal. The Respondent will be responsible for the administration fee. The administration fee may be a flat rate, or it may be a variable rate based on volume. However, it is important to remember that regardless of the makeup of the administration fee, the overall pricing must remain extremely competitive for Eligible Participants.
23. MHEC eligible participants range in size and complexity from large public multi-campus state university systems with significant research programs and highly complex I.T. infrastructures to small private colleges and local community colleges. Please explain briefly your proposed marketing strategy for bringing your products and services to the attention of Eligible Participants as well as your proposed strategy for offering a wide enough variety of products and services at price points within the range of these institutions so that your products and services would be of value to eligible institutions. Mutual review and evaluation of the marketing plans will be done, at a minimum, during annual reviews.

I. Product Category Definitions

This RFP is divided into four (4) network hardware categories. Responders shall respond to one or more categories. All products and services offered within each category are subject to the Qualifications, Functional Specifications, Training, Maintenance, and Pricing Sections of this RFP.

Category 1: Network Equipment and Services. Networking equipment includes gateways, routers, network bridges, switches, hubs and repeaters. It may also include network devices such as multilayer switches, protocol converters, bridge routers, proxy servers, firewalls, network address translators, multiplexers, modems, ISDN terminal adapters, line drivers, networking cables plus other related hardware, software, and services.

Category 2: Wireless Equipment and Services. Wireless equipment includes any wireless access point device which uses high-frequency radio waves plus other related hardware, software, and services.

Category 3: Voice Equipment and Services. Voice equipment includes hardware for the use of digital networking telephony plus other related hardware, software, and services.

Category 4: Wavelength Division Multiplexing Equipment and Services. Wavelength Division Multiplexing equipment includes multiplexers, demultiplexer, optical amplifiers, dense wavelength division multiplexing, coarse wavelength division multiplexing, transmode solutions plus other related hardware, software, and services.

J. Functional Specifications

Responders shall respond to one or more categories and are expected, by category, to provide the complete catalog of products and services by manufacturer without limitation. Proposed solutions will be scored, by category, in part against the following requirements.

Category 1: Network Equipment and Services. Please address each of these separately and describe your support for the following:

C1.1. Functional:

- a. System must provide multilayer switching and routing services that scale from workgroup applications to fully meshed enterprise systems capable of scaling from local area to metro to wide area networks.
- b. System must be capable of IEEE 802.1Q tagging, 802.1x, NAT, QoS, SSH, IPv4, IPv6, routing protocols (describe), and have security feature sets.
- c. System should provide authentication, authorization, and accounting services; virtual private network services and network access control functions.
- d. System should provide network management and monitoring capabilities. The suite should minimally be capable of providing centralized configuration and software management services.
- e. System should provide the capability of monitoring performance and troubleshooting using both polling and event driven methods.
- f. System should be capable of providing long term trending of data on network performance and creating or clearing events based on performance thresholds.
- g. System should be able to interact with other monitoring systems, either collecting event data from them or forwarding events to them.
- h. System should provide wireless data services capable of scaling from the workgroup, building, campus, and metro level.
- i. System should provide an easy point of entry to wireless deployment as well as enterprise level management/monitoring utilities for those with large deployments.
- j. System should contain components to provide client, access point, point-to-point bridge, point to multi-point bridge, and mesh functionality.
- k. System should be capable of integrating with local enterprise authentication methods (describe).
- l. System should provide traffic prioritization, shaping, control, and optimization functions for critical or constrained communications links.
- m. System should be capable of adapting or being updated to recognize current traffic patterns or network applications.
- n. System should be configurable to segment and prioritize traffic via hard bandwidth limits or by percentage of total bandwidth available.
- o. System should support prioritization of dynamic bandwidth streams as well as delegation of management to a particular partition of the bandwidth.
- p. System should provide software defined networking capabilities (describe).

C1.2. Technical Capabilities:

- a. System must provide failover and fault tolerance.
- b. System must provide support and capability for 100Mbps, 1Gbps, 10Gbps, 40Gbps, and 100Gbps ports, cards, and modules.
- c. System should provide authentication, authorization, and accounting services; virtual private network services and network access control functions.
- d. System should be secure, protect, and monitor the security of network systems. This suite would include, but not necessarily be limited to, network layer firewalls, application specific firewall applications, and intrusion detection/prevention/entrapment systems.
- e. System should provide authentication, authorization, and accounting services as well as virtual private network services in a secure fashion and provide network access control functions.

- f. System should provide support and capability for 100Mbps, 1Gbps, 10Gbps, 40Gbps, and 100Gbps ports, cards, and modules.
- g. System should provide support for fiber channel over Ethernet, FCoE, and iSCSI

C1.3. Integration:

- a. System should support mobile device management or ability to integrate with a third party mobile device management solution
- b. MHEC would also review a suite of products designed to provide network ticketing, tracking, and archiving. The suite should be capable of notifying support staff by various means; provide follow-up and escalation features; and store solutions to problems. Customers should be able to enter their own trouble tickets into interactive web forms. The suite should be able to integrate with several network management products.

