

NCCSD Systems Modernization Committee

Systems Modernization States Lessons Learned Webinars

Procurement – 10/15/2021

Nevada

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Nevada

- The Nevada Child Support Program is a state administered program, with state and county operations. There are three (3) state field offices, and nine (9) county field offices. Nevada currently has a caseload of 79,605.
- The Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS) IT Department mandated that whenever possible, the implementation vendor was to use existing enterprise software, as well as a waterfall SDLC approach.

Challenges for IT Projects in Nevada

- The implementation of Nevada's legacy system was 6 years and \$75 million over budget. It was deemed by a lawmaker as "the poster child for how not to implement a system."
- Our current system implementation began on the heels of a very public Department of Motor Vehicles system implementation failure, which cost the State \$27.2 million prior to being scrapped.

Procurement Approach

- Nevada approached procurement via RFPs for the following vendors:
 - Project Management Office (PMO)
 - Quality Assurance (QA)
 - Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V)
 - Design, Development, and Implementation (DDI)
- Staff augmentation was done through a State Pre-Approved Vendor list
- IV&V Contract Management entity was secured through a Sub-Grant

Document Development

- The DWSS PMO office wrote the RFP but had to withdraw it due to funding concerns. Prior to rescinding the RFP, vendors responded with clarifying questions which led to addition and subtraction of items in each RFP when resubmitted.
- Don't reinvent the wheel, but when asking a colleague for a RFP, ask for the lessons learned on the RFP. What worked well, what caused problems during their project, what was missed? When you need to cite this document to hold a vendor accountable, does it provide the structure to do so? What would they do differently?
- Carefully consider review time frames identified in your RFP. 10 days may seem as if it is ample time to review a document but identify the volume of deliverables and set time frames accordingly for large deliverables (i.e., Requirements Traceability Matrix, Design Documents, Training Materials, etc.).
- The review process and scoring rubrics were administered via the Nevada State Purchasing Division, and included state and county child support resources, DWSS IT resources, and an outside agency resource.

Document Development

- RFP reviewers should have all the information necessary to make informed decisions (e.g., Feasibility Study and supporting appendices), and time should be taken with functional subject matter experts to provide information on what to expect and how to approach the task if they have never participated in a large-scale RFP review.
- Nevada did not use a vendor to assist in the procurement process. If that is available to you, I highly recommend it. A third party can be beneficial in filling knowledge gaps.
- The pandemic has reiterated what those on projects already knew, work can be done from anywhere with the proper tools. Recruiting resources can be difficult if a project site is not easily accessible or desirable. It is important to think about what resources must be on site, and which resources could work remotely. Off-shore resources are usually critical to the DDI vendor, but the limitations of access need to be considered when including off-shore resources.

Contract Development and Negotiations

- Negotiations will take more time than anticipated.
- Projects historically have issues around forms and interfaces. Clearly define the expectations on both sides for responsibilities and approach.
- Assumptions should not be ignored. Flag erroneous assumptions in vendor responses and ensure that all parties are on the same page in negotiations.
- Include verbiage that includes any changes made during the project by the OCSE or IRS is within the scope of the project.
- Include holdbacks (withholding a percentage of the deliverable amount) until end of the project.
- Consider identifying penalties for failure to meet quality or schedule criteria.

OCSE Approval of RFPs, Contracts, etc.

- Communication with your OCSE Specialist is critical, and building a strong relationship early is beneficial to your project.
- OCSE has a 60-day review cycle, which can be restarted if additional items are requested or recommendations are made.
- Understand the constraints of the need for OCSE and state or legislative approval and ensure that you plan accordingly. Nevada signed the contract March 1st but needed to have OCSE and Board of Examiners approval by April 10th, far short of the OCSE review cycle.

Setting Realistic Timeframes for All of the Procurements

- Consider the time and personnel needed to manage and review multiple RFPs.
- While each vendor and RFP is separate, identifying the expectations and needs from the Division staff on the project can be beneficial.
- Take perspective into account. Each reviewer will be focused on what is important to them. Technical staff will generally have little understanding of the functional needs, while the functional staff will have little to no understanding of the technical requirements. Try to balance these sides out as best you can.

Setting Realistic Timeframes for All of the Procurements

- Nevada's schedule was set up by our internal DWSS PMO and State of Nevada Purchasing.
- The original timeline allotted 46 weeks for all activities related to the DDI vendor (review, negotiations, submission for approval, and contract start date) but this was shortened, removing almost 29 weeks from the process.
- Factor in enough time for RFP review training, vendor proposal and gap analysis review, and contract discussion approach. Each of these were done in a one-hour meeting which was an unrealistic time frame to address these critical approaches.