

25-019 BSS/OSS Questions and Answers

Question 1: Per the RFP regarding BSS and OSS, I wanted to get some clarity from you whether ICN is wanting to replace the core BSS/OSS solution or have it supported.

ICN Response: ICN wants to replace what we currently have.

Question 2: Regarding section 1.3.1 - Can you explain why an electronic (email) response, in addition to the mailed hard copies, is not acceptable? Most organizations have banned the use of USBs due to security risks, and the ability to burn a CD on current devices is no longer available.

ICN Response: This RFP is a formal bidding opportunity which by ICN policy does not allow for emailed responses and ICN does not utilize an electronic repository for bid responses. ICN still utilizes USB's in limited situations and will scan them prior to downloading the electronic copies. ICN has not received any adverse feedback on USB's from our previous bidders.

Question 3: Regarding 3.4 Billing/Business Support: Could you please provide more details or a couple of use cases for the requirement below?

- The system must allow for efficient management of data, typically through bulk/batch import/export/validation processes. It must include more options than single field, point and click, data entry user interfaces.

ICN Response: See question #23

Question 4: How is Field Service Management (truck roll) for new service and break-fix managed today? Would you like this module included in the proposal pricing, or should we plan on integrating it with what you already have?

ICN Response: ICN does not currently use Field Service Management software. This is managed by the 24x7 NOC, with task assignments in the related incident/problem/change. If your solution provides this, outline the module and its cost as an optional add-on. It will not be scored in comparison with core functions, but will be considered.

Question 5:

- Number of Residential Accounts (2200 Invoices - does that equate to accounts?):
ICN Response: 0
- Number of Business Accounts: **ICN Response:** ICN has roughly 700 parent accounts and 1650 child accounts invoiced active. All accounts are public sector Authorized Users (Education, Public Safety, State Government, Healthcare)
- Number of Users: **ICN Response:** ICN users of the Bss/Oss software would be around 120-150. Currently around 820 customer/external users.
- Number of Provisioning Devices: **ICN Response:** The network has on the order of 2,000 edge devices and another 500-1000 aggregation, core, environmental/monitoring, and necessary ancillary devices. Automating provisioning of devices is not a high priority in the initial scope of implementation (due to complexity), but will be considered as a follow-on phase.

Question 6: Based on our understanding the only acceptable way to submit the RFP response is via mail and there is no electronic RFP submission process, please confirm?

ICN Response: That is correct, sealed bids are required. Per RFP section 1.2.3 no bid responses will be accepted by telephone, electronic mail or facsimile.

Question 7: Is the goal of the RFP to replace ServiceNow and NetPlus and not add on or augment these software solutions?

ICN Response: Yes, it is our intention to replace the functionality used that is provided by ServiceNow and NetPlus with an integrated platform.

Question 8: Does ICN have any plans to add fiber based residential broadband services in the future and is support of these services a requirement of this RFP?

ICN Response: No, due to Iowa Code, ICN is precluded from providing residential broadband services.

Question 9: Is following the ITIL Framework a guideline or a critical requirement for this RFP and are any certifications required?

ICN Response: Guideline. The ICN follows the ITIL framework, and does not require any specific certifications or adherence to the guidelines provided by the framework.

Question 10: Do you have a preference for fully replacing the adjacent systems, or are you primarily looking to integrate with them?

ICN Response: If the best solution has additional capabilities that meet the needs to replace other systems in use today, ICN will evaluate those options, potentially in terms of future deployments. Many of the adjacent systems are also being considered for replacement for various reasons, but are not as critical to replace at this time.

Question 11: Are there any adjacent systems that you would like to be replaced as part of this project?

ICN Response: If the best solution has additional capabilities that meet the needs to replace other systems in use today, ICN will evaluate those options, potentially in terms of future deployments. Many of the adjacent systems are also being considered for replacement for various reasons, but are not as critical to replace at this time.

Question 12: Do you have a preference of on premise, hybrid or in the cloud solution?

ICN Response: ICN has included criteria for any of the above-mentioned options.

Question 13: Can you tell us how many users and workflows have been created in ServiceNow?

ICN Response: Workflows – 54 workflows are currently published, with some additional for password resets, etc. In terms of service delivery, five customer services are automated, with the remainder using a generic workflow to start with manual tasks added as needed per the work required. There are three change workflows, and one incident workflow that have been implemented. Of the currently deployed service delivery workflows, each service has two – one for MAC and one for Disconnect.

Current users of the system:

Internal users working in the system – 140 active accounts

Customer users of the system – 812 (have logged in, currently active and not locked out)

Customer Contacts within the system – 8193 (active accounts, but may be locked out or never logged in)

Question 14: Are you open to receiving partial proposals in which a vendor provides only some components of the solution, while excluding others?

