

SACWIS RFP Questions and Answers – Round 1

The answers to the first round of vendor Questions and Answers to the Alabama SACWIS RFP are set out below.

The State references the SACWIS Procurement Library in response to several vendor questions. The Procurement Library is being established as a component of the State’s response to the first round of vendor questions and will be updated with additional documentation through February 28, 2006.

A few of the questions received in the first round of Questions and Answers will require slight modifications to the RFP. At the conclusion of the second round of Questions and Answers on March 14, 2006, the State will post an addendum to the State’s SACWIS RFP website setting out the specific portions of the RFP that must be modified along with the modifications themselves. In order to address vendor concerns in a timely fashion, however, the questions requiring RFP modifications have been answered in the Questions and Answers below.

No.	RFP Reference	Vendor Question	State Answer
01.	Cover Page & Section 1.4	The cover page indicates that the Bidder's Conference begins at 10:00 am CST on 2/21/06. Page 12, Section 1.4 indicates that the conference begins at 9:00 am CST. Please confirm the correct start time.	The mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference will be held at 10am on Tuesday, February 21, in the Gordon Persons Building auditorium, 50 Ripley Street, Montgomery, AL.
02.	Section 1.6.1	Vendors must submit a signed copy of the RFP cover sheet and the Proposal Compliance Checklist form attached as Appendix B to respond to this RFP. Vendors must label each RFP response item with the associated RFP section and subsection numbers. Please clarify where within the vendor's proposal should the signed copy of the RFP Cover Sheet and Proposal Compliance Checklist be located - within the proposal section 5, or as an Appendix.	The RFP Cover Sheet and the Proposal Compliance Checklist should be included as the first two pages of the vendor proposal.
03.	Section 3.0 Section 3.1	Of the 4,300 DHR employees mentioned (Section 3.0, p. 22) how many are expected to be users of ASSIST when it is completed with full functionality? Will this eventual total number be greater than the 2,016 child welfare and adult protective services staff cited in Section 3.1, p. 22?	The State anticipates the number of individuals to be trained to be approximately 2,100. The State will post additional training information to the Procurement Library no later than February 28.
04.	Section 3.3	Section 3.3, Page 25 refers to ASSIST Releases 1 and 2 that have been deployed into production. Will the state provide vendors with the design deliverables associated with these releases? Have design materials been developed for future ASSIST releases and if they have will the state provide these materials to vendors?	Design documents will be made available for ASSIST Release 2. There are no design documents available for any other releases. The State will post the requested information to the Procurement Library no later than February 28.

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05.	Section 3.15	Please provide details on the technical construction of ASSIST Release 2; i.e. development tools, source code, data base, etc..	The State will post the requested information to the Procurement Library no later than February 28.
06.	Section 3.15	Has a procurement library been established for this project?	A Procurement Library has been established for the project at www.dhr.state.al.us . Follow the SACWIS Request for Proposals link under Announcements to the Procurement Library.
07.	Section 3.15	Given the need for the Vendor to convert from multiple systems, does the state have a common identifier for it's individual. If not, how does the State match individuals through these systems today?	<p>All legacy systems, with the exception of ACWIS, FSS, and FCBS, operate as independent systems. There is no consistent unique person identifier across these systems. All systems use either an internal ID, SSN, or a combination of the two, to identify a person.</p> <p>Among ACWIS, FSS, and FCBS, person information is matched via cross-reference tables that contain the internal ID and SSN information for these systems.</p>
08.	Section 3.15	How much of the desired SACWIS functionality is implemented by the totality of the existing 17 systems which comprise the ASSIST legacy system?	<p>The State outlined a total of 14 systems in the RFP from which data will be converted to the SACWIS. Please reference Section 3.15 for more information.</p> <p>Many of the 14 legacy systems referenced in the RFP were developed years ago and were not designed with the purpose of meeting SACWIS requirements. The State is unable to estimate the amount of SACWIS functionality that may exist in these systems.</p>
09.	Section 3.15	For each ASSIST legacy application, how much of the SACWIS functionality does each one provide for its conceptual part of SACWIS?	See response to question 8.
10.	Section 3.15	Would the [State] accept an automated migration of the ACWIS, FSS, FCBS, STAC, ASSIST, and Adoption Subsidy legacy systems, assuming that the other technical requirements for the application are met?	The State is open to any viable solution that meets all the requirements and conditions set out in the RFP and appendices.
11.	Section 3.15	<p>We believe the key task in this modernization is the integration of the data models of the existing legacy applications with any additional requirements induced by SACWIS.</p> <p>The second major task is reengineering the applications to all use that shared model. Is this consistent with the state's understanding of the problem?</p>	The State is open to any viable solution that meets all the requirements and conditions set out in the RFP and appendices.