Category 2: Wireless Equipment and Services. Please address each of these separately and describe your support for the following:

C2.1. Functional:

- a. System should support plug and play installation for Access Points.
- b. Access Points should simultaneously support tunneled traffic and bridged traffic at the AP.
- c. Access Points should support WDS for backhaul and to service clients.
- d. System should provide a secure central configuration and monitoring of Access Points.
- e. System should provide a customizable and centralized Captive Portal.
- f. QoS should be supported throughout the entire solution.
- g. System should support software defined networking.
- h. System should support assignment of client policies without requiring segmentation.
- i. System should support GUI-based management.
- j. System must support role based access control for management interface with integration into an Active Directory or external LDAP for user credentials.
- k. System must support centrally deployed updates of hardware firmware.
- l. System must support performance and error monitoring through industry standard protocols such as SNMP.
- m. System should support location-based services, including an API to integrate location and presence capabilities with third-party applications.
- n. System should support multiple SSIDs with guest network support and multiple security zones.
- o. System should support fast, secure roaming and handover.

C2.2. Technical Capabilities:

- a. System must have controller redundancy with sufficient emergency capacity to manage all Access Points when a failure occurs in the primary controller.
- b. System must support the latest secure authentication and encryption standards, minimally WPA2-Enterprise. Please provide a list of supported standards in this area.
- c. System must support IPv4 and IPv6.
- d. System should allow wireless security and critical services continue to function if connectivity to the controller is lost.

- e. Access Point radio configuration should include the use of dual concurrent, dual-band 802.11a/n, 802.11b/g/n, and 802.11ac connectivity with full MIMO operation for 802.11n and 802.11ac.
- f. System should utilize technologies to detect RF anomalies, including rogue access points, and mitigate noise and interference in the RF of the surrounding area.
- g. Access Points should be powered via industry standard PoE (802.3af / 802.3at), PoE+, and uPOE.
- h. System should support the Bonjour protocol. Please describe.
- i. Access Points should support an 802.1x supplicant.
- j. RF Management should support automatic channel selection and transmit power controls.
- k. System should support automatic reconfiguration of surrounding Access Points to provide coverage in the event of an Access Point failure.
- l. System should support a session availability option for the wireless controller.
- m. System should support a complete outdoor mesh deployment, including mesh access points, controllers and management.
- n. System should provide multiple form factors for access points, mounting options, antennas, and interior/exterior. Please describe.

C2.3. Integration:

- a. System should support mobile device management or ability to integrate with a third party mobile device management solution.
- b. System should integrate with Network Access Control solutions.
- c. System should support the Wi-Fi Alliance or equivalent certification for WLAN interoperability.

Category 3: Voice Equipment and Services. Please address each of these separately and describe your support for the following:

C3.1. System Administration

- a. System should have the ability to be administered through a web based management interface; please list compatible browsers and operating systems.
- b. System may require an administrative application. If so, please list operating system compatibility, system requirements, and provide a brief description of the functionality.
- c. System must implement Role Based Access Control for the system administration interface through LDAP or Active Directory accounts, groups, and structures.
- d. System must support bulk processing of adds, moves, and changes of terminal devices.
- e. System must provide a mechanism to perform updates of terminal device software from a central network location.
- f. System should provide an Application Programmable Interface, API, to programmatically interface with the system. If an API is provided, please describe.

C3.2. Monitoring & Reporting

- a. Call Detail Reporting (CDR)
 - i. System must include CDR service accessible by system administrators.

- ii. CDR data must include local extension, caller ID, date, time, and duration of the call.
- iii. CDR service must support configurable retention policies for the call detail data.
- iv. The CDR service must provide a mechanism to track calls made and assign charges to them for chargeback purposes.
- v. CDR service must have query capability for system administrators to perform ad-hoc queries and simple reports, either through a web interface or client software.
- vi. System should provide a web interface for end-users to review their call history.
- b. Traffic reporting
 - i. System must provide traffic reports detailing utilization of inbound/outbound traffic levels, including high and low peaks and averages over configurable time periods.
- c. Monitoring
 - i. System should be able to send email and/or text message notifications to system administrators in the event of an error condition, including details on the nature of the problem and the criticality of the error.
 - ii. System must provide real-time access for system administrators to monitor call traffic and system activity.
 - iii. System should allow for external monitoring through SNMP.
 - iv. System should allow for external monitoring through an API.

C3.3. Call Processing

- a. System must simultaneously support multiple digital and analog devices and gateways.
- b. System must support industry standard signaling protocols; including H.323, Session Initiation Protocol, and/or Media Gateway Control Protocol
- c. System must route E911 calls along with any required data to local Public Safety Answering Point.
- d. System must securely support remote locations, by private network over a VPN and over commodity Internet services.
- e. System must provide the ability to park a call to an extension and connect back to the parked call extension.
- f. System must allow user set a “do not disturb” flag that routes calls to voicemail.
- g. System must allow user ability to direct incoming call to voicemail.
- h. System must provide ability to forward current call to another extension and to an external number.
- i. System must provide ability to place current call on hold, connect to another extension, and then forward the on hold call to the extension.
- j. System must provide ability to require billing code prior to allowing a long distance call.