ICN Response: It is ICN's preference to award to one vendor, however that does not preclude potential bidders from partnering up to provide a complete solution response. Solutions which don't accomplish the core Billing (3.4) and Operating/Ticketing (3.5) functions will not be considered.

Question 15: Can you please confirm whether your organization intends to replace both NetPlus and ServiceNow as part of this project?

ICN Response: Yes, it is ICN's intention to replace the core functions of both systems under this RFP with an integrated solution.

Question 16: Asset Management: Please provide a list of your current network elements, including the following details:

- Vendor/Manufacturer Name?
- Device Model?
- Quantity of Each Model

ICN Response: We will provide more detailed information to the awarded bidder. There are 13,754 devices in production status. There are about 25,000 total devices in other statuses (released, pending, removed, return for maintenance, etc.). Here are the counts of various categories of devices.

Row Labels	In Production
ALARM PANEL	128
ATM	19
CARD	5493
CHANNEL BANK	36
COM SERVER	19
CWDM	136
DACS	2
DWDM	52
EOTDM	4
ETHERNET	1573
FAULT MGMT ROUTER	12
FDP/WIC	1850
FIBEROPTIC COUPLER	3
FIREWALLS	49
GENERATOR	107
HVAC	2453
ICN CORE	38
INVERTER	11
KVM	2
NETWORK TIMING SHELF	6
OFFICE REPEATER	28
OPTICAL	40
OPTICAL TAP	4
OTDR	22
PATCH PANEL	301
RECTIFIER	142
SAN	2
SERVERS	189
SONET	9
SURVEILLANCE	20
TAPE	1
TDMOE	26
TRANSCEIVER	12
UPS	334
VENDOR TRANSPORT	20
VOICE	13
VOIP	79
WDM BOX	472
WIRELESS EQUIPMENT	47

Question 17: Please provide a list of all Element Management Systems (EMS) and/or Network Management Systems (NMS) currently in use within your environment. For each system, if possible, include:

NMS

- System Name **ICN Response:** network node manager i (nnmi)
- Vendor **ICN Response:** opentext
- Function or Role (e.g., optical, IP, transport, etc.) **ICN Response:** monitoring
- Associated Network Element Vendors or Technologies **ICN Response:** detailed information will be provided to the awarded vendor, see also question #16
- Version (if known) **ICN Response:** CE 24.2

EMS

- System Name **ICN Response:** Asset Manager
- Vendor **ICN Response:** OpenText
- Function or Role (e.g., optical, IP, transport, etc.) **ICN Response:** asset/circuit tracking/design
- Associated Network Element Vendors or Technologies **ICN Response:** detailed information will be provided to the awarded vendor, see also question #16
- Version (if known) **ICN Response:** 9.90

EMS

- System Name **ICN Response:** ArcGIS ArcMap & NetDesigner add-on
- Vendor **ICN Response:** ArcGIS ArcMap (ESRI) & NetDesigner (Enghouse)
- Function or Role (e.g., optical, IP, transport, etc.) **ICN Response:** fiber plant tracking
- Associated Network Element Vendors or Technologies **ICN Response:** detailed information will be provided to the awarded vendor, see also question #16
- Version (if known) **ICN Response:** ArcGIS ArcMap 10.8.1 & NetDesigner 6.8.0.60059

