**Request for Proposal (RFP)**

**REF #: HCI\_WAM\_MWF\_RFP\_1925**

Work and Asset Management/

Mobile Workforce (WAM-MWF) Solution

Release Date: June 1, 2021

**Deadline for Submission: July 9, 2021**

Issued by:

Hometown Connections, Inc.

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Section 1: Introduction

Hometown Connections, Inc. (HCI) is soliciting proposals from qualified vendors offering software solutions that meet the identified requirements of community-owned utilities for Work and Asset Management and Mobile Workforce applications. HCI seeks to partner with the selected vendor(s) to provide these applications.

HCI is a national, non-profit utility services organization serving community-owned utilities. A single source for many utility products and services, the team of HCI consultants and vendor partners provides affordable and high-quality solutions to help utilities transform business operations, planning, employee engagement, the customer experience, and much more. All of HCI’s services and deliverables are scalable based on the size and objectives of the utility.  HCI is committed to operational and service excellence.

Through a comprehensive national marketing program, HCI features vendor partners in a broad array of online and in-person promotional activities. HCI facilitates business development for vendors, providing introductions to key personnel at individual utilities and joint action agencies.

As described in this document, HCI's customer base consists of utilities of all sizes and configurations. Therefore, HCI is seeking proposals which cover a range of solutions. For larger utilities, for example, the ideal offering may be an integrated Work and Asset Management (WAM) and Mobile Workforce (MWF) solution. For smaller utilities with less resources, HCI will entertain proposals for standalone WAM or MWF solutions, with pricing attractive to organizations that may not require a full suite of applications. Responses will be evaluated on capabilities and pricing by a team of senior managers who are representative of HCI's client network. The successful vendor(s) will be Invited to proceed to more specific negotiation on contract development and a partnership arrangement with HCI.

Responses to the RFP are due on or before July 9, 2021.

Section 2: Company Overview

HCI is a national, non-profit utility services organization specializing in the unique challenges facing community-owned utilities. For over 23 years, our expert team has helped more than 900 utilities transform and update their processes and systems. Using a collaborative, community-focused approach, HCI provides innovative products and solutions while keeping quality and cost in the forefront. HCI has access to services and technology from industry-leading companies for utilities of all sizes and offers solutions to develop each area of the utilities business, including electric, gas, and water services.

We offer solutions for all areas of operations including compliance, cybersecurity, business strategy, customer care, finance, leadership, and employee development, enterprise risk management, and many more.

The member owners of HCI are six public utilities joint action agencies:

* Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA)
* American Municipal Power (AMP)
* Great Lake Utilities (GLU)
* Missouri Public Municipal Alliance (MPUA)
* Northern California Power Agency (NCPA)
* Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA)

Our member owners collectively represent 316 utilities across 15 states. The full marketing/sales network of HCI includes additional affiliated joint action agencies, state associations, and regional representatives across the U.S., for a total of 28 relationships covering 38 states or 78% of all public utilities.

HCI is governed by its Board of Directors, which is composed of representatives from the American Public Power Association and each of HCI’s six joint action agency member owners. Day-to-day management of HCI is under the direction of its President & CEO.

HCI is passionate about serving and supporting community-owned utilities and strives to meet their needs in all facets through affordable, high-quality solutions.

# Customer Base

HCI markets its services to approximately 2,000 community-owned utilities. They provide electricity to 49 million people across 49 states — all except Hawaii — and the territories of American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Most provide one or more additional utility services — water, wastewater, and occasionally natural gas and fiber. Of these 2,000 community-owned electric utilities, 1600 (80%) serve less than 10,000 customers and nearly 50% serve less than 2,000 customers. Fifty percent (50%) earn less than $5 million in annual revenue. Most of these utilities belong to joint action agencies (JAAs) that provide their power supply and transmission services. These JAAs also aggregate other services on behalf of their membership. The services sought in this RFP would also be of interest to other utilities such as those primarily providing water and gas, as well as utility cooperatives which are also community owned.

Section 3: Project Overview

This request for proposal seeks vendors offering software solutions that help utilities improve decision-making related to asset repair, rehabilitation, or replacement. In addition, the solutions should streamline work management while optimizing maintenance and operations functions. The specific areas of interest are:

# Equipment and Asset Management

Consolidation of property records which may currently be in several paper and digital data bases; reconciliation to inventory records; updates as materials and equipment are used; and manage inventory of frequently used parts to streamline and optimize procurement/replenishment processes.

