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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Law Enforcement Information Technology Standards Council’s (LEITSC) A Project Managers Guide to Records Management Systems (RMS)/Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System Software Acquisition. If you are reading this, then it is probably safe to assume that the law enforcement agency you are representing is looking to purchase a new, or upgrade an existing, RMS or CAD system. You are also probably wondering where to start this enormous and very important task. This project manager’s software acquisition guide navigates the reader through the process of acquiring a new system and will break this task down into manageable pieces.

Project planning, requirements development, and purchasing are the primary phases of software acquisition. For each of these phases, this guide discusses the objective(s) of the phase, the deliverable for each phase, and the recommended steps to achieve those deliverables.

Note that many challenges cannot be resolved solely through the use of technology. Before beginning the acquisition of new technology, a careful reassessment of departmental policies, procedures, and business practices is required to ensure that they are up to date and that they reflect modern practices. Automating a bad process will only result in doing the wrong thing faster.

This document arose from a recognized need to aid law enforcement with the aforementioned challenges, but equally challenging is knowing what to ask your potential service providers, as well as yourself. In the appendices following this guide is a list of questions from the LEITSC RMS/CAD Assessment tool to assist you through this process.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This guide to project management is geared toward those individuals making the leap from practitioner to project manager. Those who are involved in the acquisition process as well as anyone who is interested in learning more about the process may also find this guide beneficial. These guidelines and practices are primarily intended to benefit small to medium-sized law enforcement agencies, but are applicable for anyone seeking a starting point in the acquisition or upgrade of a system.

This document is intended to be used once a decision has been made to acquire a RMS/CAD system. It does not discuss the acquisition of professional services or commodity items such as servers or mobile data computers.

Furthermore, most states, counties, and departments have their own purchasing requirements. This acquisition guide should be used in conjunction with your state and local requirements. Be sure to review these local requirements prior to starting the acquisition process.
CHAPTER 1: PUTTING THE TEAM TOGETHER

Before you can effectively manage a project, there needs to be a shared understanding of that project: its purpose, objectives, scope, sponsorship, funding, and mandate. Projects often bring together a variety of internal and external stakeholders to address these areas, identify solutions, and work collectively to meet project goals. Stakeholders include project sponsors (people who see a need for change and have the authority to make something happen), project managers (those responsible for carrying out the work detailed in the project plan), and a project team (a group of individuals with appropriate and complementary professional, technical, or specialist skills, usually belonging to different groups and functions, and assigned to activities for the same project).

These critical roles must be fulfilled when putting a team together: the project manager, the project sponsor, and the project team.

THE PROJECT MANAGER

A project manager should be designated to oversee and manage the acquisition process of a RMS or CAD system. The project manager should be someone with experience managing successful implementation of technology systems, and an ideal candidate will have prior CAD system and/or RMS implementation experience. The project manager may be someone within the agency or may be a consultant hired to fulfill the role. Characteristics of a good RMS/CAD system project manager include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An understanding that each agency and department within the agency has unique requirements
- Excellent team building, interpersonal, and communication skills
- Ability to maintain a project timeline/schedule and budget
- Ability to be flexible with planning and managing change
- Ability to strategize
- Strong problem solving skills
- Leadership skills
- Good decision making
- Excellent organizational skills

The project manager has overall responsibility for the successful planning and execution of the system procurement and installation. Here are common activities the project manager is involved in:

- Familiarizing themselves with information sharing initiatives
- Developing a scope statement
- Meeting with other local agencies and learn what they like/dislike about their RMS/CAD system
- Analyzing and designing objectives for procuring the RMS/CAD system software
- Assessing and managing risk
- Estimating and allocating resources for procuring the RMS/CAD system software
- Organizing work and assigning individual tasks
- Tracking and reporting programmatic progress
- Solving and managing issues that arise
- Communicating to team members, the sponsor, and other stakeholders the progress of the RMS/CAD system software acquisition

THE PROJECT SPONSOR

A **project sponsor** must be formally designated. Often times a sheriff, a chief, or other executive takes on the project sponsor role and provides the budget and essential resources necessary to achieve project success. The project sponsor is responsible for making key organizational decisions for the project and approves any adjustments to the project budget. In addition, the project sponsor generally acts as the project champion with external stakeholders such as city councilors, county commissioners, or other policy makers, and communicates the program’s goals to the organization as a whole. Another aspect of this role is to ensure sustained buy-in from both external and internal stakeholders. Ultimately, the project sponsor is responsible for the success of the project.