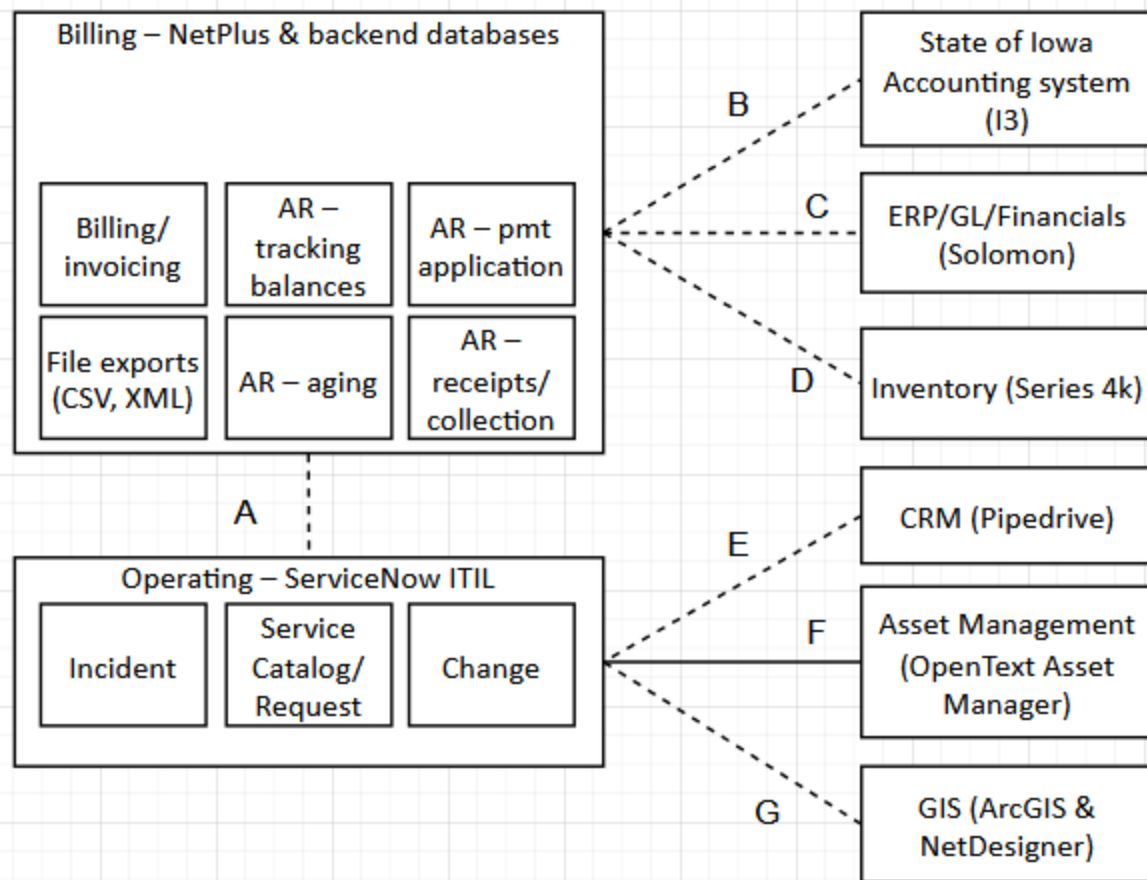
Question 18: To better understand the services currently supported by your network, please provide a list of the network services you offer today. Examples of common services include:

- TDM circuits (e.g., DS1, DS3, E1) **ICN Response:** Yes, as a pass-through service, need to bill it but not track it deeply operationally.
- MPLS **ICN Response:** Yes,
- Ethernet (e.g., point-to-point, E-LAN, E-Tree) **ICN Response:** Yes, point-to-point and point-to-multipoint
- Internet access **ICN Response:** Yes
- Layer 2 VPN / Layer 3 VPN **ICN Response:** Yes
- SD-WAN **ICN Response:** Not currently
- IP Transit **ICN Response:** Yes
- Dark Fiber / Wavelength services **ICN Response:** Yes
- Voice services (e.g., VoIP, PRI, SIP trunking) **ICN Response:** Yes
- Broadband **ICN Response:** Yes
- Mobile backhaul **ICN Response:** Yes
- Security (firewall services, DDoS) **ICN Response:** Yes
- Wireless LAN, small volume **ICN Response:** Yes
- OSP Maintenance **ICN Response:** Yes
- Structured Cabling **ICN Response:** Yes
- Professional Services **ICN Response:** Yes
- One-time billables for projects or maintenance with additional charges, pass-through, etc. **ICN Response:** Yes

Question 19: Integration to adjacent systems. Please describe the integrations required between your core systems and any adjacent systems. For each integration, it would be helpful to include the following information (as applicable):

- System Name (core and adjacent)
- Direction of Integration (e.g., unidirectional or bidirectional)
- Frequency (e.g., real-time, scheduled, on-demand)
- Purpose (e.g., inventory sharing, trouble ticket sync)

ICN Response: see following diagram and information.



- **HP Asset Manager to NetPlus -**

Integration details. See diagram above.

A - NetPlus to ServiceNow

Level of Integration: ICN Response: Manual (file exports/imports or manual entry)

Direction of Integration: ICN Response: Uni-directional

Frequency: ICN Response: As needed

Purpose ICN Response: Double entry of customer billing information after implementation tracked in ServiceNow into NetPlus

B - NetPlus to State of Iowa Accounting System (I3)

Level of Integration: ICN Response: Manual (file exports/imports or manual entry)

Direction of Integration: ICN Response: Bi-directional

Frequency: ICN Response: Monthly

Purpose ICN Response: File export from NetPlus to I3 for State's Accounting and Financial Reporting. Manual data entry or file export/upload of accounts/codes from State Accounting to NetPlus.

