

**Alaska eHealth Network
FCC RHCPP AeHN Network Procurement Phase 2
Bidders Questions to USAC RFP 465-2 – Posted July 1, 2011
As of August 8, 2011**

1. In the RFP there are a number of “Requirements” that ask for a yes or no answer. Do “no” responses represent a non-responsive bid?
 - A. No, “no” responses will not indicate a non-responsive bid. AeHN is requesting many features and functions and realizes that not all of them may be achievable by all bidders.
2. For a number of the yes or no questions, yes answers can be given, but require additional detail for clarification, is that acceptable?
 - A. You are more than welcome to provide additional detail, preferably by inserting it along with or immediately after the related question. We discourage the attachment of needless marketing documents.
3. In section 5.1.3 question C, what does without restriction mean? Please provide an example or scenario that helps illustrate the meaning of this question.
 - A. AeHN is seeking flexibility in the ability to allow future growth and desires a solution whereby the design, software or operational issues do limit or restrict our growth. We fully realize that in some cases additional hardware, network devices etc. may need to be added at additional cost.
4. In section 5.1.6 question A, does “the entire network” refer to the network at the Terminus? If not what does it refer to?
 - A. Only Terminus, we cannot dictate what sites have only recommend
5. In section 5.1.6 question B and C, do these two questions also refer to all the layer 2 devices at the Terminus? If not what other layer 2 devices would be included?
 - A. Only the Terminus. We cannot dictate what sites have. We can only recommend.
6. In section 5.1.6 question F, does this question mean that the network at the Terminus is built to support Multicast and Anycast applications? If not, what network components would also need to be included outside of the Terminus?
 - A. Yes. Only the Terminus. We cannot dictate what sites have. We can only recommend.
7. In section 5.3.1, would you please provide more clarification with regards to this entire section? There does not seem to be any questions for which to answer yes or no and no type of transport for each amount of delay has been identified.
 - A. Delay is based on worst case scenario where only satellite is an option.
8. In section 5.3.2 questions B, would you please clarify what <1e06 means and what part of the network does this packet loss threshold refer to?
 - A. Packet loss or errors are based on any type of transport and is based on standard Telecom Circuit delivery testing with equipment such as T-Birds.

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9. How many total locations is AeHN looking to connect to the AeHN initially?

- A. The total number of organizations is 25 and represents a total of 109 individual sites. Thus, most individual sites will connect via their master organization's network and will not have to be directly connected. Please refer to the RFP Attachment 2 for a complete list of sites and their master organization.

Sites that have a connection to a Regional WAN core or another TeleHealth core, that will connect to AeHN are expected to use their current connection to their existing WAN, not a new connection to AeHN. The sites listed below with ANTHC will connect through the ANTHC network.

- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA) - ANTHC
- Bethel Family Clinic
- Camai Community Health Center, Inc
- Cordova Community Medical Center
- Cross Road Medical Center
- Eastern Aleutian Tribes (EAT) - ANTHC
- Fairbanks Memorial Hospital
- Iliuliuk Family & Health Services
- Interior Community Health Center
- Kodiak Area Native Association - ANTHC
- Metlakatla Indian Community (Annette Island Service Unit) - ANTHC
- Mt. Sanford Tribal Consortium (MSTC) - ANTHC
- Native Village of Eklutna, Eklutna Village Clinic – May be part of ANTHC
- Native Village of Tyonek - ANTHC
- Ninilchik Traditional Council - ANTHC
- Petersburg Medical Center
- SEARHC – ANTHC (this may change)
- Sitka Community Hospital
- South Peninsula Hospital
- State of Alaska-Public Health Centers, DHSS
- Sunshine Community Health Center
- Tanana Chiefs Conference - ANTHC
- Wrangell Medical Center
- Yakutat Tlingit Tribe - ANTHC

10. It appears the AeHN will be accessed from healthcare subscribers over a SSL internet connection to the AeHN services. Is this correct?

- A. Yes, for non-AeHN core connections (like Orion). HIPAA and other government regulations require that any patient identifiable information be secured.

11. Will AeHN be providing logon credentials to customers for HTTPS access through a web browser?

- A. Yes.