THE PROJECT TEAM

The **project team** should be an experienced and diverse group of business and technical subject matter experts tasked with accurately communicating the needs of the CAD and/or RMS software users they represent. The groups they represent include personnel directly using the CAD and/or RMS software, as well as those who will be responsible for installing and maintaining the new system. At a minimum, project team members should represent the needs of dispatchers, patrol officers, detectives, crime analysts, executives, booking officers, records clerks, and information technology (IT) personnel. Their knowledge and expertise will prove critical to the success of the project. Members from a community policing program may also provide valuable input. These individuals actively work and participate on the project, some with specific roles at various stages of the project.

Inviting other stakeholders, such as the city councilors, county commissioners, and other policy makers to be a part of the team can help build and maintain support for the project. Acquisition projects are often a multi-year process that can extend beyond political terms and funding cycles. Inviting political stakeholders educates them to the needs of the agency and provides them with a realistic understanding of the project. Obtaining political buy-in can help during term transitions and with securing continuing funding for the project.
CHAPTER 2: DEVELOP A SCOPE STATEMENT

The project manager should develop a scope statement that clearly defines the objectives and boundaries for the acquisition of the CAD system and/or RMS. In other words, given limited resources, what will the project accomplish and, perhaps even more importantly, what will the project not accomplish? The scope statement should make very clear what is “in” the project and what is “out” and include a predetermined set of tasks and activities to complete the project successfully.

For example, agency X has decided that the CAD system will be redesigned and replaced. Although the agency may recognize the need to replace the existing RMS, it simply cannot afford to do so at this time. Therefore, during scope definition, the agency decides that while CAD is “in,” RMS is “out.”1 Since a project schedule is closely tied to the delivery time line and the scope, any variations within the scope can affect delivery and in turn affect the success of the project. “Scope creep,” the phenomenon where more requirements are introduced that were not included in the initial planning of the project, while still maintaining the same time frame for project delivery, is the single greatest cause of project failure. This problem can be addressed by describing the scope in writing at the beginning of the project and by obtaining sign-off from stakeholders. At a minimum, a scope statement should address these four areas:

- Problem Statement
- Objectives
- Performance Measures
- Milestones

It is the responsibility of the project manager to ensure that any necessary scope changes are considered in the context of the limited resources. Increases in scope, even small ones, will typically result in an increase in project costs and may require additional resources. It is also possible that a change in scope could nullify the original procurement.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem statement identifies the issues that the CAD system and/or RMS must remedy. As one of its initial tasks, the project team should develop a written outline of the issues to be resolved. Typical examples of RMS/CAD issues that departments face include the following:

- Poor utilization of law enforcement resources
- Incomplete criminal history data
- Manual processing of incidents and cases
- Ineffective/nonexistent interdepartmental communication

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OBJECTIVES

Objectives identify the high-level functionality of a system. Examples could include the implementation of crime mapping, the creation of a local criminal history repository, and the data sharing capabilities. The objectives may also identify new opportunities for the use of technology such as improving the quality and content of incident reports by using vehicle-mounted laptops and allowing officers to begin preparing the incident report while still on the scene of the incident.

Regardless of their makeup, well-written objectives are clear, and their outcomes are measurable. The next section discusses performance measures and how to develop them.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures are applied at each milestone to help determine if the delivered project component is working as required. Once a CAD or RMS system is up and running, they will also help to determine if the implemented solution satisfies the project’s objectives. When performance measures are applied at the end of a project they are, in effect, the final exam and help determine whether a project was a success or failure.

So, how is performance measured? Sometimes, the performance measure will be a simple yes or no. For example, can the officers now develop and export their incident reports from a vehicle-
mounted terminal? Other measures may be more difficult to measure, such as whether the overall quality of departmental incident reports has improved. To the extent possible, performance measures should be quantitative.

