

NCHICA NHIN Gateway RFP Q & A

Questions and Answers by RFP Section

Background:

Q1: Intellectual Property. Does NCHICA want to own our Intellectual Property?

Under FAR 52.227-17 (Rights in Data – Special Works) incorporated into the ONC Contract, the government receives expansive, unrestricted rights to use software and data developed with contract funding, and the contractor's rights to use such software are substantially limited. Accordingly, although NCHICA does not enter into this RFP with intent for long term ownership (see page 3 of the RFP), NCHICA needs to be able to control developed intellectual property in order to comply with these provisions.

We request that all Responders specifically identify: (a) what software and other technology that it anticipates developing with contract funding; and (b) what software and other technology that has been developed at private expense that it anticipates to be used in the performance of the contract. For the software and other technology falling in category (b) above, Responder should indicate whether it commits to deliver source code for such software and if so under what license terms (e.g. open source).

Long term ownership is expected to be complementary to community and statewide HIE efforts within North Carolina and benefit from NCHICA's proven ability to incubate innovations in the North Carolina. NCHICA intends to provide the most flexibility for future use of the solution. By ensuring the availability and understanding of the solution and documentation, NCHICA expects to be able to deliver the most value from the contract.

Q2. Does NCHICA anticipate supporting other HIEs beyond WNCHN within the term and/or scope of this contract?

Not at this time, other HIEs would be out of scope for this specific contract.

Technical Requirements and Services

Q3. Does NCHICA have any specific technical architecture structure in mind or should the Responder propose an architecture as they see fit?

Responders should propose the architecture they believe best fits the needs outlined in the RFP, subject to meeting the NHIN Specifications. See page 4 of the RFP, Technical Requirements and Services.

Q4: Given the tight timeframes, would NCHICA consider implementing the NHIN gateway on an existing hosted model which could be configured solely for NCHICA use, and then moved to a dedicated model over time?

NCHICA NHIN Gateway RFP Q & A

NCHICA encourages Responders to propose the hosting model which they believe best fits our needs.

Q5. Does the Asheville VA have an existing NHIN Connect Gateway for this project to link with? If so, please provide details of the version that is implemented, and whether it is being used in production today.

Not at this time. The VA has connected through the Federal Health Architecture NHIN Gateway; however, connectivity has begun with a single VA hospital in San Diego.

Q6. Does NCHICA plan to provide any MPI or data locator services centrally for various state HIEs, or for providers not participating in an HIE? If so, should we include that support in our proposal?

NCHICA is performing this project in coordination with the ONC directions for an Emergence Implementation. Responders are encouraged to anticipate flexibility for future needs as this Gateway is intended to be complementary to statewide efforts; however, any central MPI or other "HIE" type service is out of scope for the NCHICA NHIN Gateway.

Q7. Does NCHICA have a preference for the hosting location (in state vs. out of state)?

NCHICA does not have a requirement for North Carolina based hosting location, but hosting must remain within the United States.

Q8. Does NCHICA have any minimum qualifications for the hosting tier or disaster recovery processes?

Responder should detail the hosting tier, back-up, fail-over, and other offerings in its response.

Q9. The RFP states, "the Contractor will undergo NHIN conformance and interoperability testing as well as testing with other federal partners." Does NCHICA have any specific federal partners in mind?

No. Currently, the timing and availability of the NHIN Reference Implementation is in development. Should the NCHICA NHIN Gateway be ready for testing prior to the availability of the NHIN Reference Implementation, NCHICA expects that the ONC will facilitate an alternative testing environment.

Q10. "The Contractor shall develop and provide written documentation and specifications for installation, use and configuration..." (p. 5) If the Contractor is proposing a solution based on the CONNECT NHIN Gateway, is it permissible to leverage the ONC published documentation as a foundation for more specific documentation related to the North Carolina configuration and deployment?

NCHICA NHIN Gateway RFP Q & A

Yes, leveraging the existing ONC published documentation is expected and encouraged. Additionally, specific documentation related to the North Carolina configuration and deployment is critical to the successful coordination between NCHICA, the WNCHN Data Link and the successful Responder. This deliverable is intended to ensure the North Carolina WNCHN Data Link endpoint has the benefit of complete, specific and written guidance from the Contractor.

Q11. "The Contractor will meet the following timeframe for the preceding deliverables:" (p. 6) regarding the payment of deliverable 9, will this take the form of a monthly payment commencing with the completion of deliverable 7?

Yes

Q12. "WNC Data Link uses the MEDSEEK interoperability solution to facilitate this display." (p. 2). Who will be responsible for providing the UI components required to construct NHIN queries and view NHIN responses?

MEDSEEK, WNCHN's technical consultant, will be responsible for the UI in the Data Link portal.

