

Request for Proposals Infrastructure Refresh

Rhode Island Student Loan Authority

935 Jefferson Blvd., Suite 3000, Warwick, RI 02886

June 12, 2026

The following dates are set forth for informational and planning purposes; however, the Authority reserves the right to change the dates.

Please note the following critical dates:

RFP Issued, Posted to RI Division of Purchases website	June 12th, 2026
Due Date for submission of questions	June 26th, 2026
Due date for receipt of proposal	July 10th, 2026
Anticipated decision date	July 24th, 2026

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1. Background

The Rhode Island Student Loan Authority (RISLA) was established in 1981 as a public agency of the State of Rhode Island and is a leading originator of state-based education loans. RISLA also offers free college planning services through the College Planning Center of Rhode Island (CPCRI), and hosts RIScholarships.org, a statewide database of hard-to-find local scholarships.

2. RFP Availability

The RFP will be available in PDF format on the Rhode Island Division of Purchases Website at <https://www.purchasing.ri.gov> and <https://www.risla.com>. It is the bidder's responsibility to get updates on RFP changes and status by periodically checking the RI State Purchasing website.

3. Public Records

Proposers understand that their proposals will be public documents, even if they are not awarded the contract. As such, it is advisable not to include proprietary or confidential information in the proposal.

4. Project Overview

The purpose of this project is to replace and modernize the existing virtualization, storage, and switching infrastructure with:

- HPE ProLiant DL360 Gen12 Servers
- HPE MSA 2070 24TB AF FC Array
- HPE Aruba CX 6300M Switches
- VMware-based clustered virtualization environment
- Redundant host networking
- Dual-path Fibre Channel Storage Connectivity

The resulting solution will provide improved performance, resiliency, supportability, and lifecycle extension while reducing complexity.

5. Scope of Work

The awarded vendor shall provide all labor, materials, configuration, installation, validation, and documentation required for a complete operational deployment.

Services shall include, but are not limited to:

I. Hardware Procurement and Delivery

Vendor shall provide all required accessories, transceivers, rails, mounting hardware, cables, software, licensing, and miscellaneous components necessary for a complete, fully operational, manufacturer-supported deployment, regardless of whether explicitly listed below.

COMPUTE

Base System

- 2 - P72175-B21 - HPE ProLiant Compute DL360 Gen12 8SFF Server
- 2 - P74506-B21 - INT Xeon 6515P CPU for HPE
- 2 - P78279-B21 (NS204i-u v2, 2×480GB)
- 8 - P69728-B21 - HPE 64GB (1x64GB) DDR5-6400 Memory
- 4 - P38995-B21 - HPE 800W Flex Slot Platinum Hot Plug PSU
- 2 - P10115-B21 - BCM57414 2×25G OCP3
- 2 - R2E09A - HPE SN1610Q 32Gb 2-port FC HBA
- 4 - QK733A - HPE Premier Flex LC/LC Multi-mode OM4 2 Fiber 2m

Licensing / Support

- 2 - E6U64ABE - HPE iLO Advanced License (3yr)
- 2 - HU4A6A3Z - HPE Tech Care Essential 4hr Onsite (3yr)
- 2 - HU4A6A3Z0C4U - DL360 Gen12 4hr Support attachment
- 2 - HU4A6A3#R2M - HPE iLO Advanced Support (3yr)

Storage

- 1 - S3L64A – HPE MSA 2070 16Gb FC SFF 23TB Flash Bundle (12) 1.92TB RI SSD
- 1 - R0Q47A - Spare SSD
- 1 - C8R24B - 16Gb SW FC SFP+ 4-pack
- 1 - R2C33AAE - Advanced Data Services
- 1 - HU4A6A3#ZQC - ADS LTU Support
- 1 - HU4A6A30BX3 - HPE Tech Care Essential 4hr Onsite (3yr)

Networking

- 2 - JL664A - HPE Aruba 6300M 24G non-PoE + 4SFP56
- 4 - JL085A - 250W AC Power Supply
- 2 - HL7J2E - HPE Tech Care Essential 4hr Onsite (3yr)
- 2 - JL661A - HPE Aruba 6300M 48G Class4 PoE 4SFP56
- 4 - JL086A - HPE Aruba Networking X372 54VDC 680W
- 2 - HR4Z8E - HPE Tech Care Essential 4hr Onsite (3yr)
- 2 - R0M46A - HPE Aruba Networking 50G SFP56 to SFP56 0.65m
- 2 - R0M48A - HPE Aruba Networking 50G SFP56 to SFP56 5m
- 4 - JL489A - Aruba 25G SFP28 DAC 5m

The above HPE bill of materials represents the minimum acceptable configuration and serves as the reference design for bid comparison purposes.