The following is a list of characteristics of good performance measures:

- **Realistic and Measurable**: Good performance measures should have data that are quantifiable and are readily available and analyzed.
- **Strategically Relevant**: Measures should relate to the intended purpose of the project and show how it links to the agency’s goals.
- **Clear and concise**: Measures must be clearly understandable to project staff, sponsors, and internal and external stakeholders.
- **Valid**: Measures should be appropriate to the project.

**MILESTONES**

Just like highway milestones, project milestones establish progress toward the end goal—successful implementation of software. The project manager should identify which activities will produce the various project deliverables (measurable, tangible, verifiable outcomes that must be produced to complete a project or part of a project). These activities become project milestones. Then, determine the order of these activities and any dependencies they have on each other. Finally, estimate how long each activity will take, establish milestone dates, and develop an overall project timeline. If a vendor must deliver the system, then the actual timeline will have to be negotiated with the vendor. Publish these dates and constantly reevaluate project progress against each of these dates, with regular updates to team members and stakeholders.

When determining how long activities will take, keep in mind staff availability and skill proficiency. It is important to be realistic about the percentage of time an individual can realistically devote to a particular task and the project. It is important to keep a realistic pace and timeline for everyone on the team.

At a minimum, the following activities should be included in the project timeline:

- Requirements development
- Development of a Request for Information (RFI)
- Publication of the Request for Proposal (RFP)
- Proposal submission deadline
- Completion of vendor selection
- Start of implementation
- Completion of implementation
- Testing of solution
The procurement process can take an average of two to four years. Realistically, the timeline is a living document—activities will be added and dropped, and dates will be changed. Commercially available project management software packages can be helpful in documenting dependencies and managing changing timelines for a project. Regardless of the chosen tool to be used, the project manager is responsible for keeping the project timeline up-to-date and communicating all changes to the project team, project sponsor, and other stakeholders.
CHAPTER 3: IDENTIFY SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Objectives define the high-level functionality of a system. System requirements identify specific features and capabilities that the system must deliver. Significant involvement from the project team members is critical during this phase as they possess the experience and knowledge necessary to develop a concise list of requirements. The list of requirements may be either embedded within the RFP or included as an attachment.

System requirements are typically broken down into functional requirements and technical requirements. Functional requirements describe system behavior and are from the perspective of an end user. For example, “The system must be able to link the same person across multiple incidents.” On the other hand, technical requirements focus on the technical aspects of the system.

FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS DEFINED

There are almost an unlimited number of ways that a project team can go about developing a list of functional requirements. Some of the tools and methods that the team can and should leverage include the following:

- LEITSC standard functional specifications for law enforcement RMS/CAD systems
- Scenario-based requirements
- Interoperability requirements
- Site visits to other law enforcement agencies
- Tradeshows
- RFI
- External requirements

Each of these can be used in isolation or in combination with each other.

STANDARD FUNCTIONAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT RMS/CAD

The Standard Functional Specifications for Law Enforcement Computer Aided Dispatch Systems and the Standard Functional Specifications for Law Enforcement Records Management Systems are two documents that were developed by LEITSC and funded through the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). The CAD specifications break down CAD functionality into 5 primary business functions while the RMS specifications break an RMS into 24 business functions. Agencies can use these specifications to develop a comprehensive understanding of the capabilities offered by these systems, to increase their understanding of technical terms, and to help build a comprehensive RFI or Request for Quotation (RFQ).
LEITSC has also developed an online tool that allows an agency to select individual functional specifications from a comprehensive list of the most commonly requested requirements. Once the desired requirements have been selected from the list, the agency can export them into an Excel report for inclusion in its RFI or RFP. Visit http://www.LEITSC.org to request access to this tool.

**SCENARIO-BASED REQUIREMENTS**

Scenario-based requirements can be captured either textually or graphically and provide a description of how a practitioner might use a RMS/CAD in the course of doing business. For example, it can describe when and how an incident report is created and how it might be updated throughout the course of an investigation. Workflow should initially be documented based on the current procedures that are in place. Opportunities to change these procedures to enhance quality and efficiency may be done as part of the procurement project. However, care should be taken to avoid expanding the project until it transforms into an exercise in reengineering the entire department’s workflow.

