

AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY
RFQ 16-046
Student Financial Aid Call Center
Questions & Answers

- 1) On Page 5, #1.4, it references the proposal is on behalf of all TBR Member Institutions and the University of Tennessee System for Higher Education that desire to purchase under a resulting Agreement. If our agency should be awarded this proposal, what would the mechanism be for other institutions to use our services? Would this be considered a State Price Contract?

ANSWER:

If your agency is awarded the contract and select yes on #7 of the transmittal sheet, other institutions may seek the services under this proposal without bidding them. This is not a state price contract. The prices quoted in the cost proposal would be pricing for other institutions to use.

- 2) On page 6, #1.10, it states the Institution shall require a performance bond upon approval of a contract pursuant to this RFP. How does the performance bond work? Is the amount a percentage of the total contracted amount? What if another institution seeks only to use our service for Verification or default aversion? Do we need to issue a bond for each new institution?

ANSWER:

Yes.

- 3) On page 21, D.17, Governing Law. We recognize that as a public institution and being located in the state of Tennessee, the governing laws of Tennessee would take precedent. Would you be open to a dual Governing Law? We are headquartered in Kentucky, would it be an option to rewrite this section to reflect matters initiated by us would be brought in TN and those initiated by Austin Peay would be brought in KY?

ANSWER:

Being a state entity, we cannot agree to subject to any law but that of the State of Tennessee.

- 4) What is the number/volume of interactions that you are forecasting annually and peak months: January, May, June, July, August and September? Please provide for all support channels i.e. phone, email, chat, etc.

ANSWER:

For APSU, our phone call volume is approximately 20,000 for Peak Season. We currently do not use the email or chat options.

- 5) Kindly provide the volume breakdown for Verification Transactions, Default Management Transactions, etc.

ANSWER:

We currently do not use these options; however, we want the option to be include if possible.

- 6) Which, "Incident Management/Ticketing System" are you currently using? Would you like to continue with your Ticketing System or are you open for options?

ANSWER:

We are open to options.

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- 7) Page No. 3, Attachment 6.4- Section 6.4.3 (Training), could you please elaborate like what is the duration of Training required? What is the frequency of Training? What is the subject of training, etc?

ANSWER:

Duration may vary; however, there should be training between the contractor and institution at least annually. Subject, would be processes and policies specific to the institution, as an example.

- 8) Will you provide knowledgebase or training content specific to your university on “Cohort Default Management” and “Verification Transactions”?

ANSWER:

Yes, for schools participating in this option.

- 9) Post reviewing Pro Forma Contract by our Legal Team, we would request for exception on items including Termination for convenience, unlimited liability, performance bond, unilateral right to withhold payment, etc. We would like to discuss these points further once we get into the contract stage.

ANSWER:

Being a state entity, we cannot grant an exception on these items.

- 10) Are proposers supposed to complete and sign the Pro Forma Contract and submit with the RFP response?

ANSWER:

Proposers are not required to complete and sign the Pro Forma Contract with the RFP response.

- 11) Does the Uniform Sales and Use Tax Certificate have to be completed and returned prior to the submittal of the RFP?

ANSWER:

No, the successful proposer will be required to submit the Uniform Sales and Use Tax Certificate prior to the award of the contract.

- 12) Attachment 6.4.3.a Training, Pg. 30 – Is the school offering to provide the selected vendor pre-go-live on-site training at the school as a train-the-trainer activity so the vendor will then train vendor staff?

ANSWER:

We are not offering this type of training. It is preferred this type of training can be conducted virtually.

- 13) Attachment 6.6 Cost Proposal Schedule, Pg. 38 – Is school asking for pricing for verification processing or for the vendor to provide verification information to student though the call center? If so, should this be priced for both full year as well as peak season only?

ANSWER:

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It is assumed providing verification information to the student through the call center is part of the pricing for calls. Actual verification processing is considered a separate service.

- 14) Scope of Services, Attachment A, Pg. 27 – Page is blank and intended for use once successful vendor identified; are we correct in our understanding?

ANSWER:

Yes, Page 27 is intentional left blank. This page is part of the contract and will be completed with the scope of services proposed by the successful vendor.

- 15) General Question – Will vendors responding to partial services in the RFP be considered? Or are vendors required to address all RFP requirements to be compliant?

ANSWER:

Vendors are required to address all RFP requirements to be compliant.

