



**LAKE SUPERIOR ZOO
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR
IT SERVICES**

ISSUED APRIL 13, 2022

PROPOSALS DUE – MAY 4, 2022

**SUBMIT TO
LAKE SUPERIOR ZOO
ATTN: HALEY HEDSTROM
7210 FREMONT STREET
DULUTH, MN 55807
hhedstrom@lszoo.org**

1. General Overview

1.1 Key Dates

The following table outlines LSZ's key dates and events in the RFP process.

Activity	Date
RFP Made Available	April 12, 2022
Deadline to Request a Site Visit	April 20, 2022
Site Visits	April 21-25, 2022
Question & Answer Period	April 26-28, 2022
Deadline for Preliminary Proposals	May 4, 2022
Interviews with Selected Respondents	May 9-11, 2022
Deadline for Final Bid	May 13, 2022
Provider Selected & Notified	May 18, 2022
Start Date of Services	June 1, 2022

LSZ reserves the right to extend the submission deadline or any other deadline or date in the RFP in the event that an extension would be in the best interest of LSZ.

1.2 Background of Lake Superior Zoo

The Lake Superior Zoo is a nonprofit organization recognized as a charitable, tax-exempt organization pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. LSZ was founded in 1923 and incorporated in 1959 with a defined mission to provide close-up animal experiences that create connections with wildlife and inspire action towards conservation in our region and around the world.

The LSZ provides year-round opportunities for guests to visit over 300 animals comprised of 140 species. We also have numerous educational programs and opened Minnesota's first Zoo preschool in 2020. LSZ is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, meaning we uphold the highest standards of animal care and welfare.

Our annual operating budget is ranges from approximately \$2.3-\$2.9 million each year. Our sources of revenue include admission tickets, tourism tax subsidy, memberships, education program fees, donations, and on-site sales. For more information, please visit our website at www.lszooduluth.org.

1.3 IT Structure and Scope of Services

LSZ currently has no in-house IT staff and uses a managed service provider for network management, remote helpdesk staff, and monthly updates. LSZ is interested in fully managed services.

LSZ is looking to have a firm/agency support our IT operations including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Network Management
- Email Management, including spam protection
- Application Management
- Infrastructure Support
- Backup Management & Disaster Recovery
- On-site and report support (Help Desk)

Currently, LSZ generates an average of 16 helpdesk tickets each month. Network configurations include one physical server and 3 virtual servers. We have wireless and hardwired internet across zoo grounds with a total of 5 buildings. LSZ employs 31 full-time people and up to 15 part-time guest experience seasonal employees. LSZ has 43 workstations and 62 users. Each machine and user vary in use of network services, some machines are shared between multiple users, and some are dedicated workstations. Consistent, reliable, and secure access for all staff is critical to the scope of this work.

LSZ uses TAM Retail as our point of sales platform which has been cloud-based and installed software. All machines are PCs with Microsoft operating systems with the exception of several iPads. The Zoo is open seven days a week year-round and reliable access to TAM is crucial for daily operations.

1.4 Preparation Costs

LSZ shall not be responsible for bid preparation costs, nor for the cost, including attorney fees associated with any administrative, judicial, or other type of challenge to the determination of the selected proposer and/or award of the contract and/or rejection of the proposal. By submitting a bid, each respondent agrees to be bound in the respect and waives all claims to such costs and fees.

1.5 Contract Period

LSZ intends to award one contract with a base year that will begin on June 1, 2022, with options that can be discussed upon award of services.

2. Rules Governing Preliminary Proposals and Final Bids

2.1 Rules Governing Preliminary Proposals and Final Bids

The content of all proposals and bids will be kept confidential throughout the selection process and afterward. Copies of any preliminary proposal or final bid will not be shared with other respondents.

2.2 Disposition of Proposals and Bids

All materials submitted in response to the RFP shall become the property of LSZ.

2.3 Modification of Bids

Modifications to final bids will not be accepted by LSZ. Respondents have the right to revise their preliminary proposals after the interview process to form their final bid.

2.4 Late Submissions

Preliminary proposals and final bids not received after the dates specified will not be considered and will be returned to the respondent unopened.

2.5 Acceptance/Rejection of Submittal

LSZ reserves the right to reject any or all responses to this RFP, to waive minor irregularities in any bid or in the RFP procedures, and to accept any bid presented which meets or exceeds these specifications and which is deemed to be in the best interests of LSZ; however, the requirements for timelines shall not be waived.

2.6 Site Visits

LSZ is requesting providers to contact Haley Hedstrom to request a site visit by 4/20/2022. Firms will be invited to schedule a site visit during the time period listed above. Site visits are unable to be scheduled outside of this window unless discussed with Ms. Hedstrom prior to the deadline. The site visit will include an overview of LSZ's current inventory and network structure, including the servers located at our main office, as well as our current IT needs. Preliminary proposals can be submitted without a site visit.