Vendors may propose equivalent Dell Technologies solutions; however, all proposed equipment must meet or exceed the specifications, functionality, performance, capacity, connectivity, supportability, redundancy, and lifecycle expectations of the reference configuration.

Vendors proposing Dell Technologies equipment shall provide a complete line-by-line cross-reference identifying the equivalent Dell component for each referenced HPE component.

Any proposed alternative that reduces functionality, capacity, performance, support coverage, redundancy, or expected product lifecycle shall be considered non-

responsive. The determination of equivalency and compliance with the requirements of this RFP shall be made solely by RISLA.

Storage Platform Requirements

The storage platform shall be limited to the following platforms:

- HPE MSA 2070 All Flash Storage Array
- Dell PowerVault ME5224 All Flash Storage Array

For Dell proposals, only Dell PowerVault ME5224 All Flash storage arrays shall be considered acceptable equivalents.

The proposed storage solution shall provide:

- Dual active/active controllers
- Fibre Channel host connectivity
- Enterprise-class all-flash storage
- Minimum usable capacity equal to or greater than the reference configuration.
- VMware vSphere 9 compatibility, including applicable server, HBA, NIC support.
- Multipath I/O (MPIO) support
- Redundant power supplies
- Three (3) years of manufacturer-supported 24x7x4-hour onsite support

Dell ME50 Series storage arrays, including ME5012, ME5024, and ME5084, previous-generation Dell storage platforms, or any storage solution of lesser capability, performance, supportability, or lifecycle than the Dell PowerVault ME5224 All Flash or HPE MSA 2070 All Flash shall be considered non-responsive.

II. Physical Installation

Vendor shall:

Receive all project equipment at their facility, verify contents, and transport all equipment to the customer site for installation. Vendor shall be responsible for coordinating delivery, staging, and handling of all equipment prior to installation.

Remove and dispose of one (1) legacy storage array and two (2) legacy host servers identified prior to installation to provide rack space for the new equipment. This legacy equipment is not part of the production infrastructure, which will remain operational throughout the project.

- Rack and mount all equipment.
- Install redundant power connections.
- Perform all structured cabling.
- Label all network and storage connections.
- Ensure clean cable management.

III. Network Configuration

Vendor shall configure:

- Aruba CX VSF stack
- 50GbE VSF ring topology
- VLANs as provided by customer
- 25GbE host uplinks
- Switch management networking.
- Redundant uplink configuration

IV. Storage Configuration

Vendor shall:

- Configure the HPE MSA 2070 storage array.
- Configure RAID and storage pools as approved by customer.
- Configure Advanced Data Services features.
- Configure direct point-to-point Fibre Channel connectivity.
- Configure host mappings and LUN presentation.

Storage configuration shall include:

- Host 1 connected to Controllers A and B
- Host 2 connected to Controllers A and B
- ALUA-enabled multipathing configuration

V. VMware / Host Configuration

Vendor shall:

- Install and configure VMware ESXi 9 on all new hosts.
- Deploy, migrate, or upgrade VMware vCenter Server Appliance (VCSA) as required.
- Configure ESXi networking.
- Configure VMware multipathing using Round Robin / ALUA
- Configure datastore presentation.
- Migrate virtual machines and datastores from existing infrastructure to the new infrastructure.

- Validate host failover and storage path failover.
- Configure redundant uplinks across VSF members.
- Migration activities shall be performed with no unplanned production downtime. Any required service interruptions shall be coordinated with the customer and performed during approved after-hours maintenance windows.

VI. Testing and Validation

Vendor shall perform and document validation testing including:

- VSF stack failover.
- Host uplink failover.
- Link redundancy validation.
- Fibre Channel path validation.
- Controller failover validation.
- Multipathing validation.
- Datastore accessibility validation.
- VMware host connectivity.
- Shared storage access.
- Cluster communication validation.

VII. Documentation

Vendor shall provide:

- Network topology and storage connectivity diagram.
- IP addressing documentation.
- Switch configuration backups.
- Storage configuration documentation.
- Support entitlement information.
- Hardware serial number inventory.

VIII. Knowledge Transfer

Vendor shall provide operational knowledge transfer covering:

- Aruba VSF management.
- MSA management.
- VMware multipathing overview.
- Basic troubleshooting procedures.
- Support escalation procedures.

