Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

--NOTICE--

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) 2626

Issue Date: November 2, 2026
Closing Date: November 17, 2026, 5:00 p.m. (PT)

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) invites interested parties to submit a proposal for services for

Information Technology Consulting Services

Interested parties must submit one (1) electronic PDF version of the proposal, and one cost proposal setting forth a proposed fee schedule, by the closing date.

Proposals relating to this RFP shall be submitted via email to yparra@sccrtc.org and info@sccrtc.org, and addressed to:

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
Attention: Yesenia Parra, Administrative Services Officer
Phone: 831-460-3200

This notice, along with its enclosures, comprises the Request for Proposals (RFP) for this professional service. Responses should be submitted in accordance with the instructions set forth in this RFP. Email inquiries relating to this RFP should include "IT Consulting Services RFP2626" in the subject header. The RTC reserves the right to amend the RFP by addendum before the final proposal submittal date. This RFP and any addenda will be available at: SCCRTC.org

Request for Proposals (RFP):
Information Technology Consulting Services

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE/DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES/CONTRACT TYPE

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is seeking an experienced Information Technology (IT) consulting firm to provide reliable, responsive, and professional IT support services for the RTC's day-to-day technology operations.

The selected consultant will provide ongoing technical support, troubleshooting, maintenance, consultation, security assistance, project support, and coordination with third-party technology vendors. RTC operates in a public-sector environment and relies on technology to support its administrative operations, Commission meetings, remote and hybrid work, public communications, records management, and other business functions. The RTC anticipates that the majority of services will consist of day-to-day IT support and troubleshooting, with additional specialized services provided as needed. The Consultant shall provide services remotely, onsite, or through a combination of both, depending on the nature of the request and the RTC's needs.

B. PERFORMANCE PERIOD

The RTC reserves the right to award multiple firms. Work under this contract is expected to begin on December 7, 2026**.**

C. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) develops and delivers transportation solutions that support a vibrant, sustainable, and equitable community. The RTC serves as Santa Cruz County’s Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA). It is also a state-designated agency responsible for regional transportation planning, programming, and the allocation of transportation funds for transportation projects and programs throughout Santa Cruz County.

The RTC employs approximately 30 professional staff who support the planning, development, implementation, and administration of the RTC’s programs, projects, and operations. Staff work in a hybrid environment that includes time in the RTC’s offices, remote work from home, and field-based activities.

The RTC’s operations are dependent on reliable, secure, and responsive information technology services. In addition to supporting routine day-to-day technology needs, the RTC requires IT support for staff working remotely and onsite; public meetings and Commission meetings conducted in hybrid formats;

conference and meeting room technology; specialized software and applications; Microsoft 365 and related cloud services; cybersecurity and system security; computer and peripheral equipment; network and connectivity issues; and coordination with third-party technology vendors and service providers.

The RTC regularly collaborates with local, regional, state, and federal agencies, consultants, contractors, and other institutions. This work requires technology systems and services that support communication, document sharing, virtual meetings, public access, records management, and the secure exchange of information.

The RTC is a public agency, and its technology environment must support public-sector requirements, including compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, records retention requirements, public records requests, accessibility requirements, and information security practices.

The RTC is seeking an experienced Information Technology Consultant to provide responsive, reliable, and proactive day-to-day IT support and consulting services. The selected Consultant will work closely with RTC staff, management, and third-party vendors to troubleshoot issues, coordinate technology-related projects, support existing systems and applications, assist with technology planning and implementation, and ensure that the RTC's technology environment effectively supports its operational and public service needs.

For more information about the RTC, please visit https://www.sccrtc.org/about/.

II. SOLICITATION PROCESS AND PROPOSAL EVALUATION

A. SOLICITATION TIMELINE

The RTC intends to adhere to the following timeline, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the RTC. All times shown are in Pacific Time.

Activity	**Date and Time**
Solicitation Published	November 2, 2026
Pre-Proposal Videoconference	November 10, 2026, at 10:00 am
Request for Clarifications and Questions due	November 12, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.
Addenda/Response to Clarifications/ Questions Posted	November 13, 2026
Proposals Due	November 17, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.
Interviews (if required)	November 23, 2026
Approval of Contract (tentative)	December 4, 2026
Contract Begins	December 7, 2026

B. SCOPE OF SERVICES

Please see the Scope of Services included as Attachment A for a listing of required and optional services.

C. QUALIFICATIONS

The Respondent shall provide a clear and concise description of the firm's qualifications, technical capabilities, organizational resources, and previous experience providing IT services of a similar size, scope, and complexity.

The RTC is seeking a Consultant capable of providing both day-to-day IT support and proactive technology management, as well as specialized IT consulting and project support. Respondents shall demonstrate that they have the personnel, technical expertise, systems, and resources necessary to perform the full scope of services identified in Attachment A.