Project managers may find it useful to break down this task of collecting scenario-based requirements based on the functional areas defined by the RMS/CAD specifications and then spread the workload across all team members. Start this by reviewing the breakdown in the LEITSC Standard Functional Specifications for Law Enforcement Computer Aided Dispatch Systems and the Standard Functional Specifications for Law Enforcement Records Management Systems documents, identify those modules relevant to the agency, and then assign tasks to team members based on their areas of expertise. For example, the patrol officer team member might be responsible for documenting the process of issuing citations and creating incident reports.

**INTEROPERABILITY REQUIREMENTS**

An increasing number of agencies are demanding the ability for RMS and CAD systems to communicate not only with each other but also with other agencies. Collectively, this ability to exchange information with other systems is known as **interoperability**. The LEITSC Standard Functional Specifications for Law Enforcement Computer Aided Dispatch Systems and the Standard Functional Specifications for Law Enforcement Records Management Systems documents include a subsection within each module that identifies standard internal and external data exchanges. An **internal exchange** occurs when two systems within the same agency share information electronically. An **external exchange** occurs when a system transmits information to, or receives information from, an external agency. For example, an incident module may transfer incident information automatically to a prosecutor case management system.

These interoperability requirements can be further refined by identifying the specific information that needs to be exchanged (for example, subject name, state identifier, and addresses) and how that information needs to be structured.

One common obstacle to interoperability, whether internal or external to the agency, is disparate systems. Depending on the scope of the acquisition and the solutions presented by potential vendors, agencies may need to consider whether a combined RMS/CAD system or a separate CAD
system and separate RMS will best match their needs. Or, as in the example given in Chapter 2, the scope of the acquisition may only be a single system. To help with this, agencies may be able to leverage work already done by other agencies in these exchanges by referring to the Information Exchange Package Documentation (IEPD) Clearinghouse. This site posts detailed data requirements that are known IEPDs. LEITSC also has CAD and RMS IEPDs available at http://www.LEITSC.org/IEPDs. The following is a listing of the LEITSC NIEM 2.0 CAD and RMS IEPDs available at the Web site:

- RMS Summary Response
- RMS Query
- CAD to RMS Transfer
- CAD Unit Status Update
- CAD Request Status Update
- CAD Resource Availability Query
- CAD Resource Availability Response
- CAD Request for Resource
- CAD Summary Call for Service Information
- CAD Detailed Call for Service

The IEPD Clearinghouse at http://www.it.ojp.gov/iepd/ provides not only a detailed explanation of what an IEPD is, but also provides a number of IEPDs that can be downloaded and incorporated into the RFP.

**What are IEPDs?**

*Information Exchange Package Document.* IEPDs represent a set of data and the additional documentation describes the content, structure and other artifacts of the information exchange. IEPDs help facilitate the exchange of information between agencies and support a specific set of business requirements.

**What is NIEM?**

NIEM, the National Information Exchange Model, is an XML-based framework developed with the goal of automating information sharing by facilitating the development, dissemination, and support of information exchange standards.

**How can NIEM IEPDs help us?**

Using IEPDs based on national reference models allows public safety agencies to quickly and accurately share detailed information with all cooperating parties without requiring agencies to have the same equipment.

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**SITE VISITS**

It is often helpful to visit neighboring law enforcement agencies to see their RMS/CAD systems “in action” and to identify similar software needs and requirements. It is also helpful to develop a set of questions ahead of time to ask each agency. The following is a sampling of questions that may be useful:

- What type of technology is currently in use?
- How is the product working?
- Has the product met expectations?
- How did the agency go about determining requirements for its system?
- What is the name of the software provider selected?
• What are the names of the software providers that were rejected and why?
• Who is your contact person for the software provider?
• How compatible is the product with other technologies used by the agency?
• Are you satisfied with the warranty and customer service?
• What was the software provider like to work with? (pleasant, difficult, accommodating, responsive)
• What was the overall cost of implementing the solution?
• What are the ongoing maintenance costs?
• Was the agency satisfied with the initial set-up of the system?
• How much work went into data entry to get the system off the ground?
• How has the vendor handled updates/upgrades since implementation?
• Does the vendor provide training for new employees at all levels?
• Are help files and documentation usable?
• Are there any issues of concern regarding function of the system?