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12. Has AeHN determined access bandwidth requirements on a per host/user basis (i.e. 500 kbps per user)?
- A. When Phase 1, Network Design, of this project was completed, attempts were made to determine the required bandwidth for each site and their user population. The contractor was not able to obtain this information from all the sites, plus many of the sites have made changes with their networks. We are requesting the winning bidder to do a "Participating Site Requirements" review, as mentioned in Section 2.2.
13. Will access to the AeHN network be solely SSL/HTTPS web browser based or are dedicated circuits required or combination thereof?
- A. Internet access is required for non-AeHN core connections. How that is achieved is within the purview of your proposal. There does need to be the ability for high speed dedicated connections.
14. If dedicated circuits are required for customer access over existing ACS GCI AT&T networks is there a plan to manage the consortium of service providers?
- A. Our desire is to have one master contractor who would manage all necessary subcontractors. If this is not possible, AeHN would need to consider managing multiple service providers.
15. If dedicated customer circuits are required what are customer premise equipment requirements?
- A. As mention previously, AeHN is requesting the winning bidder to do a "Participating Site Requirements" review, as mentioned in Section 2.2 to determine CPE requirements.
16. Are there dedicated CPE requirements for access to the AEHN network even if only a generic internet access is required?
- A. No
17. Is the AeHN data center location and required data center services defined?
- A. AeHN does not plan on having a data center. All of the application services we are currently offering or plan to offer will be hosted remotely. Please see Section 5.2.5 Design Considerations for Applications (Servers).
18. Is a DR and/or business continuity alternate data center in place or needed?
- A. Please refer to section 5.1.1 Redundancy Requirements. AeHN applications service providers will be responsible for disaster recovery, backups, business continuity, etc. as it pertains to their services. You are responsible for ensuring that our user base can connect to those ASPs.
19. Is there a requirement for AeHN data center network access equipment such as VPN concentrators/routers etc?
- A. Yes, for the leased AeHN core.

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20. Are there other AeHN locations requiring a network of dedicated circuits such as an MPLS network?

A. Specific location requirements will need to be determined when you complete the “Participating Site Requirements” review.

21. What are their addresses, bandwidth needs, traffic types (Video, VoIP, AD, Citrix, etc)?

A. Unknown. Again, a Participating Site Requirements” review is being requested.

22. Is there an existing drawing depicting a proposed network?

A. During Phase 1, Network Design, a “Network Design Requirements” was completed. This is available at <http://www.ak-ehealth.org/about-aeH/documents>. A Visio and PDF version are present. Please note that this document is outdated and many of the sites have upgraded/changed hardware and connections. This is one reason why we are asking the winning bidder to revisit the requirements of our participating sites.

23. What are the connectivity requirements to connect to the lower 48 and what are the addresses?

A. Many of our participating sites use Cardiology monitoring services whereby a physician located in the lower 48 can examine the patient and see vitals via webcams. In other situations remote services are provided that monitor ICU / CCU patient vitals on a 24X7 basis. Diagnostic Images are often read/interpreted by remote Radiologists. Patient consults/interviews are done via webcam by remote specialists.

If you are asking for the addresses of the locations Alaska providers connect to in the Lower 48 that would not be possible because they are constantly changing and different locations use many different services in the Lower 48.

24. Is QoS over the Internet a requirement?

A. Section 5.4.3 Support for QoS lists optional requirements.

25. If AeHN is accessible over the Internet, why is the AeHN needed?

AeHN is seeking to connect existing participating networks, update/upgrade existing participant sites and connect them, and to bring onboard new participating sites and connect them. The FCC USAC has made funds available to the State of Alaska to do this otherwise; each organization would have to navigate the funds application process on their own. The AeHN network is also a building block for organizations to use the functionality of the HIE and other planned services.

a) Please explain paragraph 1 on page 8 of 22.

A. “The network will encapsulate data transfers between networked devices which are not on the same private network so as to keep the transferred data private from other devices on one or more intervening local or wide area networks.”, means that if an end-user, if for example, at site A needs to transfer information to an end-user at site B, and they are on different private networks (e.g. Tanana Chiefs versus SEARHC) the information will be secured.

