RFP – LC000060 Interactive Voice Response System Q&A (#1)

1. Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this like from (India or Canada)?

   Yes. Companies outside the USA are welcome to apply. However, please note that call centers and technical support based in the USA are preferred and that the selected vendor will be required to register with the NC Secretary of State (See section 4.1(E)(9) of the RFP).

2. Whether we need to come over there for meetings?

   Webex is fine.

3. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA like from (India or Canada)?

   Tasks related to the RFP performed in the USA are preferred. Support personnel must be available during hours the call center is open.

4. Can we submit the proposals via email?

   No. Please refer to section 4.3 (Proposal Submission and Format)

5. Please provide examples of "key trends" reports that NCEL requires from their desired IVR solution.

   What type of calls are we getting? What region they are calling from? How many times a particular number calls? What games are the callers asking questions about? Are they calling regarding an online or subscription issue? How many calls are being transferred to the Responsible Gaming Hotline? How many calls are being transferred to our different vendors?

6. Is NCEL open to leveraging Artificial Intelligence (Voice bots) in addition to providing a DTMF option within their IVR? E.g., please say or enter your number now

   Yes

7. Does NCEL desire to offer up a callback to its callers?

   The NCEL may possibly like to offer callback to our callers. We would like to learn more about this technology. Please include as an option with your proposal.

8. Does NCEL desire to provide its callers with a visual IVR experience?

   The NCEL may possibly like to offer a visual IVR Experience. We want to learn more about this technology. Please include as an option with your proposal.

9. Will the IVR need to support Alphanumeric strings that may need to be captured from the caller? E.g., A mixture of letters and numbers: "1L2E348960T256"

   A mixture of letters and numbers.

10. Does NCEL require a secure IVR to support the processing of credit card payments?

    The NCEL does not currently use the IVR to support the processing of credit card payments.

11. How many unique data requests will the IVR need to support? E.g., Please enter your pin number, username, credit card number, CCV, etc.

    The NCEL will need the phone number including the area code, retailer number and username.

12. How many IVR integrations would be required? E.g., CRM, Ticketing Solutions, Servers, etc.

    The two integrations would be RMS (current) and SalesForce (future).
    Retailer Management System is a home-grown application that feeds an internal database used by most departments within the NCEL. It is used for other Line of Business applications within the agency and transferred to other state agencies requiring the data.

13. Please provide the purpose of each integration requirement and whether they support Restful APIs? E.g., CRMs, Servers, etc.

    RMS – Retailer management system.
    Salesforce – Player data (contact WebDev for specs)
    NCEL anticipates creation / deployment of custom RESTful API for the client as needed.

14. Please provide the physical addresses of your data centers that would be considered within this project.

    Our data centers are currently located in Raleigh, NC and Charlotte, NC.   The exact address will be supplied to winning bidder.

15. Who is the existing telephony carrier for the NCEL IVR solution?

    The number is owned by the current IVR provider and their carrier is unknown to the NCEL.

16. Will NCEL be willing to change its existing telephony carrier?

    Yes. The NCEL will be willing to change it existing telephone carrier if that is required to port numbers over.

17. What would the CTI requirement support? E.g., CRM or Ticketing solution

    The NCEL is only looking for an IVR solution with this RFP.

18. Where is NCEL's knowledge base stored?

    NCEL's knowledge base is stored in Raleigh, NC.

19. Please describe your quality system requirements. E.g., Agent Evaluations, Call and Screen Recording, etc.

    The NCEL currently reviews call times, agents in ready and not ready statuses, calls abandoned, number of calls, length of calls, agent priorities and call times.

20. What type of training requirements is NCEL seeking? E.g. Training the Trainer, Role-based training, etc. Train the Trainer

    The NCEL is seeking Role-based training.

21. Please list any security requirements, policies, and acts that would be applicable to vendors responding to this solicitation.

    The NCEL is seeking requirements that conform to best practice security guidelines in securing IVR environment.

22. How many NCEL agents would need to be licensed to support the escalation of customer calls into NCEL's IVR?

    The NCEL would need 58 agent licenses and 21 supervisor licenses.

23. Will NCEL require Named or Concurrent-based licensing for their agents?

The NCEL will require Named licensing.

24. To ensure that we understand the concept of your requirements, please explain the purpose of the following Functionality requirement: Limit call length to five (5) minutes for incoming calls before transferring as an outgoing call to a hotline; no limit on call length for outgoing calls.