To be considered for selection and contract award, the Consultant shall meet the following minimum qualifications:

1. Firm Experience

The Consultant shall:

- Have a minimum of five (5) years of experience providing managed IT services, IT consulting, or comparable technology support services.
- Demonstrate experience providing services to organizations of similar size and operational complexity.
- Demonstrate experience providing a combination of help desk, end-user support, infrastructure management, cloud administration, cybersecurity, systems administration, and IT project support.
- Have experience supporting organizations operating in a hybrid onsite/remote work environment.
- Demonstrate the ability to provide both routine day-to-day support and proactive technology management.
- Demonstrate experience coordinating with multiple third-party technology vendors and service providers to resolve technical issues.

2. Public Agency and Regulatory Experience

Preference may be given to firms with experience providing IT services to public agencies, governmental entities, special districts, transportation agencies, or other organizations subject to public-sector requirements.

Respondents shall demonstrate familiarity with the technology and information-management requirements applicable to public agencies, including, as appropriate:

- California Public Records Act requirements relating to electronic records;

- Records retention and electronic records management;
- Protection of confidential and sensitive information;
- Public meeting and hybrid meeting technology;
- Accessibility requirements;
- Cybersecurity and data protection requirements; and
- Public-sector procurement and vendor coordination.

3. Microsoft 365 and Cloud Expertise

The Consultant shall demonstrate current technical expertise administering and supporting Microsoft 365 and related cloud technologies used by the RTC. Experience should include, as applicable:

- Microsoft 365 administration;
- Exchange Online/Outlook;
- Microsoft Teams;
- SharePoint;
- OneDrive;
- Microsoft Entra ID/Azure Active Directory;
- Microsoft Intune or comparable endpoint management;
- Microsoft Defender or comparable endpoint/email security solutions;
- Microsoft Azure;
- Cloud migration and data migration; and
- Microsoft licensing and subscription management.
- The Consultant shall identify relevant Microsoft certifications held by proposed staff and any applicable Microsoft Partner, CSP, reseller, or other Microsoft relationship maintained by the firm.
- A Microsoft reseller relationship is preferred but shall not, by itself, be required if the Consultant can demonstrate equivalent expertise and the ability to obtain and manage required Microsoft licenses and services on behalf of the RTC.

4. Cybersecurity Qualifications

The Consultant shall demonstrate current knowledge and experience in cybersecurity appropriate to a small public agency, including:

- Cybersecurity risk assessments;
- Vulnerability, identification, and remediation;
- Endpoint protection;
- Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA);
- Security patch management;
- Email and phishing protection;
- Security monitoring, and alert management;
- Incident response;
- Malware and ransomware prevention, and response;
- Security awareness training;
- Backup and recovery security;
- Access control and least privilege practices; and

- Development and implementation of cybersecurity policies, procedures, and controls.
- Experience with recognized cybersecurity frameworks, including the NIST Cybersecurity Framework and/or CIS Controls, is preferred.
- Respondents shall identify relevant cybersecurity certifications held by proposed personnel, such as CISSP, CISM, Security+, or other comparable certifications, where applicable.

5. Network and Infrastructure Experience

The Consultant shall demonstrate experience administering and troubleshooting:

- Network infrastructure;
- Firewalls and routers;
- Network switches;
- Wireless networks;
- VPN and remote-access systems;
- Servers;
- End-user devices;
- Network connectivity;
- Internet services; and
- Related infrastructure and security technologies.

The Consultant shall have the ability to diagnose problems that cross multiple systems or vendors and coordinate resolution with the appropriate service provider.

6. Backup, Disaster Recovery, and Business Continuity

The Consultant shall demonstrate experience with:

- Data backup and recovery;
- Cloud and on-premises backup systems;
- Backup monitoring and verification;
- Data restoration;
- Disaster recovery planning;
- Business continuity planning;
- Recovery testing; and
- Cybersecurity incident recovery.

The Consultant shall be capable of developing and maintaining documentation for critical systems, backup procedures, recovery procedures, and technology dependencies.

7. End-User, Device, and Asset Management

The Consultant shall demonstrate experience providing:

- Help desk/service desk support;

- Remote and onsite technical support;
- Laptop and desktop configuration and deployment;
- Mobile device support;
- Software installation and configuration;
- Operating system and application patch management;
- Hardware troubleshooting and repair coordination;
- Warranty administration;
- IT asset inventory management; and
- Software license management.

The Consultant shall have sufficient personnel and resources to provide timely support during the RTC's required service hours.

8. Zoom and Hybrid Meeting Technology

The Consultant shall demonstrate experience supporting video conferencing and hybrid meeting environments, including:

- Zoom administration;
- Zoom Rooms;
- Cameras;
- Microphones;
- Speakers;
- Displays;
- Meeting-room control systems;
- Audio/video troubleshooting; and
- Hybrid public and organizational meetings.
- Experience supporting public meetings, board meetings, commission meetings, or similar high-visibility meetings is preferred.

9. Public Records and Electronic Records Support

The Consultant shall demonstrate experience supporting the RTC’s routine electronic records searches and retrieval, including searches of:

- Microsoft 365;
- Exchange Online/email;
- SharePoint;
- OneDrive;
- Network file systems;
- Shared mailboxes; and
- Other electronic repositories.
- The Consultant shall demonstrate an understanding that its role is to provide technical assistance with searching, locating, preserving, and exporting records and that determinations regarding legal responsiveness, exemptions, and disclosure remain with the RTC and/or its legal counsel.
- Experience with Microsoft Purview, eDiscovery, or comparable electronic discovery and records-management tools is preferred.