CONFERENCES AND TRADESHOWS

Conferences and tradeshows are yet another way for an agency to gather information to assist in formulating the requirements for the RMS/CAD system. They can serve as an efficient means of comparing and contrasting software providers and receiving multiple product demos in a relatively short period of time (it is recommended that meeting times be scheduled with targeted providers in advance). They also provide an opportunity to meet other practitioners and to get their input on the various solutions available. Finally, tradeshows and conferences can also provide valuable insight on trends as well as on pending technology standards and developments. Contact the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) for a comprehensive list of law enforcement conferences and tradeshows.

LEITSC has information on several conferences that various agencies associated with LEITSC have every year. Here is a listing of the yearly conferences from the organizations that make up LEITSC.

• IACP Annual Training Conference and Exposition
• IACP Law Enforcement Information Management (LEIM) Section Annual Training Conference and Exposition
• National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) Annual Conference and Exposition
• Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) Annual Meeting
• National Sheriffs’ Association (NSA) Annual Conference and Exposition

Go to http://www.LEITSC.org for dates and information on these conferences.
In addition to those hosted by the LEITSC member associations, there are a number of public safety association conferences, as well as industry trade shows, which should be considered.

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

LEITSC encourages all law enforcement agencies to develop an RFI. An RFI is another tool that can be useful in helping to identify functional requirements. Essentially, an RFI is a way of formally requesting information from software providers without committing the agency to purchasing anything. An RFI is fundamentally a formal request for product literature and product demonstrations from interested software providers. The content of an RFI can vary widely. At one extreme, a comprehensive RFI will closely resemble an RFP and include all of the requirements documented during the requirements development phase. At the other extreme, an RFI may indicate that the agency is interested in acquiring CAD or RMS software, but include very little, if any, information on system requirements. At a minimum, an RFI should include the following sections:

- **Project Background**: This gives the software provider a general overview about what applications and software about which the agency is looking to get more information.

- **Rules of Preparation**: This will give providers an idea of when the agency expects a response and a general timeline for the project. Include any other general conditions of the project that the provider should know.

- **Agency Information**: In this section, you can provide information about your agency, such as the number of sworn officers, the size of the population served, and workload statistics.

Many providers will respond by returning "boilerplate" marketing materials that describe their products. In some instances, they can be persuaded to perform an on-site or Internet-based demonstration for the project team. Any marketing materials and demonstrations should serve to help further define the requirements for your new system. Finally, an RFI can help an agency begin to establish relationships with software providers and potentially identify unreasonable expectations.

**EXTERNAL REQUIREMENTS**

There are many federal, state, and local statutes, ordinances, regulations, and policies that place a number of additional demands on a system. These requirements often concern the security and privacy of information stored within the system. For example, “National Crime Information Center (NCIC) policy establishes a number of security measures to ensure the privacy and integrity of the data. The information passing through the network is encrypted to prevent unauthorized access. Each user of the system is authenticated to ensure proper levels of access for every transaction. To further ascertain and verify the accuracy and integrity of the data, each agency must periodically validate its records.” Agencies also must undergo periodic audits to ensure data quality and adherence to all security provisions (NCIC excerpt taken from the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI) Web site at [http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cjsd/ncic_brochure.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cjsd/ncic_brochure.htm)). Ensuring that an agency’s system is NCIC compliant could avoid issues later on.
Other external requirements come in the form of grant conditions and/or system standards. For example, if the agency desires to be part of the FBI’s National Data Exchange (N-DEx) Program, it will need to conform to the systems requirements set forth by that program.