C - NetPlus to ERP/GL/Financials (Solomon/MS Dynamics SL)

Level of Integration: ICN Response: Manual (file exports/imports or manual entry)

Direction of Integration: ICN Response: Bi-directional

Frequency: ICN Response: Monthly

Purpose ICN Response: Reconcile billing and ERP/GL/Financials and for ICN Accounting and Financial Reports.

D - NetPlus to Financial Inventory (Series 4k)

Level of Integration: ICN Response: Manual (file exports/imports or manual entry)

Direction of Integration: ICN Response: Bi-directional

Frequency: ICN Response: Weekly

Purpose ICN Response: Reconcile financial inventory and depreciation

E - ServiceNow to PipeDrive CRM

Level of Integration: ICN Response: Manual (file exports/imports or manual entry)

Direction of Integration: ICN Response: Bi-directional

Frequency: ICN Response: Daily

Purpose ICN Response: Double entry of customer information after sales/CRM entry into order portal in ServiceNow (and later into billing - see integration A)

F - Asset Management (Opentext) to ServiceNow

Level of Integration: ICN Response: Semi-automated (scripted file exports/imports with some manual intervention)

Direction of Integration: ICN Response: Uni-directional

Frequency: ICN Response: Weekly

Purpose ICN Response: AM is the source of truth for locations, equipment technical (vs. financial) inventory and circuit info. This info is sent from AM to ServiceNow.

Question 20: Billable Elements and Items Related to Elements or Requests. The system must allow the ability to split a charge by percentage or specific dollar amounts between accounts or sub-accounts.

- Does this mean a split between two GL codes in accounting software? **ICN Response:** No, it would be splitting one charge to multiple customer accounts but same GL coding.
- Can you provide an example use case? **ICN Response:** A customer wants to split a circuit billing between two accounts they have with different accounting coding on their end.

Question 21: The system must allow for documents to be attached to the Billing Order/Request (i.e. customer LOA, contract, etc.). Customer Master will allow ICN to upload documents for their customer to review/sign.

- Do you need the ICN customer to be able to upload documents too? **ICN Response:** That would be helpful but not required. Customers almost always have to engage a salesperson, so they could attach docs if necessary.

Question 22: The system must allow the ability to designate account coding for each hierarchical level of billing accounts.

- Please provide an example of this. Account/Customer/Network tiers but we want to make sure we meet this need. **ICN Response:** Some of our customers have multiple accounts with different accounting coding on their end. Often this is done with a parent account with multiple child accounts each with different accounting coding.

Question 23: The system must allow for efficient management of data, typically through bulk/batch import/export/validation processes. It must include more options than single field, point and click, data entry user interfaces.

- Please provide an example of what you mean by this? Updating customer/network/plant via import/export? **ICN Response:** Example - we want to change accounting coding on billable elements that share similar segments within the structure and being able to change only the one element for all billable items. i.e. - For all billable items with accounting coding 123-456 change to 123-789.

Question 24: The system must be able to export an .xml file to upload for payment state financial system.

- What is the XML file used for? Is this for ACH? Payment Processing? **ICN Response:** This is an upload to the state accounting system to automatically create payment documents for our services that process payments automatically.

- Payment Tracking and Reconciliation:

Question 25: The system must provide a robust way to track payments from both the customer and USAC. It must show the status of the USAC reimbursement, which invoices have been paid, and which are still pending. This is crucial for managing cash flow and reconciling accounts.

- Are the USAC reimbursements for customer accounts inside of the billing software?

ICN Response: The ICN uses SPI and BEAR by means of requesting reimbursement from USAC on e-rate eligible services. We need to track the portion billed to the customer and the portion billed to USAC as separate but related billings and payments.

3.5 OPERATING SUPPORT

Question 26: Define Service Level Agreement (SLA) or alternative way to manage expected vs actual response and resolution times.

- How is this done today? **ICN Response:** ServiceNow allows SLAs to be set up at various levels and vary by service. ICN can see this at the ticket level and through reports.

Question 27: What are the anticipated implementation timelines? Are there any compelling events to be taken care of?

ICN Response: ICN intends to have the ServiceNow components completed by March 1, 2026, or as close as reasonably possible to that date. Billing components may be scheduled later.

Question 28: Are there any ongoing transformation projects happening in parallel? Do we have to take care of them into consideration?

ICN Response: There are additional projects but they should not impact this effort except occasional people-time resource constraints, and this project is a top priority

Question 29: Do you provide FWA as well? Or it's only FBB?

ICN Response: If "FWA" is meant to be Fixed Wireless Access and "FBB" is Fixed Broadband, ICN has tested FWA but does not deploy that solution, our network is primarily FBB.

