



Contact Center Overflow Vendor RFP Responses to Questions

Reference: “the vendor will staff a year-round team of up to ten agents”

Question: In order for vendors to properly assess carrier long-distance charges, please provide the estimated call volume and talk time for the non-Open Enrollment periods.

Answer: The volume would be approximately 10% of overall monthly volume as provided in the RFP. Call handle and wait times average 9 minutes and 30 seconds.

Reference: “...Outbound Live Operator services”

Question: Please provide contact center forecasted MNSure outbound call volumes.

Answer: Outbound calls will be at a minimum and in ad hoc situations if needed. The vendor would only be asked to assist with outbound calls should the volume become too large for MNSure staff to handle in a timely manner. Should the need arise, volume estimates would be anywhere from 100 to 5000 contacts.

Reference: General

Question: Please confirm the overflow vendor is required to provide contact center services in English only.

Answer: Yes. MNSure has access to translation services that would be available to the vendor if needed.

Reference: General

Question: Please confirm the expected volume of calls the Overflow Vendor might receive. The RFP seems to indicate various options:

The full volume indicated on page 2 of the RFP?

The full volume indicated on page 2, minus the current in-house Tier 1 agents?

The 20% of transferred calls indicated in Section 2, page 7 of the RFP?

Some other volume, based on a combination of the above?

Answer: Vendor volume would be a combination of the above. Call volumes would be split between the vendor and MNSure Tier 1 staff based upon capacity and wait times. This would be monitored and adjusted throughout each day. There is a likelihood that some MNSure Tier 1 staff may need to be pulled off the phones to assist with manual operations work or take complex calls from the vendors agents. This would be discussed in advance with the vendor to ensure proper planning and staffing.

Reference: General: Hours of Operation

Question: Please confirm any holidays observed by MNSure when the contact center would not be operational.

Answer: Established dates that MNSure operations will be closed during the next year are: Thursday, November 27, 2014, Friday, November 28, 2014, December 25, 2014 and January 1, 2015. Additional dates may be determined.

Reference: “Note: Hours will be extended until 12:00 a.m. CT (midnight) on several dates which are yet to be determined.”

Question: For costing purposes, please provide the estimated number of days the hours of operation will be extended until 12:00 a.m.

Answer: It is estimated about 10 days would require extended hours until midnight CT. These dates are anticipated to occur in December and February. Actual dates will be finalized and provided to the vendor no later than October 1, 2014. Any additional days added after that would be discussed with the vendor at least two weeks prior to the newly added date.

Reference: “Note: Hours will be extended until 12:00 a.m. CT (midnight) on several dates which are yet to be determined.”

Question: What is the timeframe of notice given for the extended hours requirement?

Answer: See above.

Reference: “The vendor shall staff a problem reporting toll-free number on a 24/7/365 basis to accept trouble reports from MNSure.”

Question: Please confirm this is an unpublished telephone number, used for internal purposes of conducting business between MNSure and the awarded vendor of this contract.

Answer: Yes. The number would be unpublished and shared only with essential MNSure leadership or IT staff.

Reference: “The vendor shall staff a problem reporting toll-free number on a 24/7/365 basis to accept trouble reports from MNSure.”

Question: Please describe, or provide examples of, the types of trouble reports the Overflow vendor might receive from MNSure

Answer: In the event the State’s telephony or internal systems should experience issues or be completely down, MNSure would need a contact number to communicate these issues and any impact to the vendors ability to perform in a timely manner. Also, MNSure may bring MN.IT for consultation on, for example, connectivity, transmission issues or call processing within the overflow environment.

Reference: “Normal call center hours for the enrollment periods will be determined during contract negotiations.”

Question: Please confirm the Hours of Operation (HoO) delineated under section MNSure Contact Center Statistical and Operational Information is the determined HoO thus allowing acceptance of MNSure contract without exceptions/modifications in order to expedite execution of a contract following award.

Answer: Normal hours will be 8 AM to 8 PM CT Monday – Friday and 8 AM to 4:30 PM CT Saturday and Sunday. Allowances should be made for any queues that may need to be cleared after close of normal business hours.

Reference: “The vendor shall provide a turn-key, full-service operation to include... software” and “Utilization of various technologies provided by the MNSure management team in order to effectively serve clients which may include...CRM system”

Question: For costing and solutioning purposes, please confirm if the overflow vendor will be utilizing the MNSure CRM system.