**TECHNICAL AND SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS**

Technical service and support requirements tend to be “behind the scenes” of the system and are not readily visible to the user. They are essential to the operation and maintenance of the system but do not describe system behavior. Examples of these requirements include the following:

- **Telecommunications Requirements:** What kind of network encryption must be in place to ensure the security and privacy of the information?
- **Implementation Service Requirements:** How many hours of consulting services to help install and update the software should be included by the software provider?
- **Training Requirements:** What level of training and training materials will the provider supply?
- **Service Level Requirements:** When system issues occur, how responsive will the provider have to be? Will they need to respond in 3 hours, 12 hours, 24 hours, and so forth?
- **Maintenance Requirements:** What is the ongoing need for support and availability of software upgrades?
- **Legal and Insurance Requirements:** These are typically mandated by the municipality or county.
- **Computer Hardware Inventory:** Indicate the hardware currently owned by the agency. This will help responding organizations determine whether additional hardware will need to be procured in order to run the software.
- **Staff Capabilities:** Indicate the skills and capabilities of key IT staff members to help the responding organization determine how much training will be necessary to get the agency’s internal or external IT staff familiarized with the software.
CHAPTER 4: OTHER RFP SECTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

While the technical requirements constitute a significant portion of the RFP, there are a number of additional considerations that should be made when assembling the document. These include the following:

- RFP format
- Response format
- Evaluation and selection criteria
- Statements of Intent
- RFP distribution
- Vendor conferences
- Questions and clarifications
- Provider supplied references

**RFP FORMAT**

Local jurisdictions often have specific rules around the formatting of an RFP and the sections and language that need to be included. These sections may include the following:

- **Project Background:** Provides the project’s history and outlines the major applications and software that the agency is looking for.

- **Engagement Overview:** Describes and outlines the primary goal of the project, as well as the tasks for which the vendor or subcontractor will be responsible.

- **RFP Dates:** Clearly define when specific items are due for the project (such as statement of intent, questions, and proposals).

- **Attachments and Reference Materials:** Include in this section any and all worksheets and documents for vendors to use: for example, proposal response, travel reimbursement, subcontractor agreement.

- **Stakeholders:** Include any and all stakeholders involved with this project.

- **Locations:** Where meetings, conferences, and so forth will be taking place.

- **Technical Requirements:** This section should identify all the information that was collected for the functional and nonfunctional requirements.

- **Significant Dates:** These are the key dates that were established for the procurement and implementation of the system.
• **Selection Criteria:** The criteria being used to determine whom the contract goes to. This ensures that the selection process is fair and objective. Additional details about this are in the next section. This section should not contain the scoring sheet to be used by the project team.

• **Proposal Formatting Requirements:** The format in which proposals must be submitted. This would include details on how the agency wants the costs associated with the system broken down and itemized.

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**EVALUATION AND SELECTION CRITERIA**

Evaluation criteria help an agency objectively evaluate responses to an RFP. These criteria serve three primary purposes. The first is that they enable project participants to standardize the project criteria to be considered during each reviewer's evaluation of a proposal. In doing so, they reduce any potential liability associated with selecting a particular provider. Second, they enable objectivity in the scoring of proposals. Finally, they provide responders with an understanding of how proposals will be ‘graded’, both individually and in comparison with other proposals. The evaluation criteria should be clearly stated in the RFP and should be listed in order of priority. The agency should develop forms to aid in document scoring and make the award solely based on the total score assigned.

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**STATEMENT OF INTENT**

It is often a good idea to gauge the level of interest in the RFP by requiring that providers planning to respond notify the agency of their intent. This response may be in the form of a letter, e-mail, or phone call. This also helps with notification to providers of amendments to the RFP as well as with award notifications.

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**RFP DISTRIBUTION**

A procurement specialist from the local purchasing department will be invaluable for this step of the RFP process. The specialist will ensure that the RFP is in compliance with all town, city, county, and state rules and regulations.

Especially for small and medium-sized agencies, it is essential that the project team actively markets and promotes the RFP. By doing so, the agency ensures a greater response, which will result in a more successful project. Sample agency RFPs can be found at the IACP Technology Clearinghouse website (http://www.IACPtechnology.org) and at the Justice Information Sharing, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice website (http://www.it.ojp.gov).

The RMS/CAD industry has broken the law enforcement community into groupings based on agency size. These breakdowns are known as "Provider Tiers.” Their primary purpose is to allow providers to target particular segments of the market. For example, some providers cater solely to large agencies and may not be able to break down their software to accommodate the size of a
smaller agency. When promoting the RFP, ensure that targeted companies cater to the needs of agencies of a similar size to the RFP issuing agency.

**QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS**

After software providers have received the RFP, they will most likely have questions for the agency. The RFP should include a mechanism and a deadline date for the submission of any questions. Best practices suggest that all questions should be submitted in writing (this includes e-mail). Responses to the questions should be posted to a public site and distributed to providers that have notified the agency of their intent to respond. In addition to the question and clarification period, agencies may wish to host an in-person vendor conference.

Vendor conferences are held shortly after the RFP has been released and allow interested software providers to meet with representatives of the agency and ask questions that will help clarify the RFP requirements. This will also give the software providers a better overall understanding of the project's ultimate vision. The agency should provide all the details of the conference in the RFP including the following:

- Date
- Time
- Location
- Number of representatives allowed from each provider
- The attending representatives of the agency
- Indication of whether attendance is mandatory in order to respond

Keep in mind that attending a conference can be costly and that making attendance mandatory as a requirement may lower the number of responses. As such, it is generally utilized as an option. Be sure that a member of the project team takes careful notes during this conference, detailing all questions and responses to those questions. These notes should be distributed to all providers indicating interest.

**SOFTWARE PROVIDER SUPPLIED REFERENCES**

The proposal should include at least three (3) client references for similar projects for agencies of similar size. Once the project team has obtained these references, the team may do research and identify additional references. Furthermore, ask the provider for a list of any current and previous litigation and a description of the outcomes of that litigation.
It is extremely important that the procuring agency contact available references. Additionally, it is helpful to develop a list of questions when contacting the references. Here are a few topics that the questions should cover:

- Why did they choose the software?
- What is the system's behavior versus the agency's expectations?
- What was the quality of the training?
- How well did the implementation team perform?
- Was the provider able to meet schedules and deadlines?
- What was the attitude of the provider staff (friendly, adversarial, and so forth)?
- Were there problems during implementation and how were they resolved? How are bugs handled?
- How are new releases/upgrades handled?
- Were there unexpected surprises (good and bad)?
- What were the challenges of finding and training IT to support the system?
- What are the major benefits of the system?
- Are there major limitations of the system?
- Is the provider responsiveness to support and maintenance problems?
- Are there hidden costs?
- Were there customization issues?
CHAPTER 5: EVALUATION OF PROPOSAL

This phase of the project will determine which vendor the agency selects. There are four steps to selecting the vendor:

- Procurement resources
- Selection procedure
- Proposal rejection
- Best and final offer

This section explains how to successfully accomplish each of these four steps and select the right vendor for the agency.

PROCUREMENT RESOURCES

Additional resources should be added to the project team during this phase:

- Additional technical representatives
- Procurement specialist
- Software provider liaison

This expanded project team will have many responsibilities and tasks to complete during purchasing:

- Analyze and score provider proposals
- Attend final demonstration and presentations by providers
- Attend project team meetings to give updates

Technical Representatives: They will be called upon to give their assessment of the technical requirements of the system and the impact on agency hardware. These individuals are typically selected from the agency’s internal or external IT support staff.

Procurement Specialist: The procurement specialist will typically be from a local purchasing office and be knowledgeable with your city’s or county’s rules and guidelines on purchasing.

Software Provider Liaison: This role provides a vital communications link to the software providers. Typically, local guidelines require and/or limit software providers to communicate only with this person. They will often be responsible for negotiating price, warranties, and more importantly making sure the software contains everything the project team has decided is needed in a RMS/CAD system. The project manager often acts in this role.
There are two major aspects to the selection procedure.

- The scoring process
- The proposal rejection letter

To help an agency select a provider, a scoring team should be established. Given project team members’ intimate knowledge of the system requirements, they are often assigned this task. The scoring team is responsible for scoring each proposal objectively based on the scoring criteria published with the RFP.

After all proposals have been evaluated, it is not uncommon to find that none of them meet the minimum needs of the project. Be prepared to reopen the bidding process. The choice the project team makes should be based on whether the needs of the agency are likely to be met with the options presented.