    Yes, The NCEL would like to transfer all incoming calls that have been in the queue for five minutes to a hotline with a live agent to prevent frustration and to manage costs.

25. Once transferred to the hotline, will the caller speak to an NCEL agent?

    Once the call is transferred to the hotline, the caller will speak to an agent.

26. What is the current Cisco phone system and call recording system?

    The current Cisco phone system and call recording systems are CUCM 12.5, UCCX 12.5, Telstrat Call Recording.

27. Would NCEL be interested in replacing the Cisco proprietary equipment and recording system with an all-in-one solution? This can save the agency from an Opex and Capex perspective. Additionally, it would place a lesser strain on maintaining two separate solutions.

    The scope of this RFP is for the IVR only.

28. Please explain the agency's "Secure Web Report" and "Username and Password" reporting requirements? E.g., System login Audit Reports

    The NCEL would like to be able to pull reports by department using the Manager's Username and Password via a Secure Web Report Portal.

29. Please provide any diagrams or call flow designs of the existing IVR solution.

    We will provide this information to the selected vendor as part of the on-boarding process.

30. Does NC EDU Lottery currently have an IVR system in place?

    Yes, the NCEL currently has an IVR system in place.

31. It appears that there is already an IVR in place at 877-962-7529 why is the change required?

The current contract is approaching the end of its term.

32. What is NC EDU Lottery trying to achieve that cisco cannot currently offer?

Cisco is not the current IVR provider. The NCEL is looking for an IVR provider that can provide analytical reports that share caller information such as the caller phone number, type of calls, how many calls are transferred to other numbers, the number of calls by game, draw versus instant, key stroke history of the callers, length of calls, and the number of repeat callers, the ability to administer caller surveys and etc.

33. Is NC EDU Lottery looking to rip and replace that?

Cisco is not the current IVR provider. The NCEL is looking for an IVR provider that can provide analytical reports that share caller information such as the caller phone number, type of calls, how many calls are transferred to other numbers, the number of calls by game, draw versus instant, key stroke history of the callers, length of calls, and the number of repeat callers, the ability to administer caller surveys and etc.

34. Is NC EDU Lottery looking to augment or improve the existing IVR System?

The NCEL is looking to see what IVR solutions are available.

35. What functionality does NC EDU Lottery not have in your current IVR system?

Currently, the NCEL has the following functionality: CRM integration and customer/player surveys. The NCEL is looking for an IVR provider that can provide analytical reports that share caller information such as the caller phone number, type of calls, how many calls are transferred to other numbers, the number of calls by game, draw versus instant, key stroke history of the callers, length of calls, and the number of repeat callers, the ability to administer caller surveys and etc.

36. Where is the number data stored for the winning numbers so that we know where to pull that data from?

The NCEL Website stores all of the data for the winning numbers.

37. Would your user base find value in having access to the data via different channels such as: webchat, mobile chat, SMS, Alexa, google assistant?

    The NCEL may find value in having access to the data via different channels. The NCEL would like to learn more about those possibilities. Please include these as options in your proposal.

38. In the SOW, in" Minimum Required Features" it is requested that the vendor provide information related to: Workforce management tool and a Quality assurance tool. Please provide more details related to these tools?

    The NCEL would like tools to be able to add a frontend and backend messages when needed, the ability to correct numbers if reported incorrectly, and the ability to pull reports to analyze caller data to track caller trends.

39. In the "Functionality" section, it states that there is a requirement to limit the amount of times a call can loop through the menu before being disconnected. How will Cisco be utilized for this use case?

    Cisco is not the current IVR provider. The NCEL is looking for a solution that will provide the caller with a message that the call is ending once the caller's call has reached 5 minutes.

40. How many agents get transferred to from within the IVR?

    58 Agents

41. Are there any other transfers being made besides to agents?

    Other transfers are made to the Help Desk, NCEL Security and NCDHHS.

42. Who is the current long-distance carrier for the 877-toll free number?

    The number is owned by the current IVR provider and their carrier is unknown to the NCEL.

43. Who is the telecom carrier that the call center agents' inbound calls come in on?

    The telecom carrier is NWN/Bandwidth.com.

44. Exactly how is data retrieved from the "website"?

The current IVR system simply accesses our public facing XML file on our website that contains the winning numbers information.

45. Why is data access from the "website" only done in 10- and 30-minute increments?

We do not control the timing intervals the current IVR uses to periodically "look" at the XML file. It is not uncommon to "look" or query every so often for updates, and to shorten the periods between queries around expected times of results updates.