Question 30: Explain the "Change" function mentioned in Service now?

ICN Response: ICN uses ITIL terminology. In ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library), a "change" is defined as the addition, modification, or removal of anything that could have a direct or indirect effect on services. A Change may be related to a Request or to an Incident or a Problem.

Question 31: We assume OSS and BSS data from legacy have to be migrated to target platform, pl. confirm.

ICN Response: There is flexibility in what data can be migrated, understanding various systems may not have the same fields available, etc. It is fully expected there will be a high level of migration from NetPlus, circuit db. (Access), USAC (Access) and accounts receivable (Access), and possibly from the payables side depending on vendor payment management. Likely less so on the ServiceNow side.

Question 32: What are the volumes to migrate for the different business entities?

ICN Response: Only ICN data is included. See ICN response to questions 31, 65, and 68.

Question 33: What is the objective for replacing the adjacent systems? Does any of these systems sunset?

ICN Response: Many of the adjacent systems are also being considered for replacement for various reasons, but are not as critical to replace at this time and do not have a sunset date.

Question 34: Is the ERP taking care of only Telecom business? What about any other enterprise applications?

ICN Response: ICN is a telecommunications agency, thus the BSS/OSS will apply to our telecom related aspects.

Question 35: What types of customers are being served? B2C, B2B, Enterprise, Government?

ICN Response: As identified within Iowa Code, ICN provides telecommunications services to Education, Government, Healthcare and Public Safety entities within the State of Iowa.

Question 36: Are there any self-care portals? What is your future plans for this?

ICN Response: Currently, we use the ServiceNow Service Portal. We will leverage customer self-service/self-help features provided in the tool to the extent allowed by our business policies and processes.

Question 37: Do you rate the VOIP and Data consumption or only the subscriptions are billed?

ICN Response: ICN has different services, some are usage based, some are not, and some are a combination of both.

Question 38: Does the solution have to take care of number portability?

ICN Response: No.

Question 39: What kind of bill periods are to be considered?

ICN Response: At a minimum monthly and annually, quarterly would be a benefit.

Question 40: How many bill cycles do you have?

ICN Response: ICN bills monthly, so 12. If it is possible to add a 13th, which state government uses, would be nice but only if it is out-of-the-box functionality.

Question 41: What are the charge periods for different products?

ICN Response: Most are monthly but we have a growing amount that are annual.

Question 42: You have provided requirements for on-prem. Is that your preference or is it okay to use cloud providers having DCs in USA?

ICN Response: The RFP included requirements for cloud/hybrid solutions. ICN will select the best option that fits our needs.

Question 43: Some of the information in our response will be classified. The instructions state to provide a second document with the classified information removed. Do these documents also need to be printed out in duplicate and mailed - or is it OK to just includes these in digital form on the usb which will be mailed.

ICN Response: Bidder shall provide one excised copy in both paper and electronic form.

Question 44: Can you provide an example of the APIs that you currently use for the provisioning/activation (configuration) of services through ArcGIS/NetDesigner - and how the flow works between the 2 platforms?

ICN Response: ArcGIS/NetDesigner is used for fiber/site documentation only, not for provisioning/activation. There are no APIs connected to ArcGIS/NetDesigner.

Question 45: Can you provide an example or a short overview of how the current network fault/ticketing flow works?

ICN Response: This is a manual process. The ICN Network Operations Center personnel (ICN Service Desk Workgroup) typically create the initial ticket and are responsible for the routing of Incident tickets to the appropriate workgroups. The assigned workgroup can reassign the ticket to a more appropriate work group or return it to the NOC who can then assign it to the next work group for troubleshooting. During this process, the NOC will oversee the progress of all incidents.

Required Functionality:

Circuit & Service Management

Question 46: Can you clarify how you currently define the relationship between physical, virtual, and logical circuits? Are these modeled as distinct billable items or layered attributes?

ICN Response: Virtual/Logical in this context is probably interchangeable. We may have logical/virtual circuits that traverse many physical links, or multiple virtual sub-interfaces that ride the same physical path. The ideal solution would allow circuits to be represented as layered components, but also allow a particular layer or segment to be billable.

Question 47: When correlating circuit IDs (vendor vs. ICN), should the system maintain historical mappings (e.g., retired IDs) or only active ones?

ICN Response: Currently, ICN maintains both active and retired circuit information in ServiceNow and NetPlus. The path information is maintained and stored in HP Asset Manager. Path information is not stored in either ServiceNow or NetPlus.

Question 48: For service lifecycle (order → maintenance → change → disconnect), what degree of workflow automation is expected vs. manual intervention?