6. Completion Criteria & Deliverables

Following the execution of a contract, RISLA expects all work and deliverables to be completed within 10 weeks of contract execution.

7. Proposal Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions in your proposal to provide RISLA personnel with insight into the bidder's capabilities, experience, and philosophy.

- 1. Background.** Please document information regarding your company and your team.
 - A. Provide company name and address.
 - B. Designate who will be RISLA's primary point of contact and provide their direct contact information.
 - C. Please provide a brief description of and history of your company.

- 2. Experience.** A description of the firm's relevant experience.
 - A. When was the company established?
 - B. Number of full-time employees and what is their average tenure?
 - C. Number of projects your company completes annually.
 - D. Please include a list of your clients and the number of years you have worked with them.

- 3. References.** Provide three (3) client references from earlier work including organization name, name of contact, phone number, email address, description of services provided, and any other relevant information.

The Authority reserves the right to contact any references to aid in the evaluation of the proposal, to verify the information contained in the proposal and to discuss the company's qualifications with any reference. By submitting its response to this RFP, the company consents to such types of contact with references. Also, the Authority reserves the right to obtain and consider information from other sources concerning a company, such as the firm's capability and performance

under other contracts. By submitting its response to this RFP, the company consents to such types of contact with other such sources.

- 4. Litigation, Proceedings, or Investigations.** Identify any material litigation, administrative proceedings, or investigations in which your company is currently or previously involved. If there is none, include a statement specifying as much.

- 5. Equal Employment Opportunity.** The vendor shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws, regulations, and requirements. The vendor shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment based on any protected classification under applicable law. :

- 6. Ethics.** RISLA and its Board of Directors and staff are committed to maintaining the highest standard of ethics in the awarding of contracts. In accordance therewith, RISLA requires that each bidder certify the following:

“Neither the bidder nor any officer, employee, agent, representative or affiliate of the Proposer has given or offered or shall give or offer to any Board Member, employee, or representative of RISLA or to any family member of the foregoing, or to any business by which any of the foregoing persons are employed, or to any official of the State of Rhode Island who is subject to the State Code of Ethics, any gift, loan, political contribution, reward, or promise of future employment based on any understanding or expectation that the vote, official action, or judgment of the person would be influenced thereby, and, that no officer, employee, agent, representative, or affiliate of the Proposer shall have any direct or indirect nonincidental contact with any member of the board of directors of RISLA during any period of time prior to RISLA’s award of the Contract, except at a public meeting of the Board of Directors of RISLA or at a meeting of a subcommittee of the Board of Directors.”

Any violation of the foregoing shall result in immediate disqualification of the Bidder.

8. Pricing

The bid shall present the overall fixed price for the project as well as the itemized cost of each segment (i.e., Hardware, Warranty & Support, and Labor)

9. Selection Process

All proposals will be reviewed by a committee comprised of RISLA staff.

10. Communications

All questions are to be directed to RFP@risla.com by June 26th, 2026 at 4:00pm EST.

With the exception of a question and answer process and other communications which might be initiated by the RFP review committee in the course of its review, please note that no member or representative of your company may discuss the RFP or your proposal with any employee or board member of RISLA or any Rhode Island state official, office holder, or employee (including general officers, state legislators and their staffs, etc.) or any other party who might reasonably be considered to have any influence on vendor selection until RISLA has announced a decision with respect to this RFP. Bidders shall, in their proposals, represent and warrant that they have complied with the preceding sentence.

11. Bid Submission Requirements and Right to Reject

Please provide a copy of your proposal in person, by carrier, or electronically.

All proposals received electronically at RFP@risla.com will be confirmed via email reply to the sender's email address. If confirmation of receipt is not received, the bidder shall assume responsibility to deliver their proposal in person or by carrier.

Proposals must be received by July 10th, 2026 at 4:00pm EST. Any proposal received after this deadline will be rejected. This RFP does not obligate the Authority to pay costs incurred in the preparation of proposals. The Authority reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all proposals, at any time prior to execution of a written contract.

12. Award Notice and Acceptance Period

The Authority will notify awardee of its intent to award a contract, contingent upon satisfactory negotiation thereof. Negotiation and execution of the contract shall be completed in a reasonable period, as determined by the Authority. If the selected company does not negotiate and deliver an executed contract in said period, the Authority may cancel the award and award the contract to another company.

Rhode Island Student Loan Authority

Date: June 12th, 2026