Answer: Yes. The vendor’s agents will be given training and access to MNSure’s CRM system.

Reference: “MNSure presently has an in-house contact center comprised of 25 Tier 1 front-line agents year round with an additional six Tier 2 agents to handle escalations.”

Question: Who is the vendor that currently provides in-house contact center services?

Answer: MNsure's contact center services are provisioned within the State of Minnesota's owned and managed Cisco hosted environment. See Section 3, Technical Capacity.

Reference: "The vendor shall have the capability to provide call center services on a 24/7/365 basis using both IVR..."

Question: Please confirm overflow calls will be transferred to the overflow vendor IVR and/or agents during approved Hours of Operation only.

Answer: Yes. Calls will only be transferred during normal business operating hours.

Reference: "The vendor shall have the capability to provide call center services on a 24/7/365 basis using both IVR and live Customer Service Representatives.

Question: Please confirm that the overflow vendor is not required to provide live agent support 24/7/365, per the Hours of Operation listed on page 2 of the RFP

Answer: The vendor is only required to provide live agent support during normal business hours of 8 AM to 8 PM CST Monday – Friday and 8 AM to 4:30 PM CST Saturday and Sunday and until midnight CT on days identified in advance.

Reference: "Only MNsure names and logos will be permitted on information distributed"

Question: Please confirm that the Overflow Vendor is not expected to mail or distribute any "hard copy" information, such as brochures, enrollment packets or forms.

Answer: The vendor will not be required to distribute any information via paper or hard copy to the general public. However, all job aids and internal documents should be branded as "MNsure" specific.

Reference: "...the vendor shall submit a revised monthly invoice to MNsure to reflect any liquidated damages."

Question: Please define the liquidated damages, broken down by performance standard.

Answer: Liquidation and penalty terms will be negotiated with vendor and identified in the contract.

Reference: "The quantitative standards will be calculated monthly for the purpose of the contract."

Question: Please confirm the quantitative standards will be calculated as a monthly average for the purpose of the contract.

Answer: Yes. By the calendar month.

Reference: "Callers must not be placed on hold more than 120 seconds" and "The overflow vendor shall provide a "warm" transfer of calls back to the MNsure contact center that they have not been trained or able to support."

Question: Please advise how the hold performance metric applies in the instance of a warm transfer.

Answer: If current wait times exceed 120 seconds calls may be cold transferred with the appropriate consumer education before transferring.

Reference: "Callers must not be placed on hold for more than 120 seconds"

Question: Please confirm the performance standard is callers must not be placed on hold for more than 120 consecutive seconds.

Answer: Calls that have been answered and need to be placed on hold for any reason must not hold for more than 120 seconds without at least touching back to the caller before placing them on hold again if necessary.

Reference: “Vendor shall have a dedicated trainer onsite to conduct training...” and “All training costs shall be the responsibility of the vendor. MNSure will not accept any invoicing for training and/or associated expenses unless specifically authorized and agreed to by MNSure in advance and in writing.”

Question: Please confirm the required dedicated, onsite trainer is an authorized training expense that the vendor may invoice for. If so, may the vendor include the trainer under the “Billing Element Description” of Contact Center Cost?

Answer: Training expenses will be negotiated as part of the contract.

Reference: “Develop, conduct and maintain a comprehensive and continuous training program...” and “Develop and update training manuals...”

Question: It would be the most advantageous use of the MNSure’s financial and labor resources as well as produce the most consistent product if the in-house and overflow contact center vendors collaborated together on the development and maintenance of training materials. Please confirm it is the intent of MNSure to use near identical training programs as well as policies and procedures in-house and overflow.

Answer: MNSure’s current training will be provided to the vendor. Training of vendor staff will be identical to that of MNSure.

Reference: Execution of Contract. September 15, 2014 (estimated)” and “For the 2014-2015 enrollment period, the on-boarding and start-up process is scheduled to begin by September 10, 2014.”

Question: Please confirm the estimated contact execution date.

Answer: MNSure intends to complete proposal evaluation, and negotiate and execute a contract by September 15, 2014.

Reference: “...proposed lead staff” and “No change in the successful Responder’s personnel assigned to this project will be permitted without the prior written approval of MNSure.”

Question: Please define lead staff positions.