A proposal rejection is a letter sent to a software provider when its proposal is rejected because either it did not meet the minimum set of requirements set forth within the RFP or because the vendor was not selected. Here are a few guidelines to consider when writing the proposal rejection letter:

- Print the RFP rejection letter on agency letterhead.
- Thank the organization for its time, effort, and interest in the project related to the issued RFP.
- State the reasons why the proposal was rejected. Be very specific regarding these reasons. Specificity may lower the likelihood of later challenges by the company.
- Keep in mind that the rejected provider has the right to formally contest the decision within a reasonable time frame, as initially defined in the RFP. Therefore, the agency may not want to sign a contract with the selected provider until the expiration deadline to receive protests occurs and any rejection protests are settled.
- Send the rejection letter via certified mail.

Be sure to consult with the city’s or county’s legal department when sending out the proposal rejection letters to determine requirements for language.
**BEST AND FINAL OFFER**

Best and Final Offers (BAFOs) are often used when the project team needs to further differentiate competing proposals. Once a BAFO has been submitted, the project team should review it in the same manner as the proposal before a final decision is made.
CHAPTER 6: PURCHASING

The final phase of the procurement process involves the process of actually purchasing the software. Given the size of most CAD and RMS procurements, ensuring that the project remains in compliance with all local and state purchasing rules is critical during this phase. Federal requirements should also be considered if utilizing federal funding.

It must be emphasized that project team members must follow the policies and procedures governing contracts within their respective jurisdictions. For most law enforcement agencies, the contract negotiation stage is the most difficult.

The negotiation of a contract is usually a collaborative effort involving the project team members, the software provider, the city and/or county attorneys, and the procurement specialist. In this section, the guide discusses some of the recommended strategies to ensure that the procurement meets expectations.

ACCEPTANCE TESTING

Acceptance testing is the process that an agency uses to verify that the delivered and installed product meets the demands specified in the procurement documents and the contract. Acceptance testing should include the following:

- **Functionality:** This type of testing is designed to ensure that the system is functioning as required by the RFP. Functionality testing usually starts after users have been trained and the software is in a “live environment.”

- **Reliability:** This testing is designed to determine the reliability of a software package. Depending on the agency’s level of sophistication, the complexity of this testing may range from simple extended use by end user practitioners to the use of automatic testing applications that simulate use by multiple users.

- **Performance:** This testing is designed to determine the speed of the combined hardware and software package during various transactions and system load. Again, the sophistication of this testing may range from coordinating multiple users accessing the system simultaneously, to the use of automated testing scripts.
CONCLUSION

The process of acquiring a new CAD system or RMS can initially seem like an overwhelming and daunting task. However, by carefully organizing project tasks and by leveraging the tools that already exist, an agency will find the effort less difficult and will improve its chances for project success.

Over the past decade the proliferation of information technology in law enforcement has led to the development of disparate systems that do not communicate with one another. Clearly the integration of these systems is in the best interest of public safety and makes sound business sense. In order to move toward interoperability and a fully integrated justice information system so that the public safety community can share critical information, decision makers must be educated about the value of technical and practical standards in law enforcement information technology.

LEITSC was created to ensure that the law enforcement community is involved in the development of such standards. LEITSC gives law enforcement experts opportunities to give input on standards development initiatives, creates outreach and training opportunities to keep law enforcement executives engaged in the process, and continues work that is already under way to address the IT needs of the law enforcement community. The law enforcement community understands the value of using IT standards in technology implementation, and significant progress has been made in recent years in the development and implementation of IT standards to advance information sharing. LEITSC will continue to strive to promote the importance of integrated and interoperable justice information systems in the interest of effective public safety service.
### ACRONYMS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFIS</td>
<td>Automated Fingerprint Identification System</td>
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<td>AVL</td>
<td>Automatic Vehicle Location</td>
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<td>BAFO</td>
<td>Best and Final Offer</td>
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<td>BJA</td>
<td>Bureau of Justice Assistance (U.S. DOJ)</td>
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<td>BOLO</td>
<td>Be On The Lookout</td>
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<td>CAD</td>
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<td>Call for Service</td>
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<td>Department of Motor Vehicles</td>
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