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12.	Section 3.15	<p>We are likely to propose an automation-based approach to reengineer the ACWIS, FSS, FCBS, STAC, ASSIST and Adoption legacy systems. The same approach could with only a modest increment in effort likely handle the 920, PSP-969 and Putative Father applications. Is the state interested in a broader scoped proposal that includes automated reengineering of the latter?</p>	<p>The State is open to any viable solution that meets all the requirements and conditions set out in the RFP and appendices.</p>
13.	Section 3.15	<p>The RFP does not provide detailed information about the technologies used in each application. Can you provide a breakdown for all the systems listed in question 5, of the following information:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">ApplicationName, MainProgrammingLanguage, SizeOfApplicationinSLOC.</p> <p>Please be precise about the actual dialect of the programming language. (names of precise reference manuals would be very helpful).</p> <p>We are expecting that the application set are programmed in COBOL and Paradox.</p> <p>Are there any other languages involved, e.g., database description languages, database query languages, screen format specification languages. Please provide answers for each of the applications.</p>	<p>The application name, main programming language, volume of data, etc. is provided in Section 3.15 Current Automation Support, for all the legacy systems and in Appendix J: System Architecture, for each of the legacy systems that the State is asking the vendor to convert. Additional information for these systems will be provided in the Procurement Library no later than February 28.</p>
14.	Section 3.15	<p>Given that a reengineering task of this size will be of lengthy duration, does the State have any interest in documenting the present applications to ease the interim maintenance activities?</p>	<p>The State will retain responsibility for maintaining all existing legacy systems until the new SACWIS is implemented statewide. The State has documented the legacy systems that the vendor must convert in Appendix J.</p>
15.	Section 3.15	<p>Can the source code for any or all the applications be obtained in a short time frame, so that some of the details can be assessed and used to help guide our proposal? If so, please describe the process for obtaining the source code.</p>	<p>The State will post the requested information to the Procurement Library no later than February 28.</p>
16.	Section 3.15	<p>Does the state have all the source code for these applications under good configuration control at present? Is there any source code which is unavailable, even during the project?</p>	<p>The State uses three source code configuration management tools. The mainframe code is tracked through CA-Librarian. The ASSIST Java and PowerBuilder components as well as the stored procedures are tracked through a product called Subversion. The other PC applications utilize Source Safe to manage source control. All source code is available.</p>

