

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA North Carolina Education Lottery	REQUEST FOR INFORMATION NO. LC- 000059	
	Due Date: September 24th, 2021 at 4:00 PM EDT.	
<i>Refer ALL Inquiries to:</i> Anthony Downey Purchasing Administrator adowney@lotterync.net Telephone No. 919-301-3433 Fax No.: 919-715-0342	Issue Date: September 3, 2021 Commodity: Services	
E-Mail: adowney@lotterync.net	Using Agency Name: North Carolina Education Lottery	

MAILING INSTRUCTIONS: Mail only one Request for Information (RFI) per envelope. Address envelope and clearly note RFI number as shown below. It is the responsibility of the vendor to have the RFI in this office by the specified time and date of opening.

<u>DELIVERED BY US POSTAL SERVICE</u>	<u>DELIVERED BY ANY OTHER MEANS</u>
RFI NO. Interactive Voice Response System <u>North Carolina Education Lottery</u> Attn: Anthony Downey <u>Purchasing Administrator</u> <u>P.O. Box 2728 Capital Boulevard, Suite 144,</u> <u>Raleigh NC 27604</u>	RFI NO. Interactive Voice Response System <u>North Carolina Education Lottery</u> Attn: Anthony Downey <u>Purchasing Administrator</u> <u>P.O. Box 2728 Capital Boulevard, Suite 144,</u> <u>Raleigh NC 27604</u>

NOTICE TO VENDOR

Responses to this RFI will be accepted at this office 4:00 pm EDT on the September 24, 2021.

QUESTIONS

Submit written questions to **adowney@lotterync.net** until September 10, 2021. Written questions may be submitted by e-mail to **adowney@lotterync.net**. If Written Questions are received, the corresponding Answers will be consolidated into a "Question and Answer (Q & A) Summary Addendum" and posted on the NCEL website: <https://nclottery.com/Business>. The Q & A Summary Addendum is tentatively scheduled for posting on September 17, 2021 by COB.

EXECUTION

VENDOR NAME:	E-MAIL:	
STREET ADDRESS:	P.O. BOX:	ZIP:
CITY & STATE:	TELEPHONE NUMBER:	TOLL FREE TEL. NO:
TYPE OR PRINT NAME & TITLE OF PERSON SIGNING:	FAX NUMBER:	
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE:	DATE:	

1.0 INTENT

The North Carolina Education Lottery (“NCEL”) is an independent state agency created pursuant to the North Carolina State Lottery Act (N.C.G.S. § 18C-101 et seq.) (the “Act”) which was signed into law in August 2005. In accordance with the Act, the NCEL must act for the benefit of the people of North Carolina through the operation of a lottery and strive to maximize net lottery proceeds in order to fund various state educational programs.

The NCEL currently provides an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) service for callers to utilize to obtain published business information. This IVR is a vendor public cloud (SaaS) solution today, and it is anticipated to remain so with any future vendor (i.e. not on-premise).

The NCEL is in the process of searching for a robust Customer Services platform with related services that will be included with and/or interface with the proposed IVR system. The intent of this RFI is intended to collect information to provide NCEL with an assessment and understanding of the Customer Service platforms and Interactive Voice Response systems that are currently available. The information gathered from this RFI will support the development of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Customer Services Platform and related services that will either include or support an IVR and integrate with the NCEL’s existing telecom system. The RFP will provide for the design, test, installation, operations, and maintenance of the Customer Services Platform along with the integration of an existing or new IVR. It will also provide for operations and maintenance of some components of the analytics, reporting, and customer interfacing. To develop an RFP that encourages innovation regarding a robust system that supports technology and operations for housing customer data, analyzing trends, and providing customer engagement, NCEL is seeking information on best practices and technical solutions. NCEL is particularly interested in driving quality, efficiency, innovation, and continuous improvement.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF NCEL OPERATIONS AND GAMING

The NCEL currently has seven (7) draw games consisting of *Powerball*, *Mega Millions*, *Lucky for Life*, *Carolina Cash 5*, *Carolina Pick 3*, *Carolina Pick 4* and *Keno* alone with nine (9) *Fast Play Progressive* games online. The NCEL also has instant scratch tickets at various price points ranging from \$1 to \$30. The NCEL currently has approximately 7,200 licensed retailers. Below is a description of the NCEL’s current providers of gaming systems and services.

TRADITIONAL GAMING (Brick and Mortar)

International Gaming Technology PLC (IGT) is the NCEL’s current traditional brick and mortar lottery gaming system and services provider. IGT’s in-state offices and Primary data center are co-located with NCEL Headquarters in Raleigh, NC; as the primary data Center houses two (2) of the four (4) NCEL Gaming System servers communicating with our established retailer network serving our brick and mortar established retailer base. IGT manages, monitors and provides to the NCEL our complete retailer communication network, various lottery terminals distributed; whether our base retailer terminals or self-service vending machines. In addition, IGT also provides a backend management application allowing for the management of our retailer base, payment of prizes, lottery terminal configurations, and the monitoring of lottery games/products and transactional totals in a real time manner. Other major responsibilities of IGT surround the monitoring, complete processing, and operation of our Gaming System servers, including the development and update of new gaming software and games, retailer equipment field service repair across the entire state of North Carolina, and the distribution of lottery supplies such as paper stock, play slips, etc.