C3.4. PSTN Gateways

- a. Digital gateway
 - i. IP Telephony systems proposed must support PSTN interface via ISDN-PRI (FAS and NFAS) and CAS (Channel Associated Signaling) T1 digital circuit interface. These Gateways must meet all FCC regulations for connection to the public network.
- b. Analog gateway

- i. Systems must support analog trunks as a PSTN interface. In addition, systems must have the capability to support a hook-switch flash for access to Centrex transfer and network features.
- c. SIP (Session Initiation Protocol) trunking
 - i. Systems must support inbound and outbound, local, long-distance, and E-911 calls through SIP trunking between the local call processing system and an Internet telephony service provider.

C3.5. Terminal Equipment

- a. Desktop Phone
 - i. Desktop phone must have standard dialing 0-9, *, #, volume, and mute controls.
 - ii. Desktop phone must support Power Over Ethernet (802.3af) via a network switch.
 - iii. Desktop phone must connect via 10/100/1000 Ethernet and provide at least one (1) 10/100/1000 bridged Ethernet ports for connecting a desktop PC or other Ethernet device.
 - iv. Desktop phone must have hearing aid compatibility supported as required by the FCC.
 - v. Desktop phone must have a prominent visual voicemail indicator.
 - vi. Phone display must provide incoming Caller ID number and name.
 - vii. Desktop phone must have the ability to forward the incoming call to voicemail.
- b. Courtesy Phone
 - i. Courtesy phone must have standard dialing 0-9, *, #, volume, and mute controls.
 - ii. Courtesy phone must support Power Over Ethernet (802.3af) via a network switch.
 - iii. Courtesy phone must have hearing aid compatibility supported as required by the FCC.
 - iv. Courtesy phone must support at least one (1) extension.
- c. Standard Office Phone
 - i. Standard office phone must comply with all requirements for a desktop phone.
 - ii. Standard office phone must have a color display.
 - iii. Standard office phone must utilize adaptive menus that provide user-friendly button names.
 - iv. Standard office phone must support at least four (4) extensions.
 - v. Standard office phone must have a quick access button for voicemail.
 - vi. Standard office phone must have the ability to connect an external headset.
 - vii. Standard office phone must maintain a list of inbound calls that the user can retrieve via the phone menu.
 - viii. Standard office phone must maintain a list of outbound calls that the user can retrieve via the phone menu.
 - ix. Standard office phone must integrate with the “corporate directory” to quickly lookup contacts by first/last name.
 - x. Standard office phone must have at least two (2) user programmable keys for speed dialing an internal extension or external number.
- d. Conference Phone

- i. Conference phone must comply with all requirements for a desktop phone.
 - ii. Conference phone must include high quality microphone(s) with the ability to provide coverage for a 10ft x 20ft room with up to twelve (12) participants.
 - iii. Conference phone must include high quality speaker(s) to project far end conversation into the room.
 - iv. Conference phone must include echo cancellation features.
 - v. Conference phone must include shielding from cellphone interference.
 - vi. Conference phone may include ability to add additional microphones.
 - vii. Conference phone may include ability to add additional speakers.
- e. Attendant Console
- i. System must simultaneously support multiple enhanced attendant consoles (EAC) that comply with the following features.
 - ii. EAC must support a minimum of two (2) headset/handset jacks for training and supervision use-cases.
 - iii. EAC must be switchable between day and night mode with a visual indicator (LCD/LED) to indicate the current status.
 - iv. EAC must integrate with the “corporate directory” and support transfer of callers via a truncated search by name, extension, department, and/or location. The desired functionality is to have the directory automatically integrated with the name and extension as entered at the system administration terminal.
 - v. EAC must simultaneously handle multiple calls while maintaining status and recall information.
 - vi. EAC must display the idle/busy status of all, or selected, stations at required during call processing.
- f. Wireless VoIP phones
- i. Wireless VoIP phone must have standard dialing 0-9, *, #, volume, and mute controls.
 - ii. Wireless VoIP phone must support wireless connection via 802.11a/g/n.
 - iii. Wireless VoIP phone must support wireless security via 802.1X.
 - iv. Wireless VoIP phone display must provide incoming caller ID number and name.
 - v. Wireless VoIP phone must have the ability to forward incoming call to voicemail.
 - vi. Softphone
 - vii. Softphone client should run on current (N) and prior (N-1) Windows operating system and support 32-bit and 64-bit versions of those operation systems. (As of February 2014, this requirement is Windows 8.1 and Windows 7.)
 - viii. Softphone client should run on current (N) and prior (N-1) Apple operating system. (As of February 2014 this requirement is OS X 10.9 and OS X 10.8.)
- g. Analog devices
- i. System must support the utilization of analog devices. These devices may be telephone instruments, paging equipment, and/or applications such as voice processing or interactive voice response equipment.