10. Vendor and Project Management

The Consultant shall demonstrate the ability to coordinate technology projects and third-party vendors, including the ability to:

- Serve as the RTC's technical liaison with vendors;
- Troubleshoot issues involving multiple vendors or systems;
- Track open technical issues through resolution;
- Coordinate installations and upgrades;
- Manage technology implementation activities;
- Develop project schedules and work plans;
- Identify project risks and dependencies;
- Provide cost estimates and recommendations; and
- Communicate technical information clearly to non-technical staff and management.

11. Personnel and Service Capacity

The Consultant shall identify the personnel who will be assigned to the RTC account, including:

- Primary account/contract manager;
- Primary technical support personnel;
- Network/infrastructure personnel;
- Microsoft 365/cloud personnel;
- Cybersecurity personnel; and
- Backup personnel available when primary staff are unavailable.
- For each key individual, the Respondent shall provide a résumé or summary of relevant education, certifications, experience, and qualifications.

The Consultant shall demonstrate sufficient staffing and organizational resources to meet the RTC's required service levels and provide continuity of service during employee absences, turnover, vacations, or other periods of limited availability.

12. Communication and Customer Service

- The Consultant shall demonstrate excellent verbal and written communication skills and the ability to communicate effectively with technical and non-technical personnel.
- The Consultant shall understand the operational demands of a public agency and the importance of timely, clear, and concise communication with RTC staff, management, Commissioners, consultants, vendors, and other stakeholders.
- The Consultant shall be capable of explaining technical issues, risks, alternatives, and recommendations in a professional manner and in language that can be understood by non-technical decision-makers.

13. Confidentiality and Information Security

- The Consultant shall maintain a written confidentiality and information-security policy appropriate to the services provided.
- The Consultant shall have procedures addressing, at a minimum:
- Protection of agency information and data;
- Confidential and sensitive information;
- Administrative credentials and privileged access;
- Data transmission and storage;
- Security incident reporting;
- Access termination;
- Return or secure destruction of RTC data;
- Transfer of credentials and documentation upon contract termination; and
- Protection of RTC information from unauthorized access or disclosure.

14. Legal and Business Requirements

The Consultant shall:

- Be legally authorized to conduct business in the State of California.
- Maintain all licenses, permits, registrations, and certifications required to perform the services.
- Have no known conflict of interest that would interfere with performance of the contract.
- Disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest.
- Commit to avoiding conflicts that may arise from current or future work performed for other clients.
- Possess the financial, technical, personnel, and organizational resources necessary to provide the required services.
- Maintain insurance coverage meeting the RTC's contract requirements and provide renewal certificates to the RTC prior to expiration.

15. References and Relevant Project Experience

Respondents shall provide information for at least three (3) clients for whom the firm has provided IT services similar in scope to those requested by the RTC. At least one reference should preferably be for an organization with approximately 20–100 users and a comparable hybrid work environment. The RTC reserves the right to contact references and investigate the qualifications, experience, staffing, performance, and other information provided by any Respondent or proposed subcontractor.

16. Subcontractors and Specialized Resources

Respondents shall identify any services that will be performed by subcontractors or outside specialists. For each proposed subcontractor, the Respondent shall identify:

- Company name;
- Services to be provided;
- Relevant qualifications and experience;

- Proposed personnel;
- Relationship to the prime Consultant; and
- Percentage or estimated portion of the work to be performed.

The Consultant shall remain responsible for the performance and quality of all subcontracted services and no mark-ups are allowed on subcontractor fees.

17. Continuity of Service

The Consultant shall demonstrate its ability to maintain uninterrupted IT support and institutional knowledge throughout the contract term. The Respondent shall describe its procedures for:

- Staff turnover;
- Vacation and sick leave coverage;
- Emergency staffing;
- Escalation of technical issues;
- Knowledge transfer;
- Maintaining system documentation; and
- Transitioning services if the assigned personnel change.

The RTC reserves the right to approve or request replacement of key personnel assigned to the contract.

D. PROPOSAL CONTENT

RTC staff will screen and evaluate all proposals submitted by the stated deadline in response to this Request for Proposals (RFP). The initial screening and evaluation will determine which Proposers may be invited to participate in an interview, demonstration, or clarification process, if deemed necessary by the RTC.

To facilitate an efficient review and comparative evaluation of proposals, Proposers shall organize their proposals in the order identified below. The proposal shall not exceed **15 pages**, excluding required forms, resumes, references, and other attachments specifically requested by the RTC.

The RTC reserves the right, at its discretion, to request additional information, clarification, demonstrations, or interviews from any Proposer. The RTC may also contact references and conduct other reasonable due diligence regarding a Proposer's qualifications and proposed services.