ICN Response: ICN has deployed automated workflows for the most frequent services. Manual tasks can be added as needed, and are exclusively added for services that do not have automated workflows. It is our expectation that workflows cover the “normal” process, and that manual tasks can be assigned to cover for any variations.

Invoicing & Account Hierarchies

Question 49: Should consolidated invoices be flexible enough to support both roll-up by parent agency and child sub-accounts billed separately?

ICN Response: We typically do not bill anything on the parent account. Everything is billed on the child accounts and rolls up in summary reporting to the parent. However, we are inquiring about linking several parent accounts to one hierarchical rollup. Ex. - HHS has dozens of locations that are parent accounts with multiple child accounts beneath but reporting needs may require parent account roll up to one statewide HHS agency report for all locations.

Question 50: How should trial billing cycles behave — are they intended for internal audit only, or can they also be exposed to customers?

ICN Response: Right now, yes, This would only be for ICN use to be able to communicate the results to the customer however this does tie to the question about being able to run an adhoc re-bill.

Question 51: What is the required turnaround for invoice re-prints (real-time generation vs. batch)?

ICN Response: On-demand and real-time.

Customer Portal & User Access

Question 52: For the customer portal, do you require role-based access (e.g., state agency finance staff see roll-ups, facility managers see only local charges)?

ICN Response: Yes

Question 53: Should portal functionality include operational data (incidents, moves/adds/changes) or only billing and payments?

ICN Response: Currently, there are two portals, one for billing and one for ServiceNow to initiate/see Cases (requests and incidents). Ideally there would be both portals, or a consolidated portal, secured and allowing information by Role Based Access Control.

Question 54: Do customers require self-service rate sheet visibility or just standard contract pricing?

ICN Response: Our full rate sheet is not shared. We provide customer quotes for services requested on a case by case basis which should be visible to that specific customer within their portal access.

Data Management & Automation

Question 55: For bulk/batch import/export, what are the expected volumes (number of accounts, services, or transactions per cycle)?

ICN Response: We have about 4,600 customer accounts. We have perhaps 4125 unique charges which are variations of our core services (voice [VoIP/SIP], data/ethernet, internet, custom/managed router services, security [firewalls, DDoS], outside plant, inside plant, hosting/colocation, professional services). We have about 2,200 invoices to customers per month.

Question 56: Should the system validate imports against business rules (e.g., no service without location code, no invoice without GL)?

ICN Response: Yes

Question 57: How critical is API access for integration with external systems (CRM, provisioning, ticketing), beyond I/3?

ICN Response: The current “integrations” are not very automatic at all. Any capacity to automate data integration is positive. Responses will be graded on a scale according to how well they can improve this. A proposal will not fail if it lacks APIs, but will be scored accordingly. See also questions #14 and #19.

Desired Functionality:

Billable Items & Hierarchies

Question 58: For shared charges (like a port charge tied to multiple services), should costs be allocated proportionally across services or duplicated per service?

ICN Response: Proportionally in the question example (port charge).

Question 59: Do you require visibility into parent-child relationships on invoices, or is this primarily a back-office reconciliation tool?

ICN Response: Yes, this needs to be visible to the customer.

Vendor Invoice Reconciliation

Question 60: How granular should reconciliation be — by line item (minute, MB, port charge) or by aggregate service?

ICN Response: Line item.

Question 61: Should the system automatically flag discrepancies (e.g., vendor charge vs. billed revenue) or just provide tools to match manually?

ICN Response: Automatic would be preferred but explain vendor proposed tools if available.

Question 62: Do you expect the system to integrate with your accounts payable system to track vendor payments directly?

ICN Response: Yes, that would be preferred but if not, demonstrate how we might do this manually.

Question 63: The “2,200 invoices per month” is that fully representative \$33M revenue - please confirm that these invoices and revenue \$’s are fully representative of all program volume?

ICN Response: Yes.

Question 64: The RFP mentions “mostly automated” vs & “mostly manual” integrations but doesn’t specify:

- What specific data formats/protocols are used for current integrations?
- What is the frequency and volume of data exchanges? Flat file/Batch vs live API?
- For Microsoft Dynamics SL integration - what specific version and modules?
- **ICN Response:** MD SL 2018 CU7, ver. 10.07.51209.00 (10.0.0.0)
- What APIs are currently available from adjacent systems?
- Is there an enterprise service bus or integration platform currently in use?

ICN Response: See ICN response to questions #14, #19, and #57.

Question 65: Will ICN provide data cleansing or expect the vendor to?

ICN Response: ICN would probably need to be involved in any cleanup effort required. This involvement will be driven by the method and content of the data to be migrated.

Question 67: What is the acceptable downtime window?