- ii. System must be able to generate and receive DTMF signaling and support transfer via hook switch activation.

C3.6. Application Servers

- a. Voicemail/Unified Messaging
 - i. System must allow users to set and record their own name and voicemail greeting.
 - ii. System must allow users to set and record their own vacation voicemail greeting and a defined start date and end date for the vacation greeting.
 - iii. System should allow users to set a different greeting for internal and external callers.
 - iv. System should provide ability for user initiated password reset.
 - v. System should provide integration to LDAP and/or Active Directory.
 - vi. System should allow retrieval of voicemail through a web interface.
 - vii. System should allow forwarding of voicemails to the user's email address.
 - viii. System must provide ability to forward voicemail message to another extension.
 - ix. System should have the option to email and/or text message a user on arrival of new voicemail.
 - x. System should provide the ability to configure voicemail message notification groups.
 - xi. Voicemail notification groups should have the ability to require a PIN to send message.
 - xii. Voicemail system must provide an option to "0" out to an operator or centralized answering station.
 - xiii. System may include the ability to transcribe voicemail messages into text.
 - xiv. System may include the ability to access and interact with voicemail messages and/or the voicemail system through an API.

C3.7. Automated Call Distribution

- a. Auto Attendant
 - i. System must have option to dial by name to lookup an employee's extension.
 - ii. System must have the capability to provide nested options and play different types of announcements.
 - iii. System must support different recordings based on the time of day.
 - iv. System must have the ability to have an overriding message in the event of an emergency or disaster. An example would be to announce closures or other critical information.
 - v. System must support transfer of callers via a partial search of a directory by name, extension, department, and/or location.
 - vi. System must handle multiple calls simultaneously while maintaining status and recall information. Describe options and limits on the number of simultaneous calls that can be handled.
 - vii. System must display the idle/busy status of all, or selected, stations at required during call processing.
- b. Call Center
 - i. System must allow multiple phone tree options that automatically adjust on a pre-set schedule (day of week or time of day).
 - ii. System must provide multiple incoming call options to include:
 - iii. Round-robin to any extension logged in.

- iv. Ring group to all extensions logged in.
- v. Hunt group to extensions logged in.
- vi. System must provide customizable hold music or informational recordings.
- vii. System should provide caller a message with estimated wait time.
- viii. System should provide the ability to forward all calls to remote location or external number in the event of emergency or disaster.

C3.8. Integration

- a. System should integrate with Office 365. Describe.
- b. System should integrate with Google Apps. Describe.
- c. System should integrate with Microsoft Office 2013. Describe.
- d. System should integrate with customer relationship management (CRM) software. Describe.
- e. System should integrate with service desk (ITSM/ITIL) software. Describe.
- f. System should include an application programmable interface (APIs) that would allow custom integrations to be developed. Describe.
- g. System should integrate with Microsoft Lync 2013. Describe.
- h. System should integrate with Skype. Describe.
- i. System should include FAX capabilities. Describe.
- j. System should integrate with modern web browsers, including Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, and Safari. Describe.

Category 4: Wavelength Division Multiplexing Equipment and Services. Please address each of these separately and describe your support for the following:

C4.1. Course Wave Division Multiplexing, CWDM (ITU-T G.694.2)

a. Functional:

- i. Solution may include active or passive CWDM equipment.
- ii. Solution must support a minimum of 4 or more 10G CWDM wavelengths.
- iii. Solution must support point-to-point topologies.
- iv. Solution must support Ethernet transport and interfaces.

b. Technical:

- i. Solution should fit in a standard 19" rack.

c. Integration:

- i. Solution should conform to the Optical Transport Network (OTN) ITU-T G.709 standards.

C4.2. Dense Wave Division Multiplexing, DWDM (ITU-T G.694.1)

a. Functional:

- i. Solution must be able to support a minimum of 10 or more 10G DWDM wavelengths at each node simultaneously.
- ii. Solution may include point-to-point, ring, star, and other topologies.
- iii. Solution should support 1, 10, 40, and 100 Gbps transport.
- iv. Solution must support Ethernet transport and interfaces.
- v. Solution should support legacy SONET/TDM (i.e., SONET OC-48) transport and interfaces.
- vi. Solution should support Storage Area Network traffic and interfaces (i.e., Fiber Channel).
- vii. Solution must be able to add or drop any wavelength at all access nodes.
- viii. Solution must support all wavelengths simultaneously in each direction.
- ix. Solution must facilitate "hitless" or uninterruptible wavelength provisioning such that active wavelengths are uninterrupted by the addition or deletion of

wavelengths or hot insertion of DWDM system components necessary to provision wavelengths (i.e., transponders).

