



canoe
procurement group of canada

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

regarding

CANOE National Mobility Wireless Services Program

RELEASE DATE: September 23, 2022

CLOSING DATE: October 7, 2022

RFI #: CAN-2022-016

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1.0 INVITATION

Canoe Procurement Group of Canada (CANOE), with support from 8760 Cellular Inc. (8760), are requesting information from Mobility Wireless Providers with relevant experience, skills, and resources to provide details on the structure of a National Wireless Mobility Program for Public Sector CANOE members.

This RFI is seeking detailed information and unique solutions from prospective providers with their capability, pricing plans, and device offers relating to such an endeavor. CANOE intends, through this process, to collect pertinent information to be used towards a formal RFP of mobility wireless service in the coming months.

For additional clarity, only those Proponets that respond to this RFI will be invited to respond to a subsequent Request for Proposal (RFP).

Responses must be emailed to:

cellular@8760.ca

Subject line - CANOE National Wireless Mobility Program RFI #: CAN-2022-016

Not later than 4:00 p.m. (MST) on October 7, 2022

Information received after closing time and date will not be considered.

2.0 GENERAL

The proponents should be aware of the following:

- All responses will become the property of CANOE, and as such, are subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Legislation. To request documentation confidentiality, proponents must submit a covering letter with their information, detailing the specifics of their request.
- CANOE is focused on commencing this Program no later than January 1, 2023.
- The procurement policies of CANOE follow the requirements of the New West Partnership Agreement, Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, and Canadian Free Trade Agreement.
- An expectation of at least 10,000 devices to be on board the Program after the initial contract term.
- For any clarifications related to issues arising from the Request for Information, contact:

Jesse Kruper Telephone: 780-886-5454

E-mail: jkruper@8760.ca

- All clarifications must be submitted by October 4, 2022 to be eligible for a response.

3.0 PREQUALIFICATION

It is the intent of CANOE to determine prequalification through this RFI. For clarity to proponents

interested in responding to this RFI and subsequent RFP, we cite Article 508 of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA).

<https://www.cfta-alec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/CFTA-Consolidated-Version-September-24-2021.pdf>

4.0 BACKGROUND

CANOE is the lead agency and procurement authority in a group of partners representing MASH, public, and not-for-profit entities across Canada. CANOE is a trade name of the RMA, a public agency incorporated by Alberta legislation and is registered in a number of provinces across Canada. On behalf of its partner organizations, CANOE facilitates a competitive solicitation and contracting process on behalf of and based on the needs of itself and Members. This process results in regional and/or national procurement contracts with various Suppliers of products/equipment and services which Member's desire to procure.

CANOE is governed by publicly elected officials that serve as the RMA Board of Directors. RMA's Board of Directors oversee and authorize the calls for all new proposals and holds those resulting contracts for the benefit of its own and Members' use.

CANOE currently serves over 2,200 Member agencies nationally. Both membership and utilization of CANOE contracts continue to expand, due in part to the increasing acceptance of cooperative purchasing throughout the government and education of communities nationally. CANOE is currently partnered with the following provincial counterparts:

- Civicinfo BC ("Civicinfo")
- Rural Municipalities of Alberta ("RMA")
- Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities ("SARM")
- Association of Manitoba Municipalities ("AMM")
- Local Authorities Services ("LAS")
- Municipalities Newfoundland & Labrador ("MNL")
- Federation of PEI Municipalities ("FPEIM")
- Nova Scotia Federations of Municipalities ("NSFM")
- Union of the Municipalities of New Brunswick ("UMNB")
- Northwest Territories Association of Communities ("NWTAC")

In addition, this RFP may apply to Canada-wide MASH sectors including academic institutions, schools, and hospitals and other public sector and not for profit entities in Yukon Territory, Nunavut and the rest of Canada.

For a complete list of current CANOE members, as well as the current members of the provincial associations represented in this RFP, and other entities represented in this RFP see <https://rmaalberta.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Provincial-Associations-Public-Sector-Agencies-2022-2.xlsx>.

Please note, "Members", as referred to in this RFP, include all of those listed, whether current or potential future members, but does not in any way guarantee that any or all Members will want to participate.

Cellular Program Vision

The Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) Cellular Program currently manages over 2,000 lines: a combination of smartphones, tablets, hubs, and aircards on a combination of Apple, Android, and various other devices. The program utilizes the aggregation of the association to provide all RMA members, large and small, with a consistent pricing structure, dedicated customer service support, and departmentalized billing capabilities.

The current RMA Program began in 2012 as an extension of the RMA's philosophy of standardized member offerings. Growing across Alberta, the association delivers a reliable option for public organizations to utilize economies of scale for wireless services administration, billing, and ongoing contract and device management.

Corporate contract agreements are updated every three years, and are based on historical consumption of Program users, industry trends, and new feature offerings intuitively created by the Program's administrative team. This ongoing analysis of market adaptations and price points provides an environment of trust and economies of scale in terms of management for RMA members – allowing them to focus on more relevant matters in their community.

For each Provincial jurisdiction, or altogether, CANOE is focused on replicating the RMA Cellular Program for its public sector partners throughout Canada. Today, the regional associations promote current group buy offerings. The goal of this RFI is to provide each association or Province with an understanding of what national wireless carriers can offer their membership.