IGT additionally, via an API established solution, provides the feed of ‘Progressive Jackpot’ information for our Fast Play game as well as Carolina Keno Draw results for display on the NCEL’s official website.

ONLINE PLAY, LOYALTY and RELATED SERVICES

NeoPollard Interactive (NPI) is the current vendor for the Online Play, Loyalty and Related services. This vendor’s system went live on October 28, 2019. The data centers for the Online Play system that allow for online purchasing of games are located in Raleigh, NC and Durham, NC. The system is considered active/active. The data centers for the loyalty (Lucke-Rewards) system that maintains points, loyalty drawings and prize fulfillment are located in different data centers. The Lucke-Rewards portion of the application is hosted on Amazon Web Services (AWS).

NPI also provides all customer support for Online Play, Lucke-Rewards, and Mobile App contacts. They offer phone, email, and live chat support (accessible from <https://nclottery.com/Help>). While there is a clear distinction in which team, NCEL or NPI, handles what type of query, there is some overlap when players have multiple questions. It would be beneficial to understand capabilities for integrating with our 3rd party vendor systems to provide players with the highest level of service across the spectrum of our business and products, both retail and online.

Online Play allows Powerball, Mega Millions, Lucky for Life and Cash 5 tickets to be purchased via desktop, mobile web or thru the NC Lottery Official Mobile App. NPI maintains the system that allows prizes of \$99,999 and lower to be claimed through an online process.

Lucke-Rewards is the loyalty system that allows players to redeem web codes from draw tickets or instant tickets. Players can also earn points thru Online Play purchase and Earn activities. Players can then use those points to enter drawings for cash prizes, instant ticket packs or experiential prizes. NPI also maintains the system that allows NCEL Prize Validation department to award loyalty prizes.

3.0 RFI PROCEDURES

A. Schedule

Respondents will have three weeks to prepare their submissions to this RFI. Responses must be received by the date, time and the location specified on the cover sheet of this RFI.

B. Questions and Answers

Questions will be accepted, in writing, until September 10, 2021 as specified on the cover sheet of this RFI. If written Questions are received, the corresponding Answers will be consolidated into a "Question and Answer (Q & A) Summary Addendum" and posted on the NCEL website: <https://nclottery.com/Business>. The Q & A Summary Addendum is tentatively scheduled for posting on September 17, 2021 by COB.

C. Response

The NCEL recognizes that considerable effort will be required in preparing a response to this RFI. **However, please note this is a request for information only, and not a request for services.** The Vendor shall bear all costs for preparing this RFI.

1. Submission of Responses

Submissions Deadline: September 24, 2021 at 4:00 PM EDT

Respondents shall submit one (1) USB flash drive containing all requested information. If the submission includes any confidential information, each particular piece of confidential information must be conspicuously marked as such and the respondent must also submit one (1) USB flash drive containing a copy of the submission redacted to protect confidential information, trade secrets information, or such other proprietary rights as dictated by law.

Submissions labeling the entire submission as confidential will not be accepted.

Submissions should be sent to:

Anthony Downey, Purchasing Administrator
North Carolina Education Lottery
2728 Capital Boulevard, Suite 144
Raleigh, NC 27604

Please ensure to include the following on the outer envelope or packaging:
“NCEL: Request for Information - Customer Service Platform and Related Services”

2. Content

- a. The NCEL expects concise, detailed, point-by-point responses to each of the RFI response items identified in Exhibit A of this RFI. The NCEL is not interested in brochures or “boilerplate” responses. Instead, responses should clearly define how the vendor’s proposed solution(s) would meet the NCEL’s business requirements. Any issues or exceptions to the NCEL’s requirements should also be identified and explained.
- b. The response should define all services that would be required by the proposed solution. The response should also include:
 - i. The vendor’s understanding of the project and services by addressing the NCEL’s business requirements;
 - ii. An estimated total cost of ownership for the solution including continued compliance with emerging industry standards.
 - iii. The proposed solution’s ability to expand and evolve to serve other NCEL offices in the State and also meet all of the service and performance requirements identified in this RFI.

3. Response Format

The response shall be submitted in the following format:

a. Section 1 – Executive Summary

Contractors shall provide an executive summary written in non-technical language to summarize the overall capability and approaches for implementing their methods for Customer Services Platform and Related Services. The Contractor is encouraged to limit the summary to three (3) pages or less.

b. Section 2 – Contractor profile

Contractors shall include a brief synopsis of their company history, background, and target market. If the Contractor anticipates sub-contractors would be used, a brief description should be included on the type or service those sub-contractors would be providing. It is not necessary to provide specific profiles. This section shall also include a list of other lotteries which are current or past clients. The Contractor must provide the name, address, phone number, and email address for its corporate point of contact on this RFI.

c. Section 3 – Recommended Comprehensive, Full Service System Solution

Contractors shall provide their recommended Customer Service Platform(s) that include Interactive Voice Response System and Related Services which will meet the NCEL objectives. If the Contractor recognizes services that would be essential to the implementation, but are not specifically included in this RFI, a description of all such services should be included in this section.