46. What is the significance of that timing?

Again, the timing intervals are usually in the range of minutes for periods of anticipated changes to tens of minutes for uncommon periods of expected changes. This is to limit the queries/requests.

47. Why are calls limited to NC phone numbers?   There are many NC residents that play the lottery and have non-NC numbers since cell phone numbers tend to stay with people when they relocate to the state.

There was a cost with out of state calls. Some lotteries charge that cost to players, the NCEL provides a toll free number.

48. Is the call center set up to receive CTI data today?

The NCEL is only looking for an IVR solution with this RFP.

49. What is your vision of how CTI will work?

The NCEL is only looking for an IVR solution with this RFP.

50. What data would be used in a CTI environment?

The NCEL is only looking for an IVR solution with this RFP.

51. What is meant by a Self-service knowledge-based tool and how would it be used?

The NCEL is only looking for an IVR solution with this RFP.

52. Similarly, what is the use of these tools?

   The NCEL is only looking for an IVR solution with this RFP.

53. Customer satisfaction tools - Are you looking for a customer experience solution in addition to IVR? OR are you simply looking for a post interaction survey?

   The NCEL is only looking for an IVR solution with this RFP.

54. Workforce management tool - What is the connection between IVR and WFM?

   The NCEL would like to be able to pull information from the IVR through the WFM tool to gain better insights on the types of calls that are being handled by the IVR.

55. Quality assurance tool - similar to customer satisfaction question above.

   The NCEL is looking for better ways to analyze the types of calls that the IVR handles and where those callers are calling from geographically.

56. Limit call length to five (5) minutes for incoming calls before transferring as outgoing call to a hotline; no limit on call length for outgoing calls.: Does this mean that once someone is in the IVR for 5 minutes that they automatically get transferred to an agent?

   Yes, The NCEL would like to transfer all incoming calls that have been in the queue for five minutes to a hotline with a live agent.

57. What is the logic behind this? Why would you not let the caller remain in the IVR? The

   NCEL would not want the player to become frustrated due to the amount of time nor let the caller remain in queue if there is a cost to the NCEL for the amount of time the player is in the IVR.

58. Will there be an option to submit RFP responses electronically?

   This is not an option. Please see the answer to question #4.

59. Will NCEL conduct in person or virtual solution presentations with a limited number of down selected bidders?

No

60. Page 7 - Security Requirements: Can you please define (PII or any additional requirements)

    If the recommended workforce management solution tool captures any PII information in the future, there would need to be security in place to protect that information.

61. Page 8 - Cisco Integration: Is API Integration required and is it documented.

    N/A

62. Page 8 - Confirm # of Years as a Hosted Provider?   Can the State of North Carolina confirm that a Cloud Solution be proposed?

    The vendor has been the Host provider for the last 12 years. The NCEL prefers a Cloud Solution.

63. Is NCEL requesting a firm fixed cost annual fee that would cover the implementation cost, monthly call minutes up to 1.9 million minutes per month, changes to existing games/call flow, as well as the professional services to add new games and ongoing customer support for the term of this contract?

    The NCEL is requesting a firm fixed cost annual fee that would cover the implementation cost, monthly call minutes up to 1.9 million minutes per month, changes to existing games/call flow, as well as the professional services to add new games and ongoing customer support for the term of this contract. This will help with budgeting purposes.

64. Page 7 – Security Requirements: Transfer after 5 mins / suspend billing – Can you provide additional detail and if this is required or optional feature?

    The NCEL would like to transfer all incoming calls that have been in the queue for five minutes to a hotline with a live agent to prevent frustration and to manage costs. The NCEL is looking for solutions to preventing callers from getting lost in the queue.

65. What level of CTI integration is required for the IVR system?

    The NCEL is only looking for an IVR solution with this RFP.

66. Will NCEL provide the CTI Server Interface to communicate with the NCEL Phone System? (Cisco?)

The NCEL is only looking for an IVR solution with this RFP.

67. The RFP states that the proposed solution must integrate with the current Cisco phone system. If this is a hosted solution, why must the solution proposed have to integrate with the Cisco PBX and the Call recording solution?
*   Is it possible for respondents to propose a non-Cisco phone system? *We are only looking for an IVR that can transfer calls to our existing phone system. There are no plans to replace the entire phone system with this RFP.*
*   Is all the IVR inbound traffic handled by the Cisco system? *No. Other calls from the IVR are transferred outside of the NCEL's phone system.*
*   Is this for phone transfers to live agents? *No*
*   Can NCEL confirm that the VPN is behind Cisco? *Yes. The VPN is behind Cisco equipment.*

68. In addition to the Women Owned Business Participation, is there an additional category for Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (DVOSB) participation?