- x. Solution should have some form of ROADM (Reconfigurable Optical Add Drop Multiplexer) capability. Describe the architecture and capabilities.
- xi. Solution should support automatic optical power management, auto leveling, and monitoring.

b. Technical:

- i. Solution must be capable of operating in the optical C-band with a maximum 100GHz spacing using wavelengths defined by the ITU-T G.694.1 spectral grid. Specify if the solution is 50GHz spacing capable.
- ii. Solution may include multi-degree capabilities.
- iii. Solution should support full bandwidth across the infrastructure with no blocking or quality of service impacts.
- iv. Solution should support tunable transponders.
- v. Solution should support dual, redundant power inputs.
- vi. Solution should support dual, redundant control modules/processors.
- vii. Solution should support 120/240 VAC and 48 VDC power, not simultaneously.
- viii. Solution should fit in a standard 19" rack.
- ix. Solution should support Electronic Dispersion Compensation (EDC) and/or Fiber Bragg Grating based dispersion compensation.
- x. Describe Polarization Mode Dispersion (PMD) and Chromatic Dispersion (CD) requirements.

c. Integration:

- i. Solution must support remote configuration and management.
- ii. Solution should support management by CLI, SSH, Web GUI, or rich client application.
- iii. Solution should support RADIUS and/or TACACS for management security.
- iv. Solution must have in-band and out-of-band signaling and management capabilities.
- v. Solution should support small form factor pluggable optics (i.e., SFP, XFP, GBIC, etc.).
- vi. Solution should support SNMP and SNMP traps for monitoring and fault management.
- vii. Solution should conform to the Optical Transport Network (OTN) ITU-T G.709 standards.

K. Training

The successful respondent shall provide details and outline their capability to provide technical support training. Vendors will specifically address the following areas in their response:

1. Training provided as part of purchase of vendors' products. This may include training vouchers other training credits identified by the course name and number these credits may be used towards and time limits for these credits if any.
2. Types of training provided. Responses will differentiate between, on customer site, in class, on line or self-study method of delivery.
3. Variety of trainers. Responses shall provide information regarding training providers and nature of relation to Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division

Multiplexing Hardware and Services provider. Examples- they are the same company, recommended training partner (authorized trainer)

4. Capacity and location of training. Responses shall include number of trained staff and training locations within the MHEC states.

L. Maintenance

The successful contractor(s) shall provide an option for on-going support beyond the warranty period as well as one (1), (2), (3), and (4) year options for product warranty shall be included in the purchase price. Warranty and on-going support requirements are outlined below.

1. The warranty period shall begin upon successful installation and Eligible Participant acceptance of installation of the products acquired from respondent and covered by the purchase.
2. Warranty coverage shall be 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, and 365 days per year.
3. Respondents shall provide data on the average wait time before speaking to telephone support staff, as well as their expected maximum allowable times.
4. Support shall include free firmware and relevant software updates, during the warranty period, for all products purchased, leased or included as a part of this proposal.
5. The Eligible Participant has the right to on-site assistance when hardware or software is not operating as designed with their equipment or network upon request of the purchaser. The on-site warranty service shall be provided in accordance with the Master Price Agreement and any cost associated with this requirement shall also be governed by the Master Price Agreement.
6. Respondents shall provide the name, address and toll free telephone number of the nearest authorized manufacturer's services center.
7. The successful contractor may propose delivery, unpacking, assembly and set-up of hardware. Installation must be conducted by personnel authorized by the manufacturer to conduct such activity.
8. When products purchased on this contract require installation, the Contractor must provide the cost of installation as a separate line item on their quotation. The installation cost must include all packing, freight, insurance, set-up, instruction and operation manual charges. Equipment must be set in place in an area designated by University personnel, demonstrated to be in operating condition, and approved by University personnel. All debris must be removed from the University premises and properly disposed of by the contractor. Upon installation all operating instructions, and a minimum of 2 operating and maintenance manuals, should be furnished to the University personnel identified on the purchase order.
9. Eligible Participants must have the ability to have toll-free telephone access to technical support from the successful contractor, preferably a unique toll-free number just for the Eligible Participants to access.
10. Respondent will provide the location of all call centers likely to be used in providing support to Eligible Participants.
11. Respondent shall provide the conditions under which Eligible Participants may perform their own certified maintenance.
12. Respondents shall furnish a copy of Manufacturer's Extended Warranty/Maintenance Agreement with their proposal that includes warranty/maintenance for the post warranty period that would be available. Information should include:
 - a. Annual cost of on-site hardware support.
 - b. Annual cost of telephone hardware support.