1. Contract Manager and Project Team

The Proposal shall identify the individual who will serve as the Consultant's primary Contract Manager/Account Manager and provide the names, roles, qualifications, certifications, relevant experience, and responsibilities of all key personnel proposed to perform services under the contract. The Proposal shall include an organizational chart showing:

- The proposed RTC account structure;
- Primary and backup personnel;
- Technical support personnel;
- Network/infrastructure resources;
- Microsoft 365/cloud resources;
- Cybersecurity resources;
- Specialized technical resources; and
- The geographic location of personnel who may provide services to the RTC.
- The Proposal shall identify which personnel will provide services directly and which services, if any, will be provided by subcontractors or outside specialists.
- Proposers shall demonstrate that sufficient personnel and backup resources are available to:
    - Provide help desk support during the required service hours;
    - Respond to critical and high-priority incidents;
    - Provide onsite support when required;
    - Support remote and onsite employees;
    - Troubleshoot hardware, software, network, and connectivity issues;
    - Administer Microsoft 365 and cloud-based systems;
    - Support cybersecurity and security incidents;
    - Manage backups and recovery;
    - Support Zoom Rooms and hybrid meeting technology;
    - Assist with electronic records and public records searches;
    - Coordinate with third-party technology vendors; and
    - Support IT projects and technology implementations.

Proposers shall describe their procedures for maintaining continuity of service when assigned personnel are unavailable due to vacation, illness, turnover, or other circumstances.

2. Firm Qualifications and Demonstrated Technical Expertise

The Proposal shall describe the firm's qualifications and experience providing services substantially similar to the Scope of Services identified in Attachment A. The Proposal shall specifically address the firm's experience and capabilities in:

- Managed IT services and service desk support;
- Network and infrastructure management;
- Microsoft 365 administration;
- Microsoft Azure and cloud technologies;
- User, identity, and access management;
- Cybersecurity and vulnerability management;
- Backup, disaster recovery, and business continuity;
- Endpoint and asset management;
- Zoom and hybrid meeting technology;

- Electronic records and public records search support;
- Software and application support;
- Third-party vendor coordination;
- IT project management and implementation; and
- Staff training and technical documentation.

Proposers shall identify relevant professional or technical certifications held by key personnel, including Microsoft, cybersecurity, networking, or other certifications applicable to the Scope of Services.

Proposers shall identify experience providing IT services to governmental agencies, special districts, transportation agencies, or other organizations subject to public-sector requirements.

3. Understanding of RTC's Needs and Proposed Work Plan

The Proposal shall demonstrate the Proposer's understanding of the RTC's operating environment and the services required under Attachment A. The Work Plan shall describe the Consultant's proposed approach to providing:

- Day-to-day help desk and technical support;
- Remote and onsite troubleshooting;
- Network and infrastructure monitoring and maintenance;
- Microsoft 365 and cloud administration;
- User and access management;
- Cybersecurity monitoring and incident response;
- Backup and recovery;
- System and endpoint patch management;
- Zoom Rooms and hybrid meeting support;
- Software and application support;
- IT asset and license management;
- Public records/electronic records technical support;
- Third-party vendor coordination;
- IT project support; and
- Annual technology assessment and strategic IT planning.

The Proposal shall describe the Consultant's approach to identifying, prioritizing, escalating, documenting, and resolving IT incidents and service requests.

The Proposer shall explain how it will communicate technical issues, risks, recommendations, and system changes to RTC staff and management in a clear and understandable manner.

The Proposal shall also describe procedures for protecting confidential, sensitive, personal, employee, financial, and other non-public RTC information and for maintaining the security and confidentiality of RTC data.

4. Service Desk, Response, and Service Level Approach

The Proposal shall describe the Consultant's service desk and support model, including:

- Method for submitting service requests;
- Proposed ticketing/service management system;
- Availability during RTC's required service hours;
- After-hours and emergency support;
- Priority classification and escalation procedures;
- Remote versus onsite support;
- Response and resolution tracking;
- Communication with users during unresolved incidents;
- Escalation to senior technical staff or third-party vendors; and
- Procedures for documenting and closing service requests.

Proposers shall specifically state their ability to meet or exceed the minimum Service Level and Response Requirements identified in Attachment A.

If the Proposer proposes Service Levels different from those specified by the RTC, the proposed alternative shall be clearly identified as an exception or deviation.

5. Transition and Initial Assessment Plan

The Proposal shall describe the Proposer's approach to assuming responsibility for RTC's IT environment at the beginning of the contract. The transition plan shall address, at a minimum:

- Review of existing IT systems and infrastructure;
- Review of Microsoft 365 and cloud services;
- Review of user accounts and administrative access;
- Review of network and security configurations;
- Review of backup systems and recovery capabilities;
- Review of hardware, software, licenses, warranties, and technology assets;
- Identification of unsupported or obsolete systems;
- Review of existing third-party vendors and contracts;
- Review of outstanding technical issues;
- Review of cybersecurity risks and vulnerabilities;
- Establishment or transfer of the ticketing/help desk system;
- Development or update of system documentation; and
- Identification of immediate, short-term, and long-term recommendations.

The Proposer shall describe anticipated activities during the first 30, 60, and 90 days of the contract.