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17.	Section 3.15	How are the applications presently interacting with their client base? Mainframe screens? Does the state want modern GUI-based interfaces, web-based interfaces, or is a direct simulation of current screen style adequate?	<p>The mainframe online legacy systems (ACWIS, FSS, and FCBS) use mainframe screens generated by CICS maps from COBOL programs. ASSIST employs modern GUI web-based interfaces. The 969 and 920 systems are COBOL batch systems with no user interface. STAC, Adoption Subsidy Payroll, Putative Father, Child Death Reporting, Severe Emotionally Behaviorally Disabled, Administrative Record Review and ICPC use GUI Windows-based interfaces.</p> <p>Refer to requirement #7 in Appendix E: Functional Requirements. The SACWIS application must be web-based.</p>
18.	Section 3.15	Section 3.15 Current Automation Support, Page 34, Table listing the System Name and Platforms. It states that the current ASSIST system is on a web platform. What is the technical specification of this web platform?	The State will post the requested information to the Procurement Library no later than February 28.
19.	Section 3.15	Section 3.15 Current Automation Support Page 34, Are any systems that are currently in use by the Family Services and Adult Protective Services programs on a Java Platform?	<p>None of the legacy applications identified for conversion are on a pure Java platform. However, portions of ASSIST utilize JSP, Java, and Java components along with PowerBuilder components. The Department does utilize a web-based application for displaying batch reports that are generated from ASSIST, ACWIS, FSS, and FCBS. This application, known as ERD (Electronic Report Distribution), is on a pure Java platform.</p> <p>The State will post the requested information to the Procurement Library no later than February 28.</p>
20.	Section 3.15	Section 3.15 Current Automation Support Page 34, Are any systems that are currently in use by the Family Services and Adult Protective Services programs on a Microsoft.Net Platform?	None of the legacy applications identified for conversion are on a .net platform.
21.	Section 3.16	The state wishes to "use the existing technical environment to support the ASSIST system". Does this mean that the state requires the SACWIS application to run on the IBM Mainframe? To be implemented in COBOL? To specifically use DB2?	<p>The State does not require that the solution run on the IBM Mainframe, be implemented in COBOL, or use DB2 (see Appendix E – Functional Requirements, requirement number 4). Per Section 3.16 of the RFP, the State’s intent is that the vendor solution operate within the parameters of the current technical infrastructure, but the vendor is free to propose additional hardware or software needed to implement its solution provided the hardware and software will operate within the State’s technical infrastructure. If additional hardware or software is proposed, it must be included in Appendix C: Price Sheet, Section II.</p>

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22.	Section 3.16	Is it acceptable to augment the current technical environment with additional software tools or hardware components providing they are compatible with the current AL DHR technical environment?	Yes. See response to question 21. Vendors must set out in Appendix C: Vendor Price Sheet, Section II, the specific hardware and software the State must acquire in order to implement the vendor's solution.
23.	Section 3.16	It is stated that the State intends to use the existing technical environment to support the SACWIS system (3.16, p 39). The technical production environment specifications are given for the network, client workstations, file servers and mainframe. But we could not locate specifications for a web environment. Could you please supply this information, web server and application server specifications, and any other components in place that support your web environment (load balancing, etc)?	Please refer to the Procurement Library for further information on the web environment. The State is seeking a solution that will operate within the existing technical environment. The vendor may propose additional software tools or hardware components providing they are compatible with the State's current technical infrastructure. See response to questions 21 and 22.
24.	Section 4	This bullet addresses Vendor response time in the event that a deliverable or any part of that deliverable is deemed unacceptable by State standards. The Vendor's response time is reflected as 5 days. Will the State confirm that this is 5 working days from the date the Vendor is notified?	Yes. Per Section 4, page 44 of the SACWIS RFP, "From the point the notice of deficiency is issued, the vendor shall have five (5) days to cure the deficiency(ies) and resubmit the deliverable to the State." The five-day cure period begins the day the written notice of deficiency is delivered to the vendor and ends five working days thereafter.
25.	Section 4	The RFP states that the Vendor must warrant "that the system is free of defects for twelve (12) months after the system is fully operational in all counties in the State." Though all Vendors strive to produce bug-free software, the expectation that 100% of the system will contain no defects is unreasonable. Will the State consider alternative language indicating that the Vendor must warrant a defect rate in line with acceptable industry standards?	The State requires the vendor to provide the functionality defined in the requirements and as detailed in their proposal. If there are defects, the vendor is expected to repair them during the warranty period so that the operation of the system is in compliance with the terms of the contract. While the State will not be unreasonable in its interpretation of this requirement, it expects the vendor to deliver the required functionality.
26.	Section 4, Task 5	Page 56, Task 5: Data Conversion and Interfaces; Page 59; last bullet - Will the state require the vendor to perform manual conversion of cases that cannot be converted through automated means due to missing, incorrect and/or inconsistent data?	The State will provide resources to handle any manual conversion duties that are required.