Yes

69. What option is NCEL looking for Back office functionality?

The ability to pull reports and analyze caller data.

70. Can the customer list the expected data integration points?

RMS (current) Retailer Management System is a home-grown application that feeds an internal database used by most departments within the NCEL. It is used for other Line of Business applications within the agency and transferred to other state agencies requiring the data.
SalesForce (Future)

71. Does NCEL has documented API's for integration points-Webdev

NCEL anticipates creation / deployment of custom RESTful API for the client as needed.

72. Is there an option process required?

NCEL will consider options as features and circumstances dictate.

73. Allow calls from North Carolina area codes only. NC area codes could be calling from Florida or Maine. NC residents may have NY or South Carolina numbers (mobiles). Is the lottery only restricted to NC residents with phones from the NC area codes?
    The NCEL would like to see recommended solutions and the cost associated with the handling of non-North Carolina area code callers.

74. Does NCEL have a diagram or call flow documented?
    We will provide this information to the selected vendor as part of the on-boarding process.

75. IVR input I DTMF, text and voice? Is natural language or AI required? Natural Language would increase the customer experience by stating the lottery game and date and they would get an answer immediately
    Yes, IVR input I DTMF, text and voice is preferred. AI is required. The NCEL would like to see natural voice pricing.

76. Is NCEL using SIP Lines in their environment?

    Yes

77. Can you tell us how many inputs on an average per call (IE question & answer = 1 input)
    The NCEL does not have this information but would like it in the next contract.

78. Is there any need for the IVR% to take payments?

    No

79. Is there a need for the IVR to send out notifications for customers wishing to optin into receiving winning numbers every week?
    The NCEL would like to learn more about the possibility of this technology. Please include as an option with your proposal.

80. Questions on usage
    a. The call inbound is that local or toll free? Currently, toll free.

b. Would the supplier have to port over existing toll free or local numbers? *The NCEL is looking for a recommended solution on whether to port of existing toll free or local numbers.*

c. Are there any calls to the IVR that are transferred to another number or extension? *Yes*

d. If so what percentage is transferred? *1000 calls per week total. We can provide detailed reports if needed.*

e. What is the average duration of the transferred call? *approximately 65 seconds.*

81. **6.3** Background Information and Bond Requirement; Bid Bond: These requirements are typical for a construction contract, but not usually required for commercial-off-the-shelf-software. Could you remove these non-industry standard requirements or provide more insight on why these are required for this contract?

    These are required by North Carolina state law.

82. **6.3** Background Information and Bond Requirement; Record Check Fee: Carahsoft has a secret level security clearance. Would this clearance be sufficient to waive this requirement?

    Unfortunately, not. These are required by North Carolina state law.

83. **6.3** Background Information and Bond Requirement; Performance and Payment Bond: These requirements are typical for a construction contract, but not usually required for commercial-off-the-shelf-software. Could you remove these non-industry standard requirements or provide more insight on why these are required for this contract?

    These are required by North Carolina state law.

84. Who currently provides service for your Toll Free number 877 962 7529?

    The current IVR provider arranges the service. The NCEL is not aware of the actual carrier.

85. For the IVR System updating automatically by pulling the information from the NCEL website, what system feeds the NCEL website? Will the IVR only connect to NCEL Website for Data?

    The current (IVR) simply accesses our public facing XML file on our website that contains the winning numbers information.
    The URL of the pages which contain the winning number data are:
    https://nclottery.com/pick3xml
    https://nclottery.com/pick4xml
    https://nclottery.com/cash5xml

https://nclottery.com/powerballxml
https://nclottery.com/megamillionsxml
https://nclottery.com/luckyforlifexml
Yes, the IVR will connect to the Website for Data.

86. Past winning numbers are to be stored for a six (6) month sliding window period. Will NCEL Website store these or the IVR?

    Both the IVR and Website will store these numbers. The IVR stores the numbers for six (6) months and the NCEL Website stores these numbers from inception.

87. Will the IVR get the past winning numbers from NCEL website or does the IVR need to store them to use as a Option/Selection on the IVR?

    The IVR will need to store the past winning numbers to use as an Option/Selection on the IVR for six (6) months.