# Work Management

A work order system to facilitate planning, scheduling, issuing, tracking, and closing out work orders. The system allows users to create reactive, corrective, predictive and preventative maintenance work orders while also prioritizing, scheduling, and managing tasks based on asset, location, or technician. Users can also manage and track work orders using a map view or leverage ArcGIS integration to manage and maintain GIS assets.

# Mobile Workforce Management

Resource planning and scheduling: Support resource planners, dispatchers, and service managers in managing resources, planning shifts, and scheduling work. The system manages activity requests sent from host systems, automatically generating shifts and allocating activities to shifts based on skill set match, duration, and time windows.

Common dispatching functionality: Support dispatchers as they handle exceptions throughout the day and enable context-based decision making at the dispatcher level. Alert types are defined in the system to alert dispatchers of any issue so they can intervene manually to resolve the situation. The system can be configured to automatically dispatch all activities or limit auto-dispatching to a certain number or activity types or shifts.

Mobile communication platform: Support mobile crews as they perform service work, facilitating communication with the dispatcher, providing GPS-based mapping services, and processing activity status updates and work completion details. The application runs on a mobile data terminal (MDT) device. This platform enables the application to work in offline mode in case of network disconnects or network black spots and synchronizes with the server when it comes back into connectivity.

The ideal solution for a given utility will vary. HCI’s primary concern is the small to mid-sized community-owned utilities because they typically maintain a smaller staff and look to HCI and their joint action agency or affiliate for support.

The smaller the utility, the more likely that their focus will be on work and asset management basics—consolidation of property records which may currently be maintained in several paper and digital data bases; reconciliation to inventory records; and updates as materials and equipment are used. If a utility already has a handle on such functions, it may be interested in adding a work order system to facilitate planning, scheduling, issuing, tracking, and closing out work orders. Mid-sized utilities (7,500 – 50,000 customers) may want an integrated work and asset management system along with a mobile workforce solution that includes tools for project planning, crew assignment and scheduling, and updating asset records as work is completed in the field.

Utilities respond to customer-initiated service requests, utility equipment installations, maintenance, and planned and unplanned repairs. Respondents should have the capability and resources to accommodate a variety of system and data situations as there may be existing geographic information systems (GIS), service order systems, and customer information and billing systems. The vendor must be able to assist with data clean-up, data categorization, and data conversion.

Business processes will impact the success of a solution. Therefore, advice and assistance in implementation of a solution that moves the organization towards best practices is desired.

A strong security platform is essential. A solution should provide best in class capabilities for data security, encryption, monitoring for unauthorized access, protection of mobile devices, and other applicable security safeguards.

Section 4: HCI Stakeholder Expectations

Selected vendors will have the opportunity to market their services to community-owned utilities with HCI’s endorsement. It is anticipated that this RFP process may comply with proposal processes normally required by individual utilities. But HCI offers no assurances. Utilities seeking such services may face additional local requirements.

The expectation is the capabilities and pricing put forth in the successful responses will not change unless there are substantial additional requirements. Each utility which engages the successful vendor will likely expect a separate contract which meets the requirements of its governing board, city council, and/or political jurisdiction.

Section 5: Timeline/Schedule

Responses to this RFP will be evaluated by a project team of experienced managers from utility field operations. HCI intends the selection process to proceed as outlined below; however, it reserves the right to modify the dates herein if necessary.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Event | Deadline |
| Date of Issue | June 1, 2021 |
| Deadline for respondents to submit clarification questions | June 11, 2021 |
| Deadline for HCI to respond to clarification questions | June 18, 2021 |
| Deadline for submission | July 9, 2021 |
| Responses to be evaluated. Respondents will be invited to present solution to HCI as presentation only. Live presentations may be launched at this presentation. | July 23, 2021 |
| Award selection notification | August 16, 2021 |
|  |  |
|  |  |

All Respondents confirming their participation in the RFP process should send their notice of intent to respond to the attention of **Susan Ryba,** [**sryba@hometownconnections.com**](mailto:sryba@hometownconnections.com)**.**

Section 6: Proposal Requirements

1. **Transmittal Letter Content**
   1. A brief statement of the Respondent’s understanding of the work to be done and a commitment to perform the work as scheduled, including:
      1. Statement of work specifications; and
      2. Reference to any proposed contractual terms and conditions required by the respondent; and
      3. Summary of exceptions taken to the RFP requirements.
   2. An officer authorized to bind must sign the proposal on behalf of the Respondent.
2. **Respondent Information**

Complete Exhibit B-Attestation-Signature to provide the legal name of the company or individual, physical street address, the name(s) and title(s) of the individual(s) authorized to represent the Respondent, including telephone number(s) and email address(es).