2.7 Preliminary Proposals

After the site visit, LSZ expects respondents to submit a preliminary proposal that includes a brief audit of LSZ's current network, managed services and security risks, with details of enhancements and modifications that the firm will implement to improve the end-user experience. LSZ believes this is best achieved by having firms evaluate LSZ's current IT infrastructure themselves and then develop their own proposal on how they will improve and maintain a system that continues to meet business needs. This will not be viewed as the final bid and respondents will have the opportunity to amend their preliminary proposal to develop a final bid after the preliminary interview process.

2.8 Evaluation and Interviews

A committee of individuals representing LSZ will perform the evaluation of all preliminary proposals. Following this evaluation process, the committee may elect to ask qualified respondents to complete an oral interview before the committee. The purpose of the interview is to allow those selected firms further expansion and discussion of their written responses.

Oral interviews are provided at the sole discretion of LSZ and are for the purposes of allowing LSZ to broaden their understanding of certain selected respondents. This will be the only opportunity for a respondent to receive feedback on their preliminary proposal.

2.9 Final Bid

All final bids must be received by 5/19/22 and be clearly marked as the respondent's final bid. There will be no modifications of bids once submitted and there will be no further communication with the respondent until a final decision has been made by LSZ.

2.10 Final Provider Selection

The final selection of the successful respondent is scheduled to be completed by 5/18/22. The successful respondent will assume their responsibilities on approximately 6/1/22. All non-selected respondents will be notified via email on 5/18/22.

3. Minimum Qualifications

All managed service providers submitting a final bid must:

- be licensed to do business in Minnesota,
- have the expertise, license, and resource to provide managed IT services for LSZ's current and future operations,
- consistently maintain and allocate sufficient staff resources to provide timely service,
- maintain staff that are qualified and available to provide necessary, specialized expertise in various technological areas,
- maintain required business insurance coverage.

4. Bid Guidelines

Please respond as outlined in this request and observe the following guidelines:

- Respond to questions as directly as possible along with any supporting information you feel will be pertinent to these questions.
- Electronic submissions must be emailed to Haley Hedstrom hhedstrom@lszoo.org no later than 5:00pm on 5/4/22.
- Our final firm selection will be made based on our evaluation of the criteria outlined in Section 5 of this Request for Proposal and feedback from oral interviews.

Submission of a final bid will be construed to imply agreement in advance to the services outlined in the enclosed materials. Brochures, photos, annual reports or any other appropriate printed material may be included in your preliminary proposal and/or final bid. The final bid package should be kept as brief as possible, however, with the subject areas clearly defined.

5. Questions

5.1 General Firm Information

Provide a brief description of your firm, including but not limited to an overview of your firm, including name of the principal(s) of the firm, address, total number of employees, overall industry experience, certifications, and any affiliations.

Experience and Resources

1. Describe your firm and its capabilities. In particular, support your capacity to perform the services detailed in this RFP.
2. Indicate which employees from your firm would be involved in providing services to LSZ, including their designated roles, qualifications, and experience. A resume of the primary individual(s) who will be responsible for the LSZ account is required.
3. Provide a list of references, with names and contact information, for organizations or businesses for whom you have performed similar work. A minimum of three references are required, references from nonprofit organizations are preferred.

5.2 Services

4. Describe your firm's capabilities to conduct network and security assessments and ability to complete any necessary system enhancements.
5. Describe your approach to provide installation, configuration management, patching, monitoring, and ongoing maintenance for network devices.
6. Detail the process of providing services, as outlined in section 1.3, including time spent on-site and remote support available. Define standard service hours during regular business hours, weekends, and holidays. Any applicable Service Level Agreement (SLA) for response time options should be included.
7. Detail your firm's proposed approach to offering end-users a uniform working experience at any location at the Zoo, providing consistent, reliable, and secure access to files, folders, email, and printers.
8. Describe any software utilized for routine patching and updates, as well as software for communication and remote support, such as helpdesk ticketing system.
9. Outline your firm's procurement and purchase ordering process, if defined.
10. Describe any additional service items, and cost, that may be of interest to LSZ.

5.3 Fee Structure

Provide a clear fee schedule that outlines all monthly service delivery costs as well as any proposed one-time software or start-up costs. The fee schedule should include a breakdown of pricing structure (per user, per hour, etc.) and any additional billing rates, hourly costs, and additional expenses for each individual or service.

Provide any other fee information applicable to the proposal that has not been covered.

Outline all provisions, termination clauses, and/or penalties for closing or changing amount of services as needed.

5.4 Additional Considerations

Describe any additional facets relevant to this RFP, which have not been previously mentioned that you feel warrant consideration or add to your firm's value as a strategic partner to LSZ.

5.5 Small Diverse Business Information

LSZ encourages participation by minority, women, and veteran-owned businesses as prime contractors, and encourages all prime contractors to make a significant commitment to use minority, women, veteran owned and other disadvantaged business entities as subcontractors and suppliers