- 16) Scope of Services, Attachment A, Pg. 27 – Is Austin Peay able to provide any further detail on call volume history and verification processing history (if being requested)? Monthly volumes?

ANSWER:

Currently, we use peak periods, which equates to approximately 20,000 calls for peak periods.

- 17) Demographics, Pg 30. – Is data related to any outbound call volume history available?

ANSWER:

No.

- 18) Demographics, Pg 30. – Can Austin Peay provide any text volume history?

ANSWER:

No, this is a fairly new option for us.

- 19) Scope of Services, Attachment A, Pg. 27 – Are there preferred SLAs Austin Peay hopes to attain?

ANSWER:

Yes. SLA's we will review are percentage of answered calls, dropped calls, length of calls, thoroughness, etc.

- 20) Project Narrative, Pg. 30 – Please describe for what activity(ies) outbound calls and text messaging are needed? Are these outbound campaigns for specific strategic objectives (document collection, deadlines, default aversion, etc.) or incidental outbound activity related to inbound calls?

ANSWER:

Primarily, for campaigns and specific strategies. There may be incidental outbound calls.

- 21) General Question – transition – Does Austin Peay State University have documented policies and desktop procedures for all common call types?

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ANSWER:

Yes.

- 22) C.6.4.3 Pg. 30 – Does Austin Peay have training material ready or will that have to be prepared by vendor?

ANSWER:

Prepared by vendor with our assistance.

- 23) General Question – transition – If training materials need to be prepared, is Austin Peay able to share trainer resources for the first lot?

ANSWER:

No.

- 24) General Question – technology – Is connectivity required to your data center? If so, where are your data centers located in the US?

ANSWER:

Our data centers are on campus.

- 25) General Question – technology – Does Austin Peay State University own a toll free number currently that vendor must map to?

ANSWER:

Yes.

- 26) General Question – technology – Does Austin Peay host the ACD or does the vendor?

ANSWER:

Austin Peay

- 27) C.3 Pg. 36 – Are any call transfers back to Austin Peay required? If so, what percent of the calls get transferred back?

ANSWER:

Yes, depending on the severity of the situation. Less than 1%

- 28) C.3. Pg. 36 – Are outbound calls required? If so, what percent of the calls are inbound?

ANSWER:

The option is required for this contract. I do not have a percentage.

- 29) General Question – operational – What is the expected service level at which the call center must operate? (x% of calls answered in y second with abandonment rate not exceeding y%)

ANSWER:

The expectation is excellence in service. We want to see what the vendor says their performance is and document this excellence.

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30) C.15 Pg 37 – What are the operational hours of the call center?

ANSWER:

Currently, 8:00 a.m to 4:30 pm CST; however, the option for extended hours must be available.

31) Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (From India or Canada)

ANSWER:

Only companies within the USA can apply for this

32) Whether we need to come over there for meetings?

ANSWER:

We should be able to conduct business virtually.

33) Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA?

ANSWER:

No.

34) Can we submit our proposals via email?

ANSWER:

Austin Peay cannot accept proposals submitted via email.

35) Page 30, 6.4.1 - please elaborate on what assistance APSU is seeking with regard to verification. The outline in 6.4.1 seems to read that we would be advising students of required documentation and deadlines for submission; however, since 6.4.9 asks for a cost breakdown that places these interactions within a category of their own I am wondering if there was another intention. For example, we frequently handle these types of student interactions today for other Colleges and Universities by reviewing the student's account in Banner (RRAAREQ, in this case) and then discussing the requirements and deadlines with the student; all review and approval or rejection of said documentation is performed by College and University staff. Is APSU seeking something akin to this or is the intention to select a company that would act as a third party servicer to review and approve/deny documents that have been submitted within Banner Document Management or some other document imaging & management system?

ANSWER:

We need the option to utilize verification services from a support perspective with the call center component; and from a third party servicer to actually review documents for verification. We consider these to be two separate operations.

36) Page 30, 6.4.2 - Please provide data on the number of incoming calls, by day/week/month if accessible to APSU.

ANSWER:

Peak periods as outlined in the RFP were approximately 20,000.

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37) Page 30, 6.4.4 – Is there a particular range of “extended hours” that is attractive to APSU?

ANSWER:

No.

38) Page 30, 6.4.5 – With regards to PCI compliance, is APSU seeking a firm that will accept or process payments via phone?

ANSWER:

APSU is not seeking a firm that will accept or process payments via phone. The vendor must be PCI compliant because student’s personal information will be available.