1. **Proposal**
2. Responses to Project Requirements

The proposal shall include responses to project requirements as set forth in **Exhibit A** **Requirements Workbook**. These responses will be used to evaluate the capabilities and suitability of the respondent’s proposed solution(s).

The Requirements Workbook contains a list of requirements on the desired aspects of the partnership and solution(s). The Respondent should provide in the compliance column the applicable response as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Response | Meaning |
| Compliant | Respondent fully complies with the specifications/requirement |
| Non-Compliant | Respondent does not comply with the specifications/requirement (\*) |
| Partially Compliant | Respondent meets part of the specifications/requirement |

In addition, the Respondent should use the COMMENTS column to provide additional detail regarding the response, using a separate page if necessary, with a reference to the requirement number.

(\*) If Respondent does not comply with the requirement, but offers an alternative, use this response, and please provide a supporting written explanation regarding such alternative.

1. Project Planning and Management

In addition to the requirements workbook from Exhibit A, respondents shall describe how it plans to address the following:

* Project management
* Configuration/design meetings (include meeting cadence)
* Documentation/Scope of Work/Timeline for deployment with milestones
* Testing, including:
  + Testing environments
  + Test plans
  + Sample testing
  + Implementation approval
  + Acceptance testing
  + Scalability acceptance
* Training
* Support for both software and hardware if applicable
* Software licensing & maintenance
* Software integration and/or interfaces
* Software releases
* Describe the plan and methods for managing cyber security risks.
  + Select appropriate security rider (See Exhibits E and F).

1. Experience

Describe in detail at least 3 solutions which have been successfully implemented within the past 5 years.

For each example, describe:

* Type of organization (utility, city agency, etc.).
* Technology environment when hired and the environment following implementation (modules/software applications, data conversion, business processes).
* Timeline, roles and responsibilities performed by the vendor and those performed by the client, as well as the resources provided by the client.
* Implementation and project management process, including vendor staff (include organization chart) and the work plan identifying major activities, tasks, deliverables.
* Roles and responsibilities of the client
* Any significant difficulties encountered, and how they were resolved.
* Training methodology and document provided to client personnel.
* Provide references (name, position and contact information) for each engagement.
* Any ongoing support or managed services commitments with the organization.

1. Additional Functionality

Identify any additional functionality or recommended services not identified in this RFP which are believed necessary to achieve the result described, as well as field service management trends of which the respondent is aware.

1. Service Delivery Models

Describe alternative service delivery models (e.g., Software-as-Service/Hosted Off-Premises, Hosts/On-Premises) successfully implemented and how these may impact a proposed solution.

1. Pricing

From a pricing perspective, HCI is looking for a partner who will provide a model that will be attractive and feasible for its utility base. Please provide representative pricing in **Exhibit C Pricing Form.**

Respondent’s pricing should include the following:

1. Representative pricing for communities or utilities customers of 2000, 5,000, 15,000 and 30,000, including options for joint action agencies which might provide services/solutions for multiple member agencies.
2. Respondent should provide options for both on-premise and hosted solution(s). Please indicate the type or types of hosting (e.g., IaaS, SaaS, PaaS, etc.)
   1. Support items or options
   2. For software including a hosted service, managed service, on-premises or any other option.
   3. Please include unit details for pricing for any hardware items and include volume discounts.
3. Software pricing should also cover the following:
   1. Software components needed.
      1. One-time
      2. Recurring (e.g., SLAs, SMAs, etc.)
   2. Any Hardware items or components
4. If product or solution is strictly hardware based, provide unit and volume pricing.
5. If product includes both hardware and software, answer I, and include any additional software cost (if applicable)
6. Describe the delivery options and cost.
7. Describe if there is any project management or delivery cost.
8. Include sample or representative project plan for a typical utility population size of 2000, 5,000, 15,000 and 30,000.
9. Other components: Provide pricing for add-on or upgrade products or components available with Respondent’s product or solution.