Q13. "Provide limited, but important, assistance to the WNC Data Link team to finalize their development of NHIN Adapters, web services, and testing for connection with the NHIN Gateway" (p. 3) Assuming use of the CONNECT gateway system, would the WNC Data Link team be responsible for development of NHIN-PD, NHIN-DQ, and NHIN-DR adapter components, with assistance from the Contractor, or would the Contractor take primary responsibility for development of CONNECT gateway NHIN adapter component development?

The selected NCHICA NHIN Gateway contractor will take primary responsibility for the development of the NHIN Adapters.

Q14. Is NCHICA willing to place the Work Product into the public domain, contribute it to an open source project, or make it available under an open source license?

NCHICA would be open to suggestions from the Responders for open source licensing. ONC would likely provide final guidance on this issue.

Q15. Please provide additional clarification as to whether the WNC would be producing the CCD and the contractor would be responsible for message routing OR is the contractor responsible for actual CCD generation from WNC data.

The contractor is not responsible for the CCD generation from the WNC Data.

Q16. Of the entire NHIN Gateway, what are the specific services that the Responder must support?

NCHICA NHIN Gateway RFP Q & A

The contractor must support the following NHIN transactions: Access Consent, Authorization Framework, Query for Documents, Retrieve documents, Messaging, Patient Discovery, Web Services Registry.

Q17. Are there any services in the Gateway that are not mentioned in the RFP that are required to be implemented and supported? In other words, is there a gap between the services required to be implemented as per the RFP versus the NHIN core services? For example, there are less important transactions such as “notification services” that may not be implemented by WNCHN. Do we need to support such services?

Geocoded Interoperable Population Summary Exchange and HIEM do not need to be implemented at this time.

Q18. What are the requirements around privacy and consent? How is the patient consent handled in the Gateway? Does the ‘contractor’ need to store the patient consent?

The NHIN Gateway is expected to be capable of fulfilling the NHIN Access Consent Policies Specification. At this time the patient consent model followed by WNCHN Data Link is an Opt-Out model, while the VA is expected to follow an Opt-In model.

Q19. Are there stakeholders from WNCHN available to support the Gateway functionality when it goes into production? What is the commitment from MEDSEEK?

NCHICA and its contractor will be responsible for support of the Production NCHICA NHIN gateway. WNCHN will continue to operate the Data Link system in support of the local community.

Q20. Is there an expectation that the WNC hospitals consume documents from other NHIN nodes?

No, however the WNCHN Data Link portal will display documents from other NHIN nodes.

Q21. Does WNC Data Link have corresponding Development and Test environments for integrating and testing the Development and Test instances of the NHIN Gateway?

Yes. WNCHN Data Link maintains both test and production servers which are housed at a centralized hosting facility. Development environments are managed within MEDSEEK. As there are ongoing efforts to create the necessary adapters for NHIN connectivity, MEDSEEK will ensure the selected Responder has appropriate access for development and testing.

Q22. Does WNCHN have an Enterprise Master Patient Index (EMPI) currently in place?

- a. If yes, what software infrastructure is being used? Is there an API in place and in what form?**
- b. If no, how are patients currently discovered? Is there an API in place and in what form?**
- c. Does WNCHN support the IHE PIX/PDQ standard?**

No. There is not a common identifier across the member facilities within the WNCHN enterprise.

- (a) There is no enterprise master patient index currently in place.
- (b) MEDSEEK employs a record locator service known as the Master Patient Cache (MPC) which is utilized to pre-match instances of patient data across the community. There is currently no API available for this application, but MEDSEEK will be jointly developing the interface to the cache during this project.
- (c) No. The WNCHN interface does not support the IHE PIX/PDQ standard. The developed API may employ standards-based query, as directed by NHIN Standards.

Q23. Does WNCHN have a Record Locator Service (RLS) in place?

- a. If yes, what software infrastructure is being used? Is there an API in place and in what form?**
- b. If no, how are patients currently discovered? Is there an API in place and in what form?**
- c. Does WNCHN support the IHE XDS.b standard?**

Yes. There is a Record Locator Service employed within Data Link.

- (a) MEDSEEK employs a record locator service known as the Master Patient Cache (MPC) which is utilized to pre-match instances of patient data across the community. There is currently no API available for this application, but MEDSEEK will be jointly developing the interface to the cache during this project.
- (b) There is a record locator service in place.
- (c) No. The WNCHN interface does not support the XDS.b standard. The developed API may employ standards-based inquiry, as directed by NCHICA.

Q24. Can NCHICA provide any further information on the terminology, messaging, or interoperability standards currently used by WNC Data Link?