Please see the attached Exhibit A for the Proposed Solution Details.

4. Multiple Responses

Multiple responses will be accepted from a single vendor provided that each response is comprehensive, meets all of the NCEL's requirements, and is truly unique. Please place in separate envelopes and clearly mark responses as "Response #1, Response #2, etc.

5. Contractor Presentation

After a review of responses, the NCEL's Purchasing Administrator may schedule a date and time for each Responding Contractor to give an in-person or remote video presentation. Each Responding Contractor shall be allocated one hour (1) during normal business hours (8 am – 5 pm) for its presentation.

6. Confidential Information

- a. All responses, data, materials and documentation originated, prepared and submitted to the NCEL pursuant to this RFI shall belong exclusively to the NCEL and may become available to the public in accordance with the North Carolina Public Records Act as provided in N.C.G.S. §132-1 et. seq. The NCEL will make reasonable attempts to maintain, in accordance with the Public Records Laws and the Act and all applicable laws of its domicile, the State of North Carolina and the United States of America, the confidentiality of any trade secrets or confidential information that meet the requirements of N.C.G.S. §132-1.2 of the Public Records Laws **if such Contractors properly and conspicuously identify the particular data or other materials which are Confidential Information in accordance with the Public Records Laws.**
- b. The Contractor's failure to request confidential treatment of materials pursuant to this section and the relevant statutes and administrative rules will be deemed by the NCEL as a waiver of any right to confidentiality that the Contractor may have had.

7. General Terms and Conditions

- a. The NCEL is not responsible for any costs incurred by the Contractor in the RFI response preparation or presentation.
- b. Information submitted in response to this RFI will become the property of the NCEL
- c. The NCEL will not pay for any information herein requested, nor will it be liable for any other costs incurred by any Contractors related to the presentation or delivery of the response to this RFI or any subsequent presentation.
- d. The NCEL reserves the right to modify this RFI at any time.
- e. By submitting a response, the Contractor agrees that the NCEL may copy the response information for purposes of facilitating review or to respond to requests for public records. Contractor consents to such copying by submitting a response and warrants that such copying will not violate the rights of any third party. The NCEL will have the right to use ideas or adaptations presented in the responses.
- f. The NCEL reserves the right to reject any and all responses to this RFI, in whole or in part, at any time.
- g. This RFI is not intended to be comprehensive and each Contractor is responsible for determining all factors necessary for submission of a comprehensive response and a complete service capability demonstration.
- h. The RFI response and demonstration will not be subject to a Request for Proposal (RFP) type evaluation but only to a review of suggested performance, costs of services offered, and abilities to perform services.

EXHIBIT A

PROPOSED SOLUTION DETAILS

Part I: Base System

Option A:

- Base System that interfaces with an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system with the ability to expand to new technologies to better identify trends and correlations within our customer base

Option B:

- Base System that includes an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system with the ability to expand to new technologies to better identify trends and correlations within our customer base

All Responses Should Include:

- a. Annotated network drawings showing where each of the pieces of equipment in the proposed solution would be located and how those devices would be interconnected.
- b. A comprehensive, detailed equipment list required for the proposed solution should be provided. All equipment identified in the response must be commercially available and in general distribution at the time of “go-live”. The NCEL is not interested in participating in any field trials of new equipment or software.

Part II: System Capabilities

- Players Platform providing winning numbers, player call tracking to provide player information by caller id along with previous call information, player recommendations, calls and complaints about games, services and retailers.
- Player call tracking that includes recordings of calls or messages
- Ability to create customized reports that can be exported to track key topics/issues
- Ability to interface with an IVR system
- Ability to capture call data from multiple sources within the telecom environment
- Ability to have data accessible by customer support agents
- Ability to be accessed/managed remotely, (i.e. a web-based or software-based program with 20 licenses included and the ability to obtain up to 60 additional licenses to cover future expansion
- Ability to interface with social media for customer service purposes
- Ability to utilize online chat and possibly texting for customer service
- Ability to interface with our Retailer Call Logging System (SYMLOTTO) to provide retailer information
- Ability to communicate with the NCEL by sending surveys and emails after a call and ability to initiate communication with the player from the system via email, text, etc.
- Ability for NCEL to send and receive notifications and correspondence regarding player questions, recommendations and complaints, etc.
- A robust system that can link customer support technologies to developing analytics and correlations between player and retailer calls
- Accessibility of products and services
- In-house mobile solutions or integrating with partner customer support center systems and platforms
- Marketing capabilities from the proposed system
- Options available for back office management systems, business intelligence, and diversified accounting management reports

- Ability to expand to new technologies to better engage with our customers and identify trends and correlations within our customer base
- Ability to integrate with an existing CRM system
- Disaster recovery/business continuity plan (general overview)

Part III: Contract Term and Implementation

- Optimal duration of contract including extension that would provide best value for the NCEL, with recommended timeline for equipment refresh.
- General overview of Contractor's implementation plan, including estimated timeline.