ICN Response: If this question is asking how long we can take down integrated systems we currently use: See also ICN response to questions #14, #19, and #57 on integration details. No services are integrated more frequently than weekly or on-demand, and Asset Manager scripted file export and import (which require human to run scripts) is the most complex integration at present.

If this question is asking how long we can freeze the current systems and cut over to the new, we would typically schedule a freeze starting on a Friday afternoon and have the new systems up and ready by Monday morning.

Question 68: How many years of historical data must be migrated?

ICN Response: Most record types are set to 5, 7, or 10-year retention schedules. We expect ICN staff will work with the successful vendor to achieve acceptable backups and migrated data. It would be preferable to migrate several years of data, but we know there are limitations to what and how much data can be brought over. A complete list of records retention requirements can be found at <https://history.iowa.gov/research/state-government-record-management/records-manual-schedule>. See also question #31.

Question 69: What are the current SLA requirements for service provisioning?

ICN Response: Depending on the type of request (project/build/new service vs. move/add/change vs. incident response) we use SLAs of weeks, days, and hours.

Question 70: The USAC requirements are complex but lack specifics:

- Which USAC programs does ICN currently participate in? **ICN Response:** ICN participates in two USAC programs. They are the School and Libraries E-Rate program and the Rural Health Care Division (HCF) program.
- What is the volume of E-Rate transactions? **ICN Response:** E-Rate Transactions for the last fiscal year FY2025 were a total amount for \$1.4 Million, around \$120,000.00/per-month via SPI and another \$2.1 million through BEAR. There are about 138-line items per month.
- Are there specific FCC reporting templates that must be supported? **ICN Response:** Yes, ICN is a direct contributor for the Universal Service Fund and therefore we file the FCC financial forms as the quarterly FCC Form's 499-Q and the annual FCC Form 499-A.
- How are Form 471, 472, and 474 currently generated? **ICN Response:** FCC Form 471 is filed by the E-Rate applicant; FCC Form 474 (SPI) is filed by the ICN, service provider, to request E-Rate discounts payment posted on the ICN monthly billing invoices; & FCC form 472 (BEAR) is filed by the E-Rate applicant to request E-Rate discounts reimbursement.

Question 71: What are the specific versions of NetPlus TMS and ServiceNow currently in use?

ICN Response: NetPlus = release 7.0, build 210131, Apache Tomcat/9.0.56, Java ver. 11.0.11, Oracle Db 19c standard 2 release, ServiceNow = Xanadu patch9a currently -> Yokohama likely required before the contract awarded under this RFP can be implemented.

Question 72: What is the current data volume in NetPlus (number of customers, circuits, invoices, historical data retention)?

ICN Response: See ICN response to question #55 and question #68. 5,000 circuits.

Question 73: Can you provide the actual database schemas for NetPlus backend databases mentioned?

ICN Response: These backend databases perform helper functions that we don't expect are necessary with a modern solution, and we have security policies which prevent quick sharing.

Question 74: What customizations have been made to ServiceNow that must be preserved?

ICN Response: We desire to not need to be customized. The configurations that we want to preserve are the core workflows for service order -> delivery, and add workflow to connect the billing steps after that. Within the limits of implementation timeframe (usable by early March, 2026), we want to use this opportunity to streamline our business processes instead of force fit our processes into the new solution.

Question 75: What are the peak transaction volumes for billing cycles and service provisioning?

ICN Response: We have an average of 1,400 requests/tickets per year, ranging between 1,200 and 2,000. We have roughly 250 projects per year and 1,150 move/add/change/disconnect. We send approximately 2,200 invoices per month.

Question 76: Section 3.4 mentions vendor contract management as desirable but:

- How many vendor contracts are currently managed? **ICN Response:** Approximate Total number of combined Vendor/Customer Contracts: 1,478 contracts.
- Is this for telecom vendor contracts or all ICN vendors? **ICN Response:** All ICN Vendors and Customer contracts.
- Integration with accounts payable workflow? **ICN Response:** Currently handled with emails, files in folders, and a base workflow in AP/ERP system. Desired capabilities include: Tracking billable elements, editing against contract.

Question 77: What is the expected growth rate over the contract term (revenue and invoices)?

ICN Response: Expected between 0% - 3%, likely 0.5% or 1.5%

Question 78: What is the desired Go Live date?

ICN Response: ICN intends to have the ServiceNow components completed by March 1, 2026, or as close as reasonably possible to that date. Billing components ideally by April 1, 2026 but timing is less critical.

Question 79: Please provide the Carrier landscape by populating the 2nd tab titled "Carrier List".