The WNCHN implementation utilizes proprietary interfaces to access clinical system data in a federated manner. Today, these interfaces are not exposed beyond the WNCHN Data Link portal. The system employs a Record Locator Service known as the Master Patient Cache (MPC) to identify sources of patient data as well as manage

NCHICA NHIN Gateway RFP Q & A

patient matching. This index is populated by the source systems via ADT and batch inquiry so that no matching is performed in real-time.

Currently, no standards-based exchange of clinical information is in place within the network. MEDSEEK will be developing a web services gateway in conjunction with this project to provide inbound and outbound interfaces to satisfy the NHIN gateway requirements. The selected Responder will have input into the final design for implementation of the API.

Q25. If a patient has opted out of Data Link, will any of their clinical data be stored in the CCD repository?

Currently, users which have “opted out” of participation in Data Link will not have data published to the CCD repository.

Q26. Are there any published web service specifications from WNC Data Link?

No. Currently, web service interfaces for connection between WNCHN Data Link and the NHIN gateway are under consideration. The selected Responder will have input into the final design for implementation of the API.

Q27. With regards to deliverable #10 (The Contractor will register the URL address in NCHICA’s name for each supported environment of NHIN gateway.): please clarify whether it is intended that there be an externally addressable URL for the Development instance of the NHIN Gateway, inasmuch as external entities (such as Data Link, its Responder MEDSEEK, the Asheville VA, etc.) would normally be expected to communicate with the Test and Production instances rather than the Development instance?

No externally addressable URL will be needed for the Development instance.

Q28. Regarding supporting nationally-recognized data code sets, does this imply a requirement to translate data code sets and/or nomenclature?

Not at this time. Future phases could involve pharmacy and/or lab data requiring LOINC or SCRIPTS/RX NORM.

NCHICA NHIN Gateway RFP Q & A

Terms and Conditions

Q29. Can you please describe the source selection process?

NCHICA is committed to a process that will ensure the fairness and openness to the source selection process. In support of that goal, NCHICA is deploying a multiphase source selection process modeled after the best contracting practices used by the Federal Government. The process is designed to select the Responder that provides the 'best value.'

Phase I: Technical Evaluation

The first step following the receipt and logging of all proposals is to conduct the technical evaluation. All technical proposals will be initially judged to validate they have addressed all requirements. Any proposal that fails to address all RFP requirements will be judged as 'non-responsive' and eliminated from further consideration. The technical evaluation will not incorporate cost data.

Information from the 'responsive' pool of technical proposals will be compared to the individual requirement statements contained in the RFP. Each of the proposals will then be scored, and proposals meeting the minimum functional requirements will proceed into the Best Value Evaluation Phase.

Phase II: Budget Realism Evaluation

The cost section of all Responder's proposals will be reviewed to determine budget realism. NCHICA has a finite budget and only affordable (within 150% of the anticipated budget) proposals will proceed into the Best Value Evaluation Phase. During the final phase (discussed later), if the top proposal(s) exceed the budget, it is NCHICA's desire to open negotiations to bring one or all of the leading Respondents within budget realism.

Phase III: Best Value Evaluation

A third evaluation panel will use the ranking from the technical and budget realism panels and the proposals themselves to rank the technically responsive and cost realistic proposals. The ranking will be based on 'best value.' A minimum of three (3) ranked proposals, will be forwarded to the source selection authority for a final action.

Phase IV: Selection Authority

NCHICA's source selection authority shall rank the top three proposals. The final decision shall be made by the source selection authority without further input from any

NCHICA NHIN Gateway RFP Q & A

of the previous evaluations panels. NCHICA will enter into negotiations to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement, beginning with the highest ranking proposal.

Source Selection Principles

Unbiased evaluation team members

All evaluation panel members have been selected based on an explicit understanding that participation is predicated on the absence of a conflict of interest. Any evaluation panel member that may discover a conflict of interest after learning of the prospective Responders will excuse themselves during the evaluation of those specific proposals.

Separation of duties

The purpose of the separate evaluation panels is to eliminate any potential undesirable influence by individuals.

Q30. The RFP states on page 9 that NCHICA can make changes to the scope of work at its discretion. How would compensation for changes in scope be determined.

Compensation for changes in scope would be agreed as part of the change control process for the contract.

Q31. May we have a copy of the ONC contract referenced in the RFP at page 8 in the terms and conditions.

The elements of the ONC contract relevant to this arrangement have been included in the RFP.

Q32. Certain flow-down components of the NHIN Data Use and Reciprocal Support Agreement (DURSA) will apply to the Contract. – which ones specifically?