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- b) Is the network responsible for additional encryption / security or is the Orion HIE portal responsible?
 - A. No
 - c) Is SSL encryption sufficient for HIE from Orion to destination health clinic?
 - A. Yes
 - d) Where is IPSec VPN tunneling required?
 - A. Could be used to connect to AeHN Core
26. Is anonymous resolution (NAT) applicable to IP address only?
- a) Page 11 of 22, 2nd paragraph
 - A. Yes
27. What are the depths of the “small design study” described on page 13 of 22?
- A. The winning bidder will need to conduct a study/survey/interview with each participating organization (not every site) to determine any network and hardware requirements they have. Attachment 2, the spreadsheet, should be used to document the requirements that you determine with each organization.
28. Is resiliency a part of the AeHN network need?
- A. Yes
29. Are there any hard requirements for QoS or symmetrical bandwidth for clinic physical location?
- A. No, We are not in control of site networks.
30. Does AeHN intend participants, not on a vendor specific network, to be able to access ASP resources on a vendor network with QoS guarantees?
- a) Page 9 of 22, 2.1 “The Network”
 - A. not No, We are not in control of site networks.
31. Does AeHN require private VPN connectivity between disparate carrier networks or is Internet access sufficient?
- A. Internet access is sufficient.
32. Is an in person meeting before bids are due possible?

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A. Yes, however, any discussions will be shared with all other vendors.

33. Is Orion SaaS an internet access only network accessed solution?

A. It is Internet access only.

34. Is there a scenario that would require the authorized end user to access over a dedicated circuit to the Orion SaaS?

A. No

35. Is there a scenario that would require special CPE equipment at the customer location other than a computer and internet access?

A. Yes, a router and/or switch may be necessary.

36. Can we ignore all references to dedicated connections and CPE equipment in the RFP since this appears to be an internet only access solution?

A. No

37. The internet does not honor QoS. QoS can be partially implemented by prioritizing traffic on the customer router egress to the internet. This would not provide prioritization of traffic on a congested internet backbone. Do you see this as a problem for future traffic such as voice or video conferencing?

A. No

38. If all that is required is an internet connection at the customer premise what benefit would there be in a consortium between telecom providers?

A. N/A

39. It appears the solution for the AeHN network is for each user to have internet access from any local provider. Is there any other situation where this would not be the case?

A. There are situation where a participating site may want to access telehealth related information directly from another healthcare provider.

40. Does SSL encryption only to Orion SaaS satisfy all HIPAA privacy requirements?

A. SSL satisfies the connection to Orion over the Internet.

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41. Do you have a feel for the internet bandwidth requirements for health care entities that will be sourcing medical records and imaging to the Orion SaaS database?
- A. The SaaS to Orion is very bandwidth light; however, there is a large variance between organizations for this project. Bandwidth should be determined as part of the site analysis.
42. Will resizing an image (i.e. 15M down to 0.5M) file jeopardize the clarity of a file for a patient's evaluation by a doctor?
- A. No
43. Which organization is going to take initial phone calls pertaining to suboptimal portal's (Orion Health) performance?
- A. AeHN, then triaged to the appropriate vendor.
44. The escalations, handovers, and arbitration processes will be governed by whom/what?
- A. A service level agreement will be completed.
45. Will the Network Management System (NMS) built as a non-hierarchical/contiguous system or will each ISP be required to take calls from their respective customers?
- A. This will be part of the contract with the overall NMS.
46. If a NMS is designed outside of the scope of current effort, would than either AeHN or DH&HS issue new RFP?
- A. This is within scope.
47. Who is going to pay for customer support pertaining to the non-connectivity problems?
- A. This is part of the managed service.
48. Attachment 1, Section 8.3.4 - Will there be offshore restrictions or prohibitions?
- A. No.
49. The attached document mentions ARRA funding. Does AeHN anticipate any ARRA funding for the work described in the RFP, now or in the future?
- A. No.

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50. Where is Orion being hosted?

A. N/A.

51. Who is the ISP that is providing connectivity at the hosting center?

A. N/A.

52. AeHN states, "AeHN is not seeking to build a network, but to leverage existing and planned network infrastructure already in place". Yet the RFP contains detailed requirements concerning SLAs, QoS, security, and performance. Requirements such as these have traditionally been very hard to meet when utilizing circuits from numerous carriers and while traversing the Internet. What are the AeHN performance expectations regarding a multicarrier Internet based network solution?

A. We are leasing a dedicated network resource. Refer to answers in above questions.