6. Technology Modernization and Future Services

The Proposal shall describe the firm's experience and capabilities in providing technology modernization and project services that may be requested by the RTC during the contract term. This may include:

- Cloud migration;
- Microsoft Azure implementation;
- SharePoint and OneDrive migration;
- Microsoft Teams Phone implementation and telephone number porting;
- Microsoft Copilot and other approved artificial intelligence technologies;
- Virtual desktop environments;
- Server decommissioning or repurposing;
- Major network or hardware upgrades;
- Cybersecurity assessments;
- Disaster recovery and business continuity planning; and
- Other technology projects.

Proposers shall identify which of these services are included in the proposed base fee and which would be provided as separately authorized services.

7. Experience and References

Proposers shall describe their experience performing work substantially similar or related to the services requested in this RFP.

Proposers shall provide references for at least **three (3) current or recent clients** for whom the Consultant has provided services similar in scope, size, and complexity to those proposed for the RTC.

Preference may be given to references involving organizations with approximately **20–100 users**, hybrid work environments, public agencies, or other organizations with comparable operational requirements. For each reference, provide:

- Client/agency name;
- Brief description of services provided;
- Approximate number of users supported;
- General technology environment supported;
- Number of years working with the client/agency;
- Contract(s) or service period;
- Approximate annual contract value;
- Description of the Proposer's responsibilities;
- Client contact name and title;
- Telephone number; and
- Email address.

The RTC reserves the right to contact references and conduct other reasonable due diligence concerning the Proposer's qualifications, performance, service responsiveness, staffing, and ability to meet contractual requirements.

8. Pricing and Fees

Proposers shall provide a detailed and binding fee proposal that corresponds to the Scope of Services in Attachment A. To facilitate comparison of proposals, pricing shall clearly distinguish between services included in the base recurring fee and services that will be billed separately. At a minimum, the fee proposal shall identify:

i. Base Services

- Monthly recurring fee for routine IT services;
- Services included in the monthly fee;
- Number of users, devices, service requests, or onsite visits included, if subject to limitations;
- Help desk/service desk services;
- Routine onsite support;
- System monitoring;
- Microsoft 365 administration;
- Cybersecurity services;
- Backup monitoring and recovery support;
- Asset and license management; and
- Monthly reporting.

ii. Additional or Project Services

Provide hourly rates by labor category for services outside the base scope, including, as applicable:

- Senior IT Consultant;
- Network Engineer;
- Systems/Cloud Engineer;
- Microsoft 365/Azure Specialist;
- Cybersecurity Specialist;
- Project Manager;
- Help Desk/Technical Support; and
- Other specialized personnel.

iii. After-Hours and Emergency Services

Identify rates for:

- Evenings;
- Weekends;
- RTC-recognized holidays; and
- Emergency/critical incident response.

iv. Other Costs

Identify all other costs, including:

- Travel cost at rates allowable for State employees (CalHR);
- Mileage (IRS Standard Mileage Rates);
- Onsite service charges;
- Equipment installation;
- Software or licensing;
- Third-party services;
- Monitoring platforms;
- Backup/security platforms;
- Shipping;
- Minimum service charges; and
- Any other direct or indirect costs.

Proposers shall identify all assumptions, limitations, exclusions, minimum charges, and additional costs associated with the proposed services. The RTC will not be responsible for costs that were not disclosed in the proposal and subsequently authorized in accordance with the contract.

9. Exceptions and Deviations

Proposers wishing to propose an alternative approach to meeting an RTC technical, service, or contractual requirement shall clearly identify each proposed exception or deviation. For each exception or deviation, the Proposer shall:

- Identify the applicable RFP or Attachment A section;
- State whether the exception is technical, operational, or contractual;
- Clearly describe the proposed alternative;
- Explain the reason for the proposed exception;
- Describe any impact on service, performance, security, schedule, or cost; and
- Identify any additional RTC responsibility or requirement resulting from the proposed alternative.

Failure to identify an exception or deviation may result in the RTC evaluating the proposal based on the requirements stated in the RFP.

10. Additional Information

The RTC may request additional information, clarification, demonstrations, interviews, or presentations from one or more Proposers during the evaluation process. The RTC may also request clarification regarding proposed staffing, service levels, technology solutions, pricing, assumptions, or exceptions. Providing additional information or participating in an interview does not obligate the RTC to enter into negotiations or award a contract.

11. Negotiations

The top-ranked Proposer will be required to participate in negotiations which may result in revisions to the proposal. The cost and method of compensation will be negotiated with the top-ranked Proposer.

12. Required Forms

Proposals must include the following completed forms:

i. Form 1: California Levine Act Statement
ii. Form 2: Exceptions to the Agreement

13. Terms of Agreement

The agreement between the RTC and the selected Consultant will include the terms and conditions outlined in the sample Professional Services Agreement (*Attachment B*)

E. PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL

Interested firms must submit Proposals in PDF form and via email to yparra@sccrtc.org and info@sccrtc.org no later than 5:00 p.m. (Pacific Time), November 17, 2026. Proposals received after the date and time specified above will not be considered. RTC is not responsible for Proposal submitted late for any reason.