ICN Response: We did not receive a tab. We work with a large portion of the ~150 telecommunication providers in the state including all the major and most regional. We also peer with national ISPs.

After ICN sought clarification, requestor asked:

- As it relates to page 16 ERP/GL REQUIREMENTS - In carrier list we would like to know:
 - Monthly estimated spend by carrier
 - Number of invoices received by each carrier monthly
 - Number of accounts per carrier
- Understood that you would only list the larger carriers. Could you summarize the aggregate data for others.
- Are any of the carrier invoices paper, how many?
- What are the aggregate payables for carrier invoices vs. \$33M receivables from customers?

ICN Response: Monthly estimated spend by carrier or aggregate payables for carrier invoices vs receivables: ICN is a not-for-profit or cost-recovery operation; revenues and expenses are equal over the lifecycle of equipment. **All necessary detailed information will be provided to the awarded vendor to implement the new solution.**

Question 80: Please provide the desired Fixed Services by Asset Type by populating the 3rd tab titled "Service Breakdown".

After ICN sought clarification, requestor asked: Understood, can you provide aggregate number of data and voice circuits?

ICN Response: See ICN response to questions #18, #55 and #72.

Question 81: in 3.1 Background, ICN states that "annual revenues of approximately \$33 million" What is the actual carrier spend currently or what is intended to be managed?

ICN Response: All billing of services to our customers is to be managed, which includes direct costs from vendors; however, the solution is not necessarily required to manage the AP/ERP function. See ICN response to questions #5 and #55.

Question 82: Are you interested in optional electronic Bill Pay Service to reduce the risk of terminated services and late fees?

ICN Response: Include all methods to bill customers and outline costs and implementation costs for each.

Question 83: Are there any mid or high-level security requirements (for example with ServiceNow's Government Cloud GCC) deployment?

ICN Response: There is no RFP requirement to be FedRamp or StateRamp certified/approved.

Question 84: Does the State have any geo restrictions about where the software and data can be hosted or stored?

ICN Response: The State does have some restrictions where the data can be stored and hosted, which is dependent upon the data itself. In the case of the ICN's BSS/OSS data, it is our preference that the information not leave the continental United States.

Question 85: Does the State require TEM staff to be US citizens only?

ICN Response: No

Question 86: Does the State have any geo restrictions about where TEM staff can be located?

ICN Response: No

Question 87: For the approximately 350 Invoices received monthly, what is the annual total expenditures to ICN for these services or the total annual fees from your suppliers? We noted annual revenue of 33M.

ICN Response: We are a public non-profit or cost-recovery organization so direct, indirect, and administrative expenses average out to revenue on a 3-5-year period.

Question 88: Please explain your Chargeback and or Uplift model for Telecom and Network Services? Is this a percentage based, flat fee or other?

ICN Response: Depending on the service, we use both/either.

Question 89: With regards hours billed by contractors or workorders. Please describe your current process for a defining work type, fee structure and hourly rate? Is that information sent to the Billing System from vendor invoices and/or ServiceNow?

ICN Response: We have a contracted workforce augmentation. These staff hours would be billed similar to ICN staff (set rates per type of staff, or occasionally fixed fee for implementation). Currently we review rates annually and load them into billing. Monthly, billable hours from ServiceNow are entered into billing per request. For other contractors, we would add overhead/admin/management costs and pass through the cost to the customer or project account, again manually entered per request.

Question 90: Can you describe your USAC filing process today? What works well and what do you require to improve in this process?

ICN Response: The improvement would be to have all information stored in the billing system and not have to rely on an adjacent system which would allow us to calculate, track in AR, create the payment file and provide the necessary reports for USAC filing. We also would like to be able to upload USAC forms directly into the billing system which will include all of the data we need to track.

Process: ICN receives from USAC the funding commitment decision letter which we load into the USAC website which requires determining all of the data fields necessary. Next, we receive the FCC 486 approvals from the USAC which signifies the customers are eligible for discounts. ICN needs to store this information in the billing system so that discounts can be calculated correctly. This will enable reconciliation of the AR accounts tracking the discount from USAC and the amount billed to the customer. Upon the monthly billing cycle the billing system should produce the file which ICN uploads into the USAC EPIC system per SPI method. All required information should come from the data stored in the billing system. We receive the approved payments document (ISR) which should update accounts receivable for the discount from USAC (USAC account) which also confirms that the amount billed to the customer was correct.

Reminders:

- 1) Sealed bids are due to the ICN prior to 4PM October 3rd.
- 2) Per RFP Section 3.9, should you be selected, Vendor demos will be scheduled the week of October 13th.

Thank you in advance for your efforts so far, we look forward to receiving your bid responses.