NCHICA's initial analysis indicates that the following sections of the DURSA impose certain operational responsibilities and contractual requirements on NCHICA that will flow to the Contractor. The Contractor is encouraged to be familiar with the DURSA and assess operational impacts based on their specific solution:

7. System Access Policies.

8. Enterprise Security.

9. Equipment and Software.

NCHICA NHIN Gateway RFP Q & A

10. *Auditing*
11. *Performance and Service Specifications.*
12. *NHIN Operating Policies and Procedures.*
13. *Expectations of Participants.*
14. *Specific Duties of a Requesting Participant.*
15. *Specific Duties of a Responding Participant.*
16. *Privacy and Security.*
17. *Representations and Warranties as appropriate*
18. *Confidential Participant Information.*
19. *Disclaimers.*

Q33. Can NCHICA confirm the budget amount the ONC has provided/allocated for this service? Under the procurement guidelines, are Responders limited to providing bids equal to or greater than cost? How do Cost Accounting Standards apply to this proposal?

NCHICA has made public statements at our February NCHICA Board meeting to the effect that the project to provide the NHIN Gateway appliance is relatively small, and we have not provided a budget number. Independent analysis of the scope of this project indicates that the total for this project should be in the range of \$40,000 to \$100,000. Responders are encouraged to provide the best value possible. NCHICA's current ONC contract requires modified Cost Accounting Standards compliance as per CFR 48. NCHICA has reviewed this question with the Contracting Office at HHS and received guidance that proposals below cost are allowable as a business decision on the part of the Responders.

Q34. Our proposal will comply with the font requirements; however one of our graphics contains text smaller than 10 point font. To increase the font size would change the perspective of the graphic. Will a smaller font size be allowable in this instance?

Responders should follow the instructions in the RFP, font size smaller than 10 point embedded in a graphic will not be grounds for disqualification.

Q35. Is there a specific mapping we should follow between the 11 project deliverables (pages 4-6 of the RFP document) and our discussion of them in our response to Section I: Functional Proposal?

NCHICA NHIN Gateway RFP Q & A

Responders are encouraged to summarize approach for each deliverable in their response.

Q36. Please elaborate on the difference between Section I-2a “NHIN Gateway Experience and Plans” and Section II-2 “Appendix: References”. We assume NCHICA is looking for a narrative of our overall experience in Section I-2a and a detailed description of each of our references in Section II-2 “Appendix: References.” Is this assumption correct?

Yes.

Q37. Does NCHICA want a project plan/schedule in Section I-2a “NHIN Experience and Plans”?

Not at this time.

Q38. In Section I-2c “Facilities Description”, is NCHICA looking for a complete description of our hosting facilities and approach to hosting including data security, etc?

Responders should provide enough information to distinguish their approach.

Q39. In Section I-3 “Project Management Approach” please elaborate on the specific topics NCHICA would like covered in this section (i.e., project plan, organizational chart, project management process, change control process, etc.).

Responders are expected to follow the Project Management instructions on page 9.

Q40. In Section III “Pricing Proposal” is NCHICA looking for our price proposal to provide anything other than an excel spreadsheet table with values filled out for the requested cells?

NCHICA will focus evaluation on the table provided. Responders may describe any flexibility in their pricing approach and any relevant assumptions which will increase the ability of NCHICA to compare pricing proposals.

Q41. RE: "Demonstrate organizational integrity, independence, and commitment to the long term success of standards-based Health Information Exchange (HIE) in North Carolina." (p. 3) To what extent does the Contractor having a presence in the state of North Carolina come into consideration for acceptance of the proposal? Does hosting the solution at a data center in North Carolina provide the Contractor with an advantage in proposal scoring?

A North Carolina presence is not required for the successful Responder, and an NC data center does not provide a scoring advantage.

NCHICA NHIN Gateway RFP Q & A

Q42. "The Technical Support telephone number will be manned Mon-Fri, 5:00 am to 9:00 pm Eastern Time" (Appendix D, Service Level Agreement) If the Response Time and Resolution Time SLAs can be met using an on-call approach, is having an answering service sufficient to meet the requirements of a "manned" telephone number? Is it required that the Technical Support telephone number be "manned" by an engineer during Normal Business Hours?

An answering service or alternative method for routing would be adequate.

Q43. "Use of After-Hours Technical Support is limited to Severity One and Severity Two problems only, as defined below." (Appendix D, Service Level Agreement) If the Response Time SLA for a Severity Two issue is 1 business day, why the requirement to allow After-Hours Technical Support for Severity Two problems? Shouldn't the Severity Two Response Time SLA be measured in hours if this were the case?

Correct, a clarification for Severity Two "Response Time" would be to allow 24 hours.

Q44. How would NCHICA prefer the Contractor handle the hosting costs incurred between deliverables 1 and 7?

Given the unpredictable timing of deliverable #7, the Responders are encouraged to explain the hosting costs after deliverable #2 and before deliverable #7. NCHICA expects that the solution might be mothballed during this period, rather than incurring costs for no activity.

NCHICA thanks you for your interest.