Section 7: RFP Evaluation Process

1. **Criteria**

The primary award factors will be based on the most economically advantageous and quality proposal that includes the proposed solution. Apart from this criterion, the evaluation will be based on the following listed in order of priority:

* 1. General
* Does the response reflect an understanding of the business model of community-owned utilities?
* Does the proposed product or solution provide all desired features?
* What is the strength of the product or solution for electric, water and gas?
* What is the ability to support optional requirements?
  1. Usability
* Is the service easy to access for users? Easier than previous delivery method? Is the system easy to manage?
* Does it have an intuitive graphical user interface?
* How will security and privacy of personally identifiable information be protected?
* Is daily work expected to become easier for back-office operations?
* Is the system flexible regarding how work processes are designed?
* What actual field devices (iPad, PC based, custom, proprietary, etc.) are used in the field by employees? Are there objective results of utilities satisfied with that device and form factor?
* Will the field devices provide the utility historic data to compare for an instant health check?
  1. Migration
* How successful will migration from existing platforms, systems and service delivery channels be? (Example from Respondent)
* How difficult (with respect to resources) is migration expected to be?
* What are the risks of significant service interruptions during migration?
  1. Completeness
* Does the system cover all the needs in this RFP? Are all required services delivered?
* Can the system be expected to handle future service needs?
* Is the financial investment of bidder in the project likely to be adequate?
* Does the system streamline business processes?
  1. Financial Capabilities
* Does the bidder have a solid financial foundation and a track record of responsible financial management?
* Does the bidder have a proven track record of relevant competencies, service delivery, support, etc. to be a reliable potential partner?
* Has vendor been involved in a Paycheck Protection Program before?
* Does the development roadmap offer vision and perspective? Is it realistic?
* Does pricing meet needs of public utilities?
  1. Technology
* Is the technology used, best in class? Will it be able to scale and handle new demands?
* Does the bidder have a proven track record using the technology?
* Does the solution use open standards?
* Does the solution respect de facto standards?
* Is the technology prepared for future development?
* Are there any security issues existing related to the technology?
* Is there on-going support 24x7? What are the response times?
  1. Process
* Does the outlined process for implementation, project organization, plan for education and information, etc. seem adequate?
* Is training adequately addressed in the deployment plan?
* Is communication adequately addressed in the deployment plan?
* Is ongoing support addressed in the deployment plan?
  1. Project Management
* What are the proposed mechanisms for project management?
* How will communications with stakeholders and end users be handled?
* Has bidder adequately addressed risk management?

1. **Selection Process**

The selection committee will review and evaluate proposals based on overall responsiveness to requirements, completeness, thoroughness of presentation, and the criteria described above. The selection committee may submit questions to Respondents or request that Respondents give a written or oral presentation of their proposal to the selection committee. Requests from the selection committee is a means for Respondent to clarify or elaborate on the proposal only.

An initial screening evaluation will be performed to identify and eliminate any proposals that are, for example, not responsive to the RFP, do not meet the minimum requirements set forth in the RFP, are not economically competitive with other proposals, or are submitted by Respondents that lack appropriate creditworthiness, sufficient financial resources, or qualification to provide dependable and reliable services for the proposed work.

1. **Negotiation Process**

Following its evaluation, the selection committee will rank the proposals that best meet the business requirements. Starting with highest-ranked proposal, HCI will enter negotiations regarding:

1. A pricing structure that HCI considers feasible for community owned utilities with customer bases in the range of 2,000, 5,000, 15,000 and 30,000 meters; and
2. A commission structure which compensates HCI for its marketing support and endorsement of the proposed solution. (See sample agreement – Exhibit D)
3. Annual maintenance pricing plus any discounts for executing a long-term service contract with a 5-, 10- and 15-year term (if available).

If a mutual agreement cannot be reached in a reasonable time, HCI will reject the proposal and begin negotiations with the next highest ranked firm with an acceptable solution.

1. **Contract Term**

The term of the agreement will be for a period of three (3) years with the option to extend the agreement for up to two (2) additional years for a maximum term of five (5) years.

Respondents should also be aware that the following documents would be included as attachments to the final contract:

* This Request for Proposal
* The Respondent’s proposal in response – both technical and commercial
* Any modifications to the proposal
* A Service Level Agreement (if applicable)
* An implementation plan identifying the tasks to be completed with milestones, the assigned responsibilities, and the scheduled completion dates.