- c. Annual cost of on-site and telephone hardware support.
 - d. Annual cost of software updates and upgrades.
 - e. The number of years extended warranty/maintenance made available to the Eligible Participant
 - f. Name, address and toll free telephone number of the manufacturer's authorized service center(s) located in or nearest to MHEC's 12 state region.
13. Contractor agrees to make available maintenance services to meet the Eligible Participant's ongoing performance requirement for as long as the Eligible Participant utilizes the equipment. Such services shall be available in accordance with Contractor's generally listed prices, but shall in no event exceed current prices plus 3% per year for each year after the date of acceptance of the equipment.
14. If Contractor is unable to provide maintenance services pursuant to this Agreement and in the University's sole opinion is unlikely to resume providing maintenance services to meet the University's ongoing performance requirement, then Contractor or its receiver or trustee shall provide the following items to the Eligible Participant.
- a. All information necessary for the Eligible Participant to perform or to have such maintenance service performed including, but not limited to, source code, logic diagrams, maintenance manuals, system and unit schematics.
 - b. A listing of suppliers capable of supplying necessary spare parts and equipment support.
 - c. Available information adequate to permit the Eligible Participant to have spare parts manufactured elsewhere.
 - d. A listing of spare parts and their frequency of use to enable the Eligible Participant to create a centralized inventory of spare parts.
- Any information in items a. through d. above which is identified by Contractor as proprietary information shall be maintained in confidence by the Eligible Participant except where disclosure to a third party is necessary in order for the Eligible Participant to continue the maintenance service; however, any third party to whom disclosure is made pursuant thereto shall agree to hold such proprietary information in confidence and to make no further disclosure thereof. Further, the Eligible Participant agrees that any such proprietary information shall be used solely to perform the Contractor's obligations hereunder and shall be returned to Contractor upon completion of such use.

M. Pricing

1a. Technological advances are anticipated over the term of this contract. Vendors should include pricing in at least one of the following formats:

- Discount percentage from published retail price list
- Discount percentage from best published higher education price list
- Discount percentage from original purchase price (for support only)

Respondents may also propose alternate pricing arrangements in addition to those above. MHEC may choose to accept or reject such alternative arrangements. In addition to purchase prices, the Respondent may offer a direct or indirect leasing program.

1b. Some additional factors, which might modify pricing in the specific instances noted below, are:

- Eligible Participants who are willing to standardize their purchases to a small number of configurations should receive some consideration.

- Respondents offer a limited number preconfigured product selections discounted beyond their general product offerings.
- Eligible Participants that are willing to give an exclusive purchasing contract (of at least one year's duration) to a respondent should receive special consideration.
- Eligible Participants willing to guarantee purchase volume by year or quarter should be offered lower prices.
- Eligible Participants, who are willing to provide local warranty, repair, or sales services present lower costs to the vendor and should be rewarded.
- Differential pricing based on market segment (e.g. higher education, K-12, local governments, state governments, faculty, staff or students) may be proposed.

1c. Submission of innovative program ideas to increase vendor penetration of the market or satisfaction of the Eligible Participants as well as provide opportunity for stronger relationships is encouraged.

1d. Respondents are encouraged to provide a contract mechanism for their current eligible customers to roll into this agreement at any time after the inception of the contract.

1e. Successful Respondent agrees not to sell Awarded Products (or bundles) to Eligible Participants at a price higher than that awarded via the MHEC Master Price Agreement.

1f. All pricing on future products offered under this proposal must, at a minimum, reflect the same percentage discounts or better as established with this contract award. Greater discounts are permissible and encouraged.

1g. Any price reductions from suppliers from the time of proposal submission to time of purchase order must be passed on to the Eligible Participants.

1h. Respondents must identify any and all associated costs, fees or charges for which the Eligible Participant may be billed. Costs not indicated in your proposal will not be paid.

2a. Price/Fee Increases

MHEC reserves the right to accept or reject all or any part of successful supplier's subsequent request to increase pricing. At a minimum, any proposed price increase will become effective only upon thirty (30) days prior written notice and written acceptance by MHEC. In addition to the provision of an e-commerce web site for this contract, successful respondents will be expected to provide complete updated price lists to MHEC on a quarterly basis. All line item price increases or decreases and product additions or deletions must be identified. Vendor must provide an identified capped annual increase rate for the life of the contract.

3a. Certification of Independent Price Determination

By submitting a proposal, the vendor certifies, and in the case of a joint proposal, to its own firm, that in connection with this proposal:

1. The proposal has been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication or agreement with any competitor for the purpose of restricting competition, and;
2. Unless otherwise required by law, the offer cited in this proposal has not been and will not be knowingly disclosed by the vendor prior to opening directly or indirectly to any other vendor; and

3. No attempt has been made nor will be made by the vendor to induce another person or firm to submit or not to submit a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition.

N. Signatory Authority

Each person signing this proposal certifies that:

1. The signer is the person in the vendor’s firm responsible for the decision to offer the proposal; or
2. The signer is not the person in the vendor’s firm responsible within that firm for the decision to offer, but has been authorized in writing to act as agent to quote for the persons responsible for such decisions.

O. Illegal Conduct

All responses must include a statement as to whether or not the responding firm has been convicted of bribery or attempting to bribe a public official, barred from contracting with a unit of local, state or federal government as a result of bid rigging, or for any other reason or been convicted of a felony.