Answer: Any supervisor, manager or account manager change should be discussed with MNSure to determine if the change will be detrimental the day to day operations.

Reference: “In no more than one page...”

Question: Please confirm if the two references required in Part 2 are included in the one page limit prescribed in Part 1.

Answer: Yes.

References: “The overflow vendor shall provide a “warm” transfer of calls back to the MNSure contact center that they have not been trained or able to support.” And “The overflow vendor may receive up to 100% of the agent bound calls.”

Question: Please advise of inquiry types the overflow vendor will not be trained or able to support.

Answer: The vendor staff will not be trained or required to perform any duties deemed as manual work. Should the need arise this may include manually enrolling consumers outside the system, making manual life event changes, manually renewing a consumer as well as other similar functions.

References: “The overflow vendor shall provide a “warm” transfer of calls back to the MNSure contact center that they have not been trained or able to support.” And “The overflow vendor may receive up to 100% of the agent bound calls.”

Question: Will the primary IVR support intelligent call routing to prevent the overflow vendor from receiving calls they are unable to support?

Answer: The primary IVR supports intelligent call routing; however, depending upon the overflow arrangement, the overflow vendor may receive calls that they are unable to support. These calls may need to be routed back to MNSure.

References: “The overflow vendor shall provide a “warm” transfer of calls back to the MNSure contact center that they have not been trained or able to support.” And “The overflow vendor may receive up to 100% of the agent bound calls.”

Question: If the overflow vendor is supporting of 100% of agent bound calls, yet not trained to support all call types, please advise how non-supported calls will be addressed.

Answer: The overflow vendor will be provided a process to address non-supported calls.

Reference: “It is forecast that approximately 20% of the calls will be transferred to MNSure on a separate backdoor telephone number.”

Question: Please confirm the calls being referenced here will be transferred the overflow vendor.

Answer: It is forecasted that the overflow vendor will transfer back to MNSure 20% of the calls they receive. These calls will be transferred from the vendor to MNSure and will be comprised of escalations and/or complex cases requiring manual assistance.

Reference: “It is forecast that approximately 20% of the calls will be transferred to MNSure on a separate backdoor telephone number.”

Question: Please confirm if the forecast is 20% of the total incoming call volume.

Answer: Yes. It is forecasted that 20% of the calls the overflow vendor receives will be transferred back to MNSure.

Reference: “It is forecast that approximately 20% of the calls will be transferred to MNSure on a separate backdoor telephone number.”

Question: Please confirm the separate backdoor telephone number is the telephone number the in-house contact center will utilize to transfer calls to the overflow vendor.

Answer: The overflow vendor will be provided a separate telephone number to transfer calls back to MNSure.

Reference: “The vendor will have in place a comprehensive call flow and intelligent routing process”

Comment: To minimize the complexity of call flow and routing as well as produce the most seamless experience for callers it would be most advantageous for the initial, in-house contact center ACD/IVR to fulfill the majority of call flow and intelligent routing needs.

Response: Agree; however call volumes preclude doing this at certain times of the year.

Reference: “...until the final product of this Contract has been reviewed by State’s...”

Question: Please define the “final product” of this contract.

Answer: This will be negotiated and defined in the contract.

Reference: “...until the final product of this Contract has been reviewed by State’s...”

Question: Please define the period of performance for the review.

Answer: This will be negotiated and defined in the contract.

Reference: “contractor will be paid [insert negotiated compensation terms]...”

Question: Please indicate the type of contract MNsure intends to award – Time and Materials, Cost Plus Fixed Fee, Fixed Fee for Service, Volume-Based, or another type?

Answer: An hourly per agent rate is preferred, however payment terms may be negotiated as part of the contract.

Reference: Cost Proposal: Trunking Cost and Contact Center Cost

Question: Please confirm if vendors may add additional descriptions in the Billing Element Description in order to provide the most accurate financial proposal, such as other support positions, ODCs, etc.

Answer: Yes. The vendor should make the proposal as descriptive as possible.

Reference: Billing Element Descriptions

Question: Please identify what constitutes a session.

Answer: A SIP session is the equivalent of one telephony trunk.

Reference: Contact Center Cost

Question: Can vendors add billing elements to the cost form (such as other support positions, ODCs, etc.), or should those costs be incorporated into the cost elements indicated on this form?

Answer: Yes. The vendor should make the proposal as descriptive as possible.