All proposals shall be limited to 15 pages, not including the transmittal letter, table of contents, or single page resumes of Key Personnel. Proposals should provide the requested information in a concise, well-organized manner.

F. PRE-PROPOSAL VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

The RTC will host a Pre-Proposal conference via zoom on November 10, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. The RTC staff will review the requirements for this Solicitation and be available to answer questions. Participation in the Pre-Proposal meeting is *not mandatory, but is highly recommended.*

RSVP to yparra@sccrtc.org and info@sccrtc.org or (831) 460-3200 by 10:00 a.m. on November 9, 2026, to be sent the meeting link/dial-in number. Interested parties are encouraged to submit questions prior to the meeting.

G. QUESTIONS CONCERNING THIS RFP:

All questions and/or requests for clarification regarding this RFP must be received in writing via email no later than November 12, 2026, 3:00 p.m. Questions received prior to November 9, 2026, 10:00 a.m. will be answered at the Pre-Proposal Virtual Conference. The email subject line must read: "RFP2626 IT Services." Responses to all questions received will be posted on the RTC website: SCCRTC.org by 5:00 p.m. on November 13, 2026.

H. CONTACT PERSON

Yesenia Parra, Administrative Services Officer
Phone: (831) 460-3200
Email: yparra@sccrtc.org and info@sccrtc.org

I. ADDENDA TO RFP

The RTC reserves the right to amend this RFP at any time up until November 12, 2026. Any amendments to or interpretations of the RFP shall be described in written addenda posted on the RTC website. All addenda issued shall become part of the RFP. Respondent is responsible to monitor the RTC website for any notices related to this RFP SCCRTC.org

If the RTC determines that the addenda may require significant changes in the preparation of proposals, the deadline for submitting the proposals may be postponed by the number of days that the RTC determines will allow Proposers sufficient time to revise their proposals. Any new due date shall be included in the addenda.

J. PROPOSAL EVALUATION/CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated by an Evaluation Committee for completeness and content, and will rank proposals received according to the following criteria:

Proposal Criteria – 100 Points Possible

1. Qualification of Firm/Proposed Staff: *(0-40 points)* a. Demonstrated success as an IT service consultant, including desktop, server, and cloud solutions. b. Experience working with State or local governments for at minimum 5 years. c. Experience of proposed staff, particularly the qualifications and level of involvement of key personnel, help desk staff, network administrators, etc. d. Strength and stability of the firm. e. Microsoft and Office 365 and cybersecurity licensed professional staff. f. Assessments of previous client references, as available. g. Ability to serve RTC Offices in person within one business day meet Service Level requirements. h. Cybersecurity education platform and clearly defined cybersecurity practices according to scope of services.	Points:

2. Approach to the Scope of Services: *(0-30 points)* a. Clear and concise representation that demonstrates thorough understanding of the proposed scope of services. b. Transition and initial assessment plan and experience providing similar services. c. "Best Fit" assessment of the skill set offered by the Consultant and the needs desired by the RTC. d. Prior history of serving clients or employers in the manner described in the proposed scope of services. e. Capacity and ability to provide quality personnel in a timeframe that meets RTC's needs.	Points
3. Fees for Service *(0-30 points)* This portion of the proposal will be evaluated based on reasonableness of the proposed costs to deliver the scope of services. Costs will be evaluated on costs the RTC or other comparable public agencies have paid for similar services, and in accordance with what is considered to be the industry's standard and customary costs for the services.	Points

Any proposal that does not include enough information to permit the RTC to evaluate it using any one of the evaluation factors listed above will be considered non-responsive. A proposal that fails to include one or more items outlined under Section D – Proposal Content and Format (see above), may still be considered complete and generally responsive, if evaluation in every criterion is possible.

Interview and Selection: Following the review and evaluation of proposals, one or more Proposers may be invited to participate in an oral interview. Interviews, if held, are tentatively scheduled for the week of November 23, 2026, and will be held by video conference (Zoom) or in Santa Cruz County, California. Attendees at an interview should be restricted to those individuals who will have direct involvement in providing the services requested. The RTC expects that at a minimum the proposed key staff will attend the oral interview. Members of the firm's management team may also attend. Upon completion of this step of the evaluation and selection process, the Evaluation Committee will re-rank the remaining firms in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth above.

K. COMPLETION OF THE EVALUATION/SELECTION PROCESS

The RTC may accept the proposal or negotiate the terms and conditions of the Agreement with the highest-ranked firm. If negotiations are unsuccessful, the RTC

will terminate the negotiations with that firm and may open negotiations with the next highest-ranked firm. If negotiations with this firm are also not successful, the RTC may repeat the negotiations process with the next highest-ranked firm or, at their sole discretion, the RTC may reject all remaining proposals.

Based on the findings of the Evaluation Committee, and determination of a fair and reasonable cost proposal, staff and Executive Director of the RTC may recommend to the RTC Board that one or more consultants be selected to perform the work. The contract will be awarded to the firm(s) that presents the proposal that is the most advantageous to the RTC, based on the evaluation criteria and fair and reasonableness of the cost proposal.