P. Conflict of Interest

In submitting a response to the RFP, the Provider certifies that no relationship exists between the Provider and the Midwestern Higher Education Compact or the members of its Network Equipment and Services Committee that interferes with fair competition or is a conflict of interest, and that no relationship exists between the Provider, and other persons or firms that constitutes a conflict of interest that is adverse to the Midwestern Higher Education Compact.

Q. RFP Schedule of Events

The following schedule lists meetings and deadlines related to this Request For Proposal (RFP) on the development of a Master Price Agreement(s) for the MHEC Network Equipment and Services Solution. Deadline dates are as indicated unless otherwise changed by the Committee. In the event that the Committee finds it necessary to change any of the dates or activities listed in this calendar, it will do so by issuing a written statement or an amendment to the RFP to prospective Providers.

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
1. Formal issuance of RFP	April 21, 2014
2. Last day for submitting inquiries about RFP by e-mail	May 12, 2014
3. e-mail delivery to Prospective Providers of answers and amendment(s) to the RFP	May 21, 2014
4. Proposals due from Prospective Providers	June 9, 2014
5. Notification of Finalists	June 24, 2014
6. Individual meetings with Finalists (Chicago) to review proposals submitted by each Prospective Provider Finalist (if required)	July 22, 2014 or July 23, 2014
7. Deadline for submitting responses to Committee’s questions and inquiries	August 8, 2014
8. Selection and announcement of Solution and Provider(s)	September 2014
9. Execution of Agreement and Solution start date	December 2014

R. Pre-proposal Conference and Requests for Clarification

Because of the straight-forward nature of this RFP, we will only use a one-stage process to answer questions. The question & answer stage will be conducted by e-mail, rather than through a bidders' meeting:

- Questions are to be submitted by e-mail no later than May 12, 2014.
- Our answers will be provided to all potential respondents indicating participation by e-mail on May 21, 2014.

Information about the Compact, its member states, the Information Technologies Committee, the Network Equipment and Services Committee and this RFP may be discussed. Requests for clarification, revisions to requirements or technical questions concerning the RFP may be submitted to Mr. Nathan Jay Sorensen at the MHEC office by email at nathans@mhec.org. Participation in the pre-proposal activities is voluntary.

If a Prospective Provider discovers a significant ambiguity, error, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other deficiency in the RFP, the Provider should *immediately* notify Mr. Nathan Jay Sorensen of such error and request modification or clarification of the RFP document.

Only information supplied by MHEC in writing through Mr. Nathan Jay Sorensen or this RFP or amended RFP should be used as a basis for the preparation of Provider responses.

S. Submission Deadlines and Format

The deadline for submission of proposals and related information is **10:00 a.m. Central Standard Time on Monday, June 9, 2014. One (1) sealed bound original and one (1) identical electronic copy (acceptable media CD, DVD, flash drive) of the response OR an electronic copy to nathans@mhec.org under 15MB in size should be forwarded to the following address prior to the deadline: Allowable formats are PDF and Microsoft Office. Spreadsheet data such as price lists may be submitted in MS Excel format. Proposals should be organized and presented in a manner that addresses all of the RFP provisions and requirements.**

Network Equipment and Services Committee
c/o Mr. Nathan Jay Sorensen
Midwestern Higher Education Compact
105 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 450,
Minneapolis, MN 55401

T. Selection of Finalists and Best and Final Offers from Finalists

The Committee will select and notify the finalists on Tuesday, June 24, 2014. Only finalists will be invited to participate in the subsequent steps of the procurement. Prospective Provider Finalists may be asked to make a presentation to the Committee in Chicago, IL during the period of Tuesday, July 22 or Wednesday, July 23m 2014. Prospective Provider Finalists may be asked to submit revisions to their proposals for the purpose of obtaining best and final offers by Tuesday, August 12, 2014.

U. Provider(s) Selection

All proposals received on or before the deadline date of submission will be forwarded to each Subcommittee member. The Subcommittee will conduct its evaluations of responses

based upon its assessment of the quality and comprehensiveness of the Prospective Provider's responses to the criteria set forth in the RFP. During this initial evaluation time, the Subcommittee may, at its option, initiate discussions with Prospective Providers who submit responsive or potentially responsive proposals for the purpose of clarifying aspects of the proposals, but proposals may be accepted and evaluated without such discussion. The Prospective Providers shall not initiate discussion. The Subcommittee reserves the right to waive or modify any informalities, irregularities or inconsistencies in the responses received. Following initial evaluations, Finalists will be selected. Each Prospective Provider Finalist may be invited to give a presentation on and discuss their response.

The Subcommittee will evaluate each response based on the extent to which the proposal:

1. Expressed understanding of the proposal objectives, requirements, and qualifications.
2. Meets the Functional Specifications of one or more of the following categories:
 - Category 1: Network Equipment and Services
 - Category 2: Wireless Equipment and Services
 - Category 3: Voice and Services
 - Category 4: Wavelength Division Multiplexing and Services
3. Shows willingness to explore solutions beyond a standard purchase agreement.
4. Displays innovation.
5. Completeness, thoroughness and detail of response as reflected by the proposal's discussion and coverage of all elements of this RFP.