5.0 SCOPE OF SERVICES

Nationwide Pricing

CANOE is aware of current regional pricing disproportions in the country. It is the goal of this RFI to determine the possibility of an overall national standardized pricing model, or standardized pricing model to each jurisdiction provincially, as it has been achieved in Alberta through the RMA.

The goal of the cellular program is to organize all Municipal organizations together under one contract agreement with Canoe, and one pricing structure provincially, or nationally. Respondents are encouraged to refine their vision of having one or multiple pricing structures that will be offered, across various geographic locations in Canada.

Technical and End-User Support

Suppliers are asked to provide a description of the support levels and services that would be provided to a national program. Understanding that users will be based in various time zones across the county, suppliers are asked to provide solutions for:

- 24-hr technical support
- Day-to-day requests (roaming package adds, device upgrades, rate plan changes, etc.)
- Vacation Suspension / Re-activation
- Individual Notifications – End-User notifications for data thresholds and roaming charges.

International Plans

The need for CANOE members to maintain access to their lines outside of Canada is a growing concern. Travelling to international destinations creates challenges for users that want cost-effective plans, coverage to all major destinations, and usage limits that match current consumption patterns.

Respondents are to outline potential international roaming pricing plans and their associated usage limits (if any) to ensure members have the coverage necessary for international travel. The inclusion of any “safety net” roaming features applied to all monthly rate plans is encouraged. Supplementary roaming features, add-ons, and/or dedicated rate plans should be laid out with an example scenario explaining how each option is to be utilized by end-users.

Data

As device technology becomes more and more advanced, we see a growing demand for data. Current data allotments are often outpaced by these innovations and contracted rate plan data is insufficient to cover the growing demand.

Respondents are tasked with providing solutions for this challenge in three separate areas:

- Unlimited Data Plans – Throttled rate plan thresholds that make sense for evolving needs.
- Pooled Data – With an aggregated program, a unique approach to how data can be shared across the entire portfolio is requested. This includes data sharing for North America plans.
- Supplementary Data – Current protocol is to tack on additional data in bulk. Automated data top-ups, terabyte-level add-ons, and data-only monthly rate plan options should be provided.

Additional Program Requirements

The association requires incentives to provide to members when boarding the program. Respondents are to outline specific contract-level features that broaden the eligibility for new users to board the program. Examples of this include:

- Device Upgrade Timelines – Understanding that devices sometimes require replacement prior to a device term, options for early replacement are to be included with standard replacement terms.
- Port-In Credits – The cost to switch carriers (or even accounts) is restricted by device terms, balances, and return policies. These barriers can be overcome through credits put forward to new members.
- Internal Account Transfer - Responses are to include resolution for situations where lines boarding the CANOE program are part of an internal transfer of the carrier providing service to the Program. How will these transfers be handled when it comes to existing balances owing.
- Renewal Offers – A historical benefit of corporate-level contracts was an allotment of float offers. These floats were used in situations where a new device was required even though a term balance remained. This valuable feature has been relied upon in the past and a replacement strategy should be provided.
- Program Growth – As this would be a new contract and program, incentives regarding stretch goals, rate plan reductions, and proportional growth of contract-level features would encourage uptake and reward program expansion. And, more importantly, provide respondents with a means to tier the pricing in relation to program success.

Billing Requirements

Knowing that the aggregation of devices onto a single provincial or national contract provides numerous benefits (both monetarily and administratively), CANOE has access to billing redistribution that allows the association to deliver the monthly billing to each member in a unique and customizable manner i.e. departmentalized. While all end-users must remain under the umbrella of a single, corporate contract, there will likely be multiple billing accounts for the respective regional pricing arrangement.

There are aspects of billing that need to be considered and addressed as to the level of ability the providers have prior to CANOE posting the RFP to eligible bidders:

- Account Level Reporting – The program requires access to raw usage/billing data. This needs to be in the form of csv or xlxs. CANOE staff will need access to these raw data files within a timely manner each month, preferably, within a week of the invoice being generated.
- Cellular Program Management Fee – The administrative costs required to run the Program by Canoe are desired to be billed and collected by device, directly from the service provider. The Fee would then be remitted to CANOE on a scheduled basis (either monthly or quarterly). This Fee would be proposed by the proponent in a subsequent Request for Proposal, and would be outlined in the contract agreements between CANOE, and all participating members.
- Billing Clarification – Knowing that there must be a party financially responsible for the costs incurred each month, respondents are to clarify if CANOE is to be billed directly, or if regional associations can be assigned as an affiliate, accountable for payment of charges incurred by membership in their region.

6.0 TIMELINES

September 20, 2022 RFI released
October 4, 2022 RFI Closes

7.0 INFORMATION DISCLOSURE

All information provided by CANOE and RMA to the proponents and all information provided by the proponents to CANOE as part of or subsequent to this submission, is subject to the disclosure and protection provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Alberta) (FOIP). This Act allows any person a right of access to records in CANOE's custody or control, subject to limited and specific exceptions as set out in the Act.

Where applicable, a proponent may identify those portions of its submission which the proponent considers confidential and what harm could reasonably be expected from disclosure. CANOE does not warrant that such identification will preclude disclosure if disclosure is determined to be required under the Act.