Reference: Contact Center Cost; Billing Element Description; Recurring Cost Units

Question: We assume that this refers to the cost of the ten full time Agents and the management and infrastructure to support them. Is this correct?

Answer: MN.IT is not clear on the “ten agents” part of this question. We agree that the cost should include agent, the management and the infrastructure to support the services delivered.

Reference: Contact Center Cost; Billing Element Description; Non-Recurring Cost Units

Question: We assume that this refers to the cost of the cost of the surge agents and the management and infrastructure to support them. Is this correct?

Answer: No. The non-recurring costs are one-time costs to implement the overflow solution and provision overflow agents, and any additional requested features/functionality.

Reference: Liquidated Damages

Question: Please confirm liquidated damages will not apply in the event of force majeure.

Answer: No. Liquidated damages will not apply to any natural and unavoidable catastrophes that interrupt the expected course of events and restrict the vendor from fulfilling obligations.

Reference: Liquidated Damages

Question: Please confirm liquidated damages will not apply in event of failure due to third parties outside of the vendor’s reasonable control.

Answer: No. Liquidated damages will not apply to any natural and unavoidable catastrophes that interrupt the expected course of events and restrict the vendor from fulfilling obligations.

Reference: Liquidated Damages

Question: Please confirm that the vendor will have appeal rights concerning any liquidated damages assessed by the State.

Answer: Yes. The vendor will have the right to appeal. Terms and the process of appeals will be negotiated within the contract.

Reference: IVR

Question: Will the vendor have access to the same voice talent used by MNSure to record IVR prompts in an effort to create a seamless experience for callers?

Answer: Yes, provided recording of the IVR can be done remotely.

References: “the vendor must describe if there is the ability to be part of the MNSure Cisco contact center” and “Describe the vendor’s contact center (call control) platform”

Question: Please clarify if MNSure wishes vendors to including pricing for their own contact center platforms, or if vendors should assume use of the HIPCC.

Answer: MNSure would like pricing for both options.

Reference: “the vendor must describe if there is the ability to be part of the MNSure Cisco contact center”

Question: Please describe the full functionality of the MNSure Cisco (HIPCC) contact center in order for vendors to appropriate gauge resources and ability to use the system.

Answer: The Contact Center functionality includes call routing, monitoring, queuing and reports, and also scripting and optional interface to backend systems.

The vendor needs to provide:

- data connectivity to the state’s network
- staff resources to answer calls
- work with the State of Minnesota on licensing and configuration
- these are needed if the vendor is offering this solution

Reference: “the commission shall award up to a six percent preference on state procurements to certified small businesses...”

Question: Will vendors that subcontract with small businesses meeting the requirements in this section be awarded the six percent (6%) preference?

Answer: No. To receive the 6% preference, the primary vendor must be certified with the State of Minnesota as a targeted group business (TGB).

Reference: Training

Question: What is the average duration of new agent training?

Answer: Approximately 2 weeks – this includes classroom and nesting periods with live calls.

Question: Would MNSure grant an extension of an additional three (3) weeks to answer and respond to the Contact Center request for proposal?

Answer: MNSure is extending the proposal submission deadline one week. It will not extend the submission date beyond August 25, 2014.

Question: Is it expected that vendor will utilize the same ACD/IVR platform (Cisco) as MNSure currently uses?

Answer: This is one of three options. See Section 3, Technical Capacity, #3 Vendor Trunking, in the addendum.

Question: The Overview states that the vendor will staff a year-round team of up to ten agents at all times. Is there a minimum number of agent resources that are required, and if so, how many?

Answer: The volume would be approximately 10% of overall monthly volume as provided in the RFP. Call handle and wait times are Average handle times are 9 minutes and 30 seconds.

Question: Per **Responsibilities...#4 and 5**, does MNSure envision that the vendor may be expected to provide services outside of the MNSure Contact Center Hours of Operation? If so, can you characterize the requirement?

Answer: The vendor is only required to provide live agent support during normal business hours of 8 AM to 8 PM CST Monday – Friday and 8 AM to 4:30 PM CST Saturday and Sunday and until midnight CST on days identified in advance.

Question: Are there language requirements for live agents other than English?

Answer: Yes. MNSure has access to translation services that would be available to the vendor if needed.

Question: Is MNSure amenable to receiving a la carte options for IVR-related services not specifically listed in the RFP?

Answer: Yes.