Award(s) may be granted to the highest scoring responsive and responsible proposer(s). Alternatively, the highest scoring proposer or proposers may be requested to submit best and final offers. Upon completion of the evaluation process, the Subcommittee will recommend one or more Prospective Providers to the Compact, and the Compact will establish an agreement with the recommended Provider(s). Once an agreement(s) is successfully consummated, the Compact will so notify all providers who responded to the RFP. The Compact reserves the right to not recommend any Prospective Providers to the Compact, and the Compact reserves the right not to enter into an agreement with a recommended Provider at its own discretion.

After the Master Price Agreement(s) are executed, all proposals and documents pertaining to the proposals will be open to the public. If the Prospective Provider submits information in response to this RFP that it believes to be trade secret materials as defined by the laws of the MHEC member states, the Prospective Provider must:

- a. clearly mark all trade secret materials in its response at the time the response is submitted
- b. include a statement with its response justifying with specificity the trade secret designation for each item, and
- c. defend any action seeking release of the materials it believes to be a trade secret, and indemnify and hold harmless MHEC, its Commissioners, agents and employees, from any judgments awarded against MHEC in favor of the party requesting the materials, and any and all costs connected with the defense. This indemnification survives MHEC's award of a contract. In submitting a response to this RFP, the Prospective Provider agrees that this indemnification survives as long as the trade secret materials are in possession of MHEC.

In the event a request is made for information which the Prospective Provider has identified as trade secret, MHEC agrees to notify Prospective Provider of said request and provide its determination as to whether disclosure is legally required, in addition to anticipated disclosure dates, if any, and to allow the Prospective Provider an opportunity, in its discretion and at its sole expense, to seek a protective order or otherwise protect the confidentiality of the information.

V. Contract Term

The MHEC Master Price Agreement shall be effective on the date that the parties to the Agreement sign the Agreement. It shall remain in effect for three (3) years from that date with options by mutual agreement (of the parties to the Agreement) to renew for up to four (4) additional one (1) year periods. Eligible Participants may procure hardware, software, or services from the Provider under the terms of the MHEC Master Price Agreement at any time during the duration of the Agreement.

W. Incurring Costs

MHEC is not liable for any cost incurred by Prospective Providers in replying to this RFP.

X. Method of Operation

The Subcommittee, at the direction of the Commission and its compact authority, will negotiate the pricing structures, terms and conditions and related services provided under the Master Price Agreement(s). Any terms and conditions which may be the subject of negotiation, will be discussed only between MHEC and the selected Provider(s) and shall not be deemed an opportunity to amend the Provider's proposal. MHEC reserves the right to terminate negotiations and select the next response providing the best value for MHEC, prepare and release a new RFP, or take such other actions as MHEC deems appropriate if negotiations fail to result in a successful contract. Once a Master Price Agreement(s) is formally established, Eligible Participants will be responsible for procurement and payment of charges associated with the hardware, software, and related services provided to them. MHEC will not be liable for the failure of any Eligible Participant to make payment or for the breach of any term or condition under the Master Price Agreement.

The Compact will appoint a Committee composed of representatives of the MHEC Technologies Network Equipment and Services Subcommittee to oversee the solution and assure that it operates in an effective and efficient manner. The Compact will also assist in promoting the solution and assist Eligible Participants with problems as requested. The Committee will periodically review and evaluate the performance of the solution and submit its recommendations to the Compact. The Compact will provide staff support to the solution, and will support information exchanges, conferences and related activities.

In advance of each contract anniversary representatives from each successful Respondent will meet with representatives from the Network Equipment and Services Committee to discuss contract performance over the past year and amend the contract to improve its performance for the Respondent and Eligible Participants. These annual business reviews are crucial success factor.

The Compact, the members of the Technologies Committee and the members of the Network Equipment and Services Subcommittee make no guarantee that any Eligible Participant or number of Eligible Participants will participate in the MHEC Network, Wireless, Voice, and Wavelength Division Multiplexing Hardware and Related Services Solution and/or make any purchase under the Master Price Agreement.

Y. Analysis of Information

The Network Equipment and Services Committee will analyze all responses to this RFP. The analysis will be based upon the criteria set forth in this RFP. The findings and recommendations of the Subcommittee will be submitted to the MHEC President and Commission for approval.

Z. Contacting MHEC

For further information about the Midwestern Higher Education Compact and its solutions you are referred to the Compact website at: <http://www.mhec.org>

For Further information about the Compact's Technologies Committee or the Network Equipment and Services Committee, visit <http://www.mhectechnology.org> or contact:

Mr. Nathan Jay Sorensen,
Strategic IT Procurement Officer
Midwestern Higher Education Commission
105 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 450,
Minneapolis, MN 55401
Phone: (612) 677-2767
E-mail: nathans@mhec.org