88. In relation to allowing phone calls from North Carolina area codes only- what would NCEL like to do with non-North Carolina area code callers? What if a NC resident has a different area code? What is the intent for visitors to the state that play NCEL games?

    The NCEL would like to see recommended solutions and the cost associated with the handling of non-North Carolina area code callers.

89. Calls are requested to be limited to 5 minutes before transferring to as an outgoing call to a hotline. What is the current method of contacting the NECL Hotline – via Toll Free or Telephone #?

    Telephone # - CE (919-xxx)

90. What is the official NCEL Hotline telephone number?

    919-301-3417
    919-301-3318

91. What sits behind the NCEL Hotline? Agents?

    The calls go to UCCX que and then get transferred to Agents

92. Are the NCEL hotline agents 24/7? The NCEL agents are available from 8am -5pm Monday through Friday. If not, how do you want to handle?

The NCEL would like calls to be transferred to the NCEL Hotline Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm and would like all other calls to be transferred to a NCEL voicemail box.

93. A limit to the number of times that a call may loop through the menu before disconnecting the call is being requested. Does NCEL want to play a recording or message before disconnect?

    Yes, the NCEL prefers to play a recording or a message before it disconnects the caller.

94. With regards to the ability to transfer the IVR calls to additional numbers without an additional charge- By additional charge, do you mean a charge by the IVR for the transfer feature? There might still be charges associated with usage when transferred out.

    Yes

95. What is the model and version of your Cisco phone system?

    CUCM 12.5 , UCCX 12.5, Unity 12.5, MRA

96. What other systems require connection to the IVR or the IVR to the system and what method is the connection/integration?

    None

97. Section 4.7 indicates that proposals are required to be valid for a minimum of 120 days following submission deadline. Section 5.3 indicates all proposals shall remain valid for 180 calendar days after proposal deadline. Is the required validity period 120 or 180 days?

    180 days

98. Can contractor's timeline be noted in days leading up to Go Live of Dec 15 2022 or keep general days and customer will note time to start project after award?

    Both would be appreciated

99. The Scope of Services indicate the IVR would need to access functions within the NC Lottery systems. Does the Lottery system have existing API or web services available for this use?
    a. If so, what systems will the IVR need to integrate with and their versions?
       The NCEL needs nclottery.com web systems to access the IVR.
    b. What are your preferred integration methods?

Public facing read-only XML files.

100. The RFP also indicates "the IVR would be updated automatically by pulling the information from the NCEL website" at predefined intervals. Can you provide additional clarification regarding the "pulling" of information from the website? Is this done VIA API or some sort of screen scrape? If the data is pulled via screen scrape, please provide the URLs of the pages which contain the winning number data.

> *https://nclottery.com/pick3xml*
> *https://nclottery.com/pick4xml*
> *https://nclottery.com/cash5xml*
> *https://nclottery.com/powerballxml*
> *https://nclottery.com/megamillionsxml*
> *https://nclottery.com/luckyforlifexml*

101. Is it the intention for the Lottery to truly duplicate the existing IVR's call flow, or does the Lottery wish to modify / improve the existing IVR?

The NCEL wants to see if there are recommended solutions that offers improvements to the current IVR without losing any of its current functionality.

102. Please provide the existing call flow with any private data redacted. The call flow is an essential component when determining the scope of this project.

We will provide this information to the selected vendor as part of the on-boarding process.

103. Within the existing IVR it appears callers can transfer to two entities – Lottery Customer Service or NC Problem Gambling Helpline representative. Are there other transfer functions within the existing call flow or that you would like to add to the IVR?

Yes, the NCEL would like to be able to transfer calls to the two entities listed above as well as to our loyalty provider and ticket vendor.

104. Does the Lottery have any requirements or SMS / text messaging at this time?

No

105. In order to determine the scope of the project, please provide samples or screenshots of all reports. And MIS may have different screenshots.

Please see attached spreadsheet.

106. Does the existing system provide the player call tracking functionality?

    No, The NCEL is looking for player call tracking solutions.

107. With an incumbent provider already in place, can NCEL provide a brief explanation of why the IVR system is out for RFP? Perhaps the contract term is coming to an end?

    The contract is approaching the end of its term.

108. The RFP mentions that the system should Allow calls from North Carolina area codes only. Is this functionality currently being enforced in the IVR system? Is it the goal for the IVR system to immediately hang up on the caller if the system recognizes an ANI (caller-id) that is not from NC?

    Yes, This function is currently being enforced. The NCEL would like to see recommended solutions and the cost associated with the handling of non-North Carolina area code callers.