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27.	Section 4, Task 5.4	Given that the stated systems that the SACWIS system must interface with (Task 5.4, p. 61) are FACETS, ALECS, AMAES, and the Juvenile Court System, it is assumed that Alabama intends on deploying SACWIS across all 67 counties at one time. If this were not the case, then temporary interfaces would be required with the existing systems (ACWIS, FSS, etc.). Is this assumption correct?	The State does not assume a 67 county deployment at one time. Per Section 4, Task 6.6, page 71, “[t]he State will entertain proposed pilot solutions from vendors, but anticipates a two to three county pilot for a period of not less than two months followed by a phased rollout of the system over the following three to six months.” The State encourages alternative implementation strategies, but expects vendors to provide temporary interfaces with legacy systems during pilot and any phased implementation that’s proposed. (Reference Section 4, Task 8.1, “prepare and establish Pilot interfaces with legacy systems”)
28.	Section 4, Task 5.5	The RFP states that an interface will be certified only when testing through the partner system has been completed. The rate at which an interfacing entity’s staff works to complete the complementing interface is not within the Vendor’s control. Does the State have existing Memorandums of Understanding with all interfacing entities that indicate the level of cooperation that can be expected when creating interfaces to the new ASSIST? What assurances will the State provide that an acceptance of the interfaces, the entire ASSIST SACWIS, and any associated payments will not be unduly held due to circumstances outside the Vendor’s control?	The vendor will not be held responsible for interface delays due to factors beyond their control.
29.	Section 4, Task 6	Does the state have any kind of automated regression tests for the existing applications?	See response to question 30.
30.	Section 4, Task 6.5	What is the state proposing to use for acceptance testing?	Currently, the State utilizes Mercury Interactive’s TestDirector 5.0, WinRunner 7.0, and LoadRunner 7.8 testing automation tools in acceptance and regression testing for the ASSIST legacy application. While there are no immediate plans to acquire a different testing toolset, the State does not warrant that these tools will be used in the future.
31.	Section 4, Task 7.3	The RFP indicates that the 6 available training sites will be insufficient for all users within the prescribed 3 weeks of implementation to the user’s sites. Can the State elaborate what assumptions were used to determine this? IS there an assumption related to the number of days of classroom training delivery?	It is not the intent of the State to constrain Training Schedule/Plan approaches. The vendor must provide training to users within three (3) weeks of implementation in users’ respective sites/counties. The State’s six training sites are available to be included in the Training Schedule/Plan if the vendor wishes to include them in its training strategy. The vendor is responsible for any additional training facilities required to meet delivery of its training plan.
32.	Section 4, Task 7.3	Please provide the approximate number of end-users to be trained by county.	The State will post the requested information to the Procurement Library no later than February 28.