This RFP does not commit the RTC to enter into an Agreement nor does it obligate the RTC to pay for any costs incurred in preparation and submission of proposals or in anticipation of an Agreement. The RTC is under no obligation to receive further information, written or oral, from any respondent.
The RTC reserves the right to:

1. Reject any or all proposals;
2. Issue subsequent Requests for Proposal;
3. Alter the selection process dates;
4. Remedy technical errors in the RFP process;
5. Approve or disapprove the use of particular subcontractors;
6. Negotiate with any, all, or none of the Proposers;
7. Solicit best and final offers from all or some of the Proposers;
8. Award a contract to one or more Proposers;
9. Accept other than the lowest offer; and/or,
10. Waive informalities and irregularities in proposals.

Selection Disputes

Respondents not selected for interview or contract award will be informed by phone, mail and/or email. Upon request, the RTC will offer a debriefing to respondents who were not selected, at a mutually agreeable time after award of the contract.

Protest procedures are provided to allow proposers an opportunity to formally protest a procurement. The RTC will review only protests submitted by an actual or prospective Proposer. Protests by prospective subcontractors will be rejected. A protest which does not strictly comply with the RTC protest procedures will be rejected.

A proposer may object to a provision of the RFP on the grounds that it is arbitrary, biased, or unduly restrictive, or may object to the selection of a particular consultant on the grounds that RTC procedures, the provisions of the RFP or applicable provisions of federal, State or local law have been violated or inaccurately or inappropriately applied. Any objection must be submitted in writing

and either mailed or hand delivered to the RTC Contract Manager and must include an explanation of the basis for the objection. The date of filing will be the date that the RTC receives the protest.

1. Protests relating to the content of the solicitation (i.e. RFP, RFQ, IFB) must be filed no later than 4:00 PM on the fifth business day after the date of the solicitation or addendum with the revised content is released to the public; or
2. Protests relating to a notice of non-responsiveness or not meeting the minimum qualifications must be filed no later than 4:00 PM (PT) on the fifth day after the date of such notice; or
3. Protests relating to failure to make shortlist must be filed no later than 4:00 PM (PT) on the fifth day of business following the protester's receipt of a notice regarding the shortlisting; or
4. Protests relating to the notification that a Proposer was not recommended for selection or that another Proposer was recommended for selection must be filed no later than 4:00 PM (PT) on the fifth day of business following the protester's receipt of such notice.

Except with regard to initial determinations of non-responsiveness, the evaluation record shall remain confidential until the RTC authorizes the award. A letter of protest must set forth detailed grounds for the protest and be fully supported with technical data, documentary evidence, names of witnesses, and other pertinent information related to the subject being protested. The protest also must state the law, rule, regulation, or policy upon which the protest is based. The RTC Contract Manager will respond to the objection in writing within thirty business days. No contract to a consultant shall be executed until the expiration of the objection period or, if an objection is filed, the issuance of a written response to the protest by the RTC Contract Manager.

The Proposer may appeal the decision of the RTC Contract Manager by filing a written appeal with the RTC Executive Director, no less than three (3) working days after receipt of the written response from the RTC Contract Manager. The Executive Director will respond to the appeal within ten business days and the decision will be final.

III. GENERAL CONDITIONS

1. **Respondent's Proposal Preparation Expenses:** Respondents are solely responsible for their own expenses in preparing and submitting a response to this RFP as well as for subsequent interviews and contract negotiations with the RTC. The RTC will not be liable to any respondent for any costs or damages incurred by the respondent in preparing the RFP response, loss of anticipated profit, or for any other claim.

2. **Ownership of RFP Responses:** All documents, including specific RFP responses, submitted to the RTC become the property of the RTC. All materials submitted by proposers are subject to public inspection under the California Public Records Act (Government Code § 7920.00 et seq.), except that the RTC may withhold from disclosure clearly marked confidential trade secret information contained in any proposal, and proposer's submission of information so marked shall constitute its agreement to defend and indemnify the RTC from any claim or liability for nondisclosure thereof. After award of the contract (or if not awarded, after rejection of all proposals), all responses will be regarded as public records and will be subjected to review by the public. Any language purporting to render all or portions of the proposal confidential will be regarded as non-effective and will be disregarded.

3. **Collection and Use of Personal Information:** Respondents are solely responsible for familiarizing themselves and ensuring that they comply with the laws applicable for the collection and dissemination of personal information, including resumes and other personal information concerning respondent employees and employees of any proposed subconsultants.

4. **Non-Commitment of RTC:** This RFP is not an agreement to purchase or contract for services. The RTC reserves the right to modify or cancel in whole or in part this RFP, to reject any and all proposals, to accept the proposal they consider most favorable to the RTC's interests in their sole discretion, and to waive irregularities or informalities in any proposal or in the proposal procedures. The RTC reserves the right, in its sole discretion, not to enter into a contract as a result of this RFP. The RTC further reserves the right to reject all proposals and seek new proposals when the RTC considers such procedure to be in their best interests. All responses will be assessed in light of the needs described in this RFP, including the Scope of Services (Attachment A.). The RTC is under no obligation to receive further information, written or oral, from any respondent. Any award will be to the consultant(s) whose proposal is, in the sole judgment of the RTC board on the basis of the evaluation criteria herein, most advantageous to RTC.