Section 8: Proposal Submission Requirements

The deadline to submit clarification questions on this RFP is June 11. 2021. All questions should be submitted electronically via email to:

Susan Ryba, [sryba@hometownconnections.com](mailto:sryba@hometownconnections.com)

and reference **Work and Asset Management and Mobile Workforce Management RFP** in the subject line. Answers to questions that HCI, at its sole determination and discretion, deems to be substantive or that would place the inquisitor at a distinct and unfair advantage to other potential respondents will be posted on HCI’s website as soon as practicable after the date received, but no later than June 18, 2021. It is the responsibility of potential respondents to review this website for all postings.

A single copy of the response in digital form shall be emailed or uploaded. Include the reference number noted above along with the name of the respondent in the subject line and contact Susan Ryba ([sryba@hometownconnections.com](mailto:sryba@hometownconnections.com)) for details.

HCI will acknowledge receipt of Respondent’s submittal via email.

Only those responses which are received by the deadline will be considered. Delivery in any other manner does not constitute proper or adequate delivery. Upon submission, all responses become the property of HCI.

Section 9: Additional Terms and Conditions

* + - 1. **Insurance, Licensing, or other Certification**

If selected, the Respondent will be required to maintain sufficient insurance, licenses, or other required certifications for the type of work being performed. Also, utility clients may require specific insurance coverage to be established and maintained during work and as a condition of award or continuation of contract.

* + - 1. **Non-Discrimination/Equal Employment Practices**

If selected, the Respondent and each of its known subcontractors may be required to comply and file documentation required by a local jurisdiction regarding non-discrimination/equal employment practices.

* + - 1. **Liabilities of HCI**

This RFP is only an invitation for proposal and no contractual obligation on behalf of HCI whatsoever shall arise from the RFP process unless and until a definitive contract is mutually agreed upon and signed between HCI and the respondent.

All costs of the RFP process are entirely the responsibility of the Respondent and neither HCI, its member owners nor its affiliated joint action agencies shall be responsible for any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of any proposal or to procure or contract for any services. Good faith responses to this RFP are being solicited without the creation of any obligation between parties, explicit or implied.

HCI makes no representation or warranty regarding the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this RFP or any statements made by representatives of HCI during the RFP process. Each Respondent is responsible for making its own evaluation of information contained in this RFP and in preparing and submitting responses to this RFP.

The issuance of this RFP and the receipt of information in response to this RFP shall not, in any way, cause HCI to incur any liability (whether contractual, financial or otherwise) to any Respondent participating in the RFP process, and by submitting a response, the Respondent hereby waives and releases HCI from and all claims, demands, actions, losses, liabilities, costs and expenses (including reasonable legal fees and expenses) arising out of or relating to this RFP or Respondent’s preparation or submission of any proposal.

* + - 1. **Proposal Process Management**

HCI reserves, in its sole and absolute discretion, the right to accept or reject all proposals, to revise the RFP, to request one or more resubmissions or clarification from one or more respondents, or to cancel the process in part while full. No respondent is obligated to respond to or to continue to respond to the FP after the submission in closing date.

* + - 1. **Confidentiality and RFP Ownership**

This RFP is both confidential and proprietary to HCI, and HCI reserves the right to recall the RFP in its entirety or in part. Respondents shall not duplicate, distribute, or otherwise disseminate or make available this document or the information contained in it, other than to its own employees and staff members, without the express written consent of HCI.

Respondents shall not include or reference this RFP in any publicity without prior written approval from HCI, which if granted, shall be granted in HCI’s sole and absolute discretion. Respondents must accept all the foregoing terms and conditions without exception. All responses to the RFP will become the property of HCI and will not be returned.

* + - 1. **Security – Non-Disclosure**

The Respondent should understand this process is confidential and should be always treated as such.

* + - 1. **No Guarantee**

Selection of successful Respondent’s product or solution does not guarantee the specific number of customers or an exclusive relationship with HCI or its member owners or customers. Each potential HCI customer will have an option to select a successful Respondent’s product or solution to implement without the requirement of an RFP.

Section 10: Exhibits

**List of Exhibits**

1. Requirements Workbook WAM-MWF
2. Attestation/Signature
3. Pricing Form
4. Sample Vendor Agreement
5. Data Security Rider
6. Software Security Rider