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33.	Section 4, Task 7.4	Please provide the breakdown of the training to be delivered by type of staff, including technical staff.	The State will post the requested information to the Procurement Library no later than February 28.
34.	Section 4, Task 7.5	Last sentence – “The State has developed a Cultural Change Management Plan and will make it available to the Vendor upon request.” Our implementation approach needs to closely align with the State-run Cultural Change Management Plan. Would the State provide Vendors with a copy (draft or final) of your Cultural Change Management Plan to better ensure our understanding? Would the State be receptive to comments or suggestions as a result of Vendor review of the Cultural Change Management Plan?	The State's Cultural Change Management Plan is available for review in the Procurement Library.
35.	Section 4, Task 8	The section is titled Pilot Test but the description discussed pilot operations. Does the State intend that pilot be ‘live’ using the new ASSIST system in the chosen locations with other locations operating under the legacy systems or is this to be a test environment where the existing legacy environment will have to be maintained in parallel for the test locations?	The State intends that the pilot be “live”. Pilot counties will utilize the new SACWIS during the pilot period while other counties will continue to use the legacy systems described in the RFP.
36.	Section 4, Task 8.3	Is it the State’s intent that Help Desk Facilities be separate and distinct from the Project Work Site established by the Vendor? What level of State Staff support is anticipated for Help Desk activities/ transition?	The State does not require that Help Desk facilities be separate and distinct from the Project work site established by the vendor. The vendor should detail in its Knowledge Transfer Plan how State staff will be trained in order to assume responsibility for Help Desk activities following successful statewide implementation. The State will provide adequate staff for Help Desk activities and transition.
37.	Section 4, Task 8.3	Please provide the software name or the system specifications on the State's Help Desk tracking application.	See response to question 38.
38.	Section 4, Task 8.3	The implementing vendor will transition its help desk historical data to the state’s help desk tracking application (Task 8.3, p. 80). Can you supply the name of the state’s preferred help desk tracking software in use now?	The State currently utilizes a MS Access application to track help desk calls. The Access application is inadequate to meet issue-tracking needs, and the State is in the process of acquiring industry standard help desk software.
39.	Section 4, Task 9	Please clarify that the Maintenance period begins month 25 through 36.	As specified in Section 4, Task 9.1 in the RFP, the twelve (12) month warranty and maintenance period begins at the date the system is fully implemented statewide. The date of this occurrence may vary depending on the vendor’s proposal and implementation strategy.
40.	Section 7	Page 91, Section 7; Evaluation Criteria - Financial Stability is identified as a pass/fail criteria. Will the state provide details on how this determination will be made and the financial thresholds to be employed.	The State will review the financial information submitted in accordance with Section 5.1.4.5 of the RFP and, based on that information, will make an assessment of whether the vendor’s financial condition presents an unacceptable risk to the State in regard to the vendor’s ability perform in accordance with its proposal.

No.	RFP Reference	Vendor Question	State Answer
41.	Appendix C	Vendor task number 2.3 Develop Application Strategy is not part of the price sheet. Is this correct?	No. Task Number 2.3 Develop Application Strategy should be a part of the Price Sheet. Appendix C has been updated to reflect the correction.
42.	Appendix E	Item 3 The system must operate within the parameters of the existing DHR and State of Alabama technical environment. (see Appendix A for details) Requirement number 3 references Appendix A for details of the Alabama Technical environment. Please provide the details regarding the technical environment for the new ASSIST	Requirement number 3 in Appendix E: Functional Requirements should reference RFP Section 3.16 for an overview of the State's technical environment. The requirement has been updated with the correct reference.
43.	Appendix E, Requirement 1	For the stated performance levels in Appendix E (REQ #1), what is the distinction between an external update/inquiry and an internal update/inquiry?	The definitions for "external update/inquiry" and "internal update/inquiry" are provided in Appendix G: Definitions.
44.	Appendix E, Requirement 87	It is stated that the system must provide address normalization capability (Appendix E, REQ #87). Does the department have an address normalization package that can be leveraged?	The Department currently utilizes Code-1 Plus v. 2.9, a mainframe address normalization tool from Group 1 Software. This tool, which resides on the State's mainframe, is maintained by the Department of Finance – ISD and is used in conjunction with mainframe applications. ASSIST attempted to utilize this tool in the web environment, but was unsuccessful. Direct access from the web application to the mainframe tool could not be established. The State makes no assertion that the tool would or would not be suitable for use in the context described in the RFP.
45.	Appendix J – ACWIS 2.5.2 b	The payment subsystem consists of the regular foster care board payments, difficulty of care payments (Level I and Level II), and telephone and mail allotments are generated by the payment subsystem. (Therapeutic foster care and medically fragile care are not made by the payment subsystem, although the foster care board payment for such children is made on the sub-payment system). By utilizing information in Child Data and Provider Data components, payment information is generated monthly for verification by county staff. Please further define the meaning of Telephone allotments?	Foster home providers receive an additional \$25.00 per month telephone allotment for each child in foster care who will be making long distance telephone calls. The allotment is added to the board payment.