5. **Changes to Proposals Prior to Closing Date:** Any proposals received prior to the due date and time specified above may be modified by written request of the proposer. Any modification must be received by the proposal due date and time specified in this RFP. After that date, no additional wording or comments will be added to the response unless requested by the RTC for purposes of clarification.

6. **Modification of RFP Terms:** The RTC reserves the right to modify the terms of this RFP at any time and may cancel this RFP or further review of responses at any time without entering into a contract. It is the sole responsibility of prospective and actual respondent to check for modifications of and additional information pertaining to the RFP on the RTC website: SCCRTC.org.

7. **Notification of Further RFP Respondent Review and Interview Not Binding:** A respondent may withdraw from consideration at any time by notifying the RTC in writing, by phone or by email. The RTC may, at its sole discretion, withdraw the name of a respondent for further review by notifying the respondent in writing, by phone or by email. Notice in writing, by email or by phone to a respondent that it has been identified as a candidate for further review and an interview will neither constitute a contract, nor give the respondent any legal or equitable rights or privileges relative to this RFP.

8. **Contract:** Any contract proposed with a selected respondent shall comply with all public contracting statutes applicable in the State of California. RTC's sample contract is enclosed as *Attachment B*. Respondents shall be prepared to accept the terms and conditions of the sample contract provided herein, which include requirements for compensation, financial auditing and management requirements, indemnity, and insurance.

   If a Proposer desires to take exception to the above, Proposer shall provide the following information using *Form 2 "Exceptions to the Contract."* The exceptions to the Contract shall include the following:

   1. Proposer shall clearly identify each proposed change to the Agreement, including all relevant exhibits.

   2. Proposer shall include the reasons as well as specific recommendations for alternative language.

   The above factors will be taken into account in evaluating proposals. Proposals that take substantial exceptions to the Agreement or proposed compensation terms may be determined by the RTC, at its sole discretion, to be unacceptable and no longer considered for award. Only the exceptions stated in the proposal will be considered when negotiating the Agreement.

   The RTC may accept the proposal or negotiate the terms and conditions of the Agreement with the highest-ranked firm. If mutual agreeable terms are not reached, the RTC reserves the right to terminate negotiations and may open negotiations with the next highest ranked firm. RTC further reserves the right to terminate negotiations at any point without obligation to contract for services with any firm. If a proposer wishes to recommend a change to any standard RTC contract provision, the provision and any proposed alternative language must be requested in writing prior to the closing date for receipt of requests for clarifications/exceptions listed above. If no such change or exception is requested in writing, the consultant will be deemed to accept RTC's standard contract provisions.

9. **Conflict of Interest:** The prospective consultant shall demonstrate no conflicts of interest, and a commitment to avoid potential future conflicts that might arise from work performed for others, or current or past associations

or relationships that would present a conflict of interest under California Government Code Sections 1090 *et seq.* or 87100 *et seq.* during the performance of services under any contract resulting from this RFP and that it will not knowingly employ any person having such interest. Violation of this provision may result in the contract being deemed void and unenforceable.

By submitting a proposal, the Proposer represents and warrants that no commissioner, officer, or employee of the RTC is in any manner interested directly or indirectly in the proposal or in the contract that may be made under it or in any profits expected to arise therefrom, as set forth in California Government Code Section 1090.

Prospective consultants shall disclose any financial, business or other relationship with RTC that may have an impact upon the outcome of this contract. The prospective consultant shall also list current clients who may have a financial interest in the outcome of this contract or RTC projects that will follow.

10. **Accessible Electronic Documents:** In order to facilitate public engagement and ensure accessibility of documents, Consultant shall provide Americans with Disabilities Act of 1994 (ADA)-accessible electronic copies of any documents being distributed for board and public review, such as policy documents, as applicable. Guidance on ADA remediation of documents is available at: https://www.section508.gov/create/

11. **Non-discrimination:** RTC's Nondiscrimination Plan is available on our website (https://www.sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2025-RTC-TitleVI-Program.pdf). It is the policy of RTC to ensure nondiscrimination in the award and administration of all contracts and to create a level playing field on which firms can compete fairly for contracts and subcontracts relating to the RTC's procurement and professional services activities. The Consultant or subconsultant shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, or gender in the performance of this contract. This applies to all consultant's and subconsultant's employment, solicitations, selection of subconsultants, and procurement of materials.

    Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 – disadvantage business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation.

12. **Financial Management and Accounting System Requirements:** Contracts shall not be awarded to a consultant without an adequate financial management and accounting system as required by 48 CFR Part 16.301-3, 49 CFR Part 18, and 48 CFR Part 31. Consultant's financial management system must be adequate to accumulate and segregate reasonable, allowable, and allocable direct and indirect project costs.

ATTACHMENTS TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

- Attachment A: Scope of Services
- Attachment B: RTC Sample Contract
- Required Forms and Attachments (online at SCCRTC.org)
  i. Form 1: California Levine Act Statement
  ii. Form 2: Exceptions to the Agreement