**WHATCOM COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

Cybersecurity Audit

February 2025

## 1 OVERVIEW

Whatcom County Library System (WCLS) is seeking consultant services to conduct a cybersecurity audit.

The Consultant selected for this project will work directly with the IT Services Manager as the Project Manager, and will meet with them, Network Administrator, Desktop Support Technician, Executive Director and Finance Director as well as other designated staff and the WCLS Board of Trustees IT Services Committee. The Consultant will present a final written report that is specific to WCLS's network infrastructure, staffing, locations and services.

## 2 BACKGROUND

WCLS is a public library system serving approximately 140,000 residents of the small cities and unincorporated areas of Whatcom County, Washington, outside the city limits of Bellingham. WCLS provides library services online 24/7 via its hosted website, www.wcls.org, and in-person at 10 branch libraries, one new library in development, a bookmobile and one Administrative Services building. The annual operating budget is $11.4 million. WCLS has approximately 165 staff members. WCLS patrons check out over 2 million items per year. WCLS is a proud recipient of the PEN/Newman's Own First Amendment Award and several John Cotton Dana Awards for library marketing and public relations.

There are approximately 300 devices used by WCLS employees and the public, including laptops and desktop workstations. Public and staff networks are located on separate VLANs with limited access between the two for administrative purposes. WCLS provides public internet workstations, public printers and publicly-available Wi-Fi internet access across all 12 locations. WCLS currently has virtualized on-premises file servers, print servers, and other servers dedicated to collection of library-specific data and statistics for a minimal about of time. These services are migrated to cloud-based solutions as quickly as possible but some staff needs are not met by these services. Network switches and firewall/VPN endpoints in each location comprise the majority of networking equipment. WCLS currently has virtualized on-premises file servers, print servers, and other servers dedicated to collection of library-specific data and statistics for a minimal about of time. These services are migrated to cloud-based solutions as quickly as possible, but some staff needs are not met by these services.

Most production file storage, mail and phone services have been migrated to Microsoft 365. However, a small amount of data does reside on on-premises servers, including financials, accounts payable and budgeting data (excluding banking and account data).

WCLS contracts with several SaaS vendors for its Integrated Library System (ILS) and discovery layer. We download cataloging records from OCLC. We use a hosted payroll service. We provide patrons with access to online tools such as Consumer Reports, Kanopy streaming video, Freegal streaming music, and more.

## 3 SCOPE OF WORK

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to bring on outside expertise to review the network architecture, data maintenance and security processes of both IT and general staff and to set up systems to minimize security vulnerabilities and protect files and data in the future. A cybersecurity audit completed in 2022 can be used as a basis for the current audit in comparing progress.

The audit should review the standards and procedures developed after that 2022 audit, as well as the System's methods for confirming accountability for these processes. It should review the IT Services incident response plan. It should also include an internal and external penetration testing to ascertain security of internally- and externally-housed data.

## 4 DELIVERABLES

There are four (4) main deliverables expected for this project.

### 4.1 Cybersecurity Audit Report

The Cybersecurity Audit must include the following:

- Internal/External Penetration Testing
    - Attempt to gain access to internet facing systems and attempt exfiltration of data
    - Attempt to enumerate, acquire, and exploit plaintext user credentials in order to perform privilege escalation
    - Assess if it is possible to disrupt data integrity and availability
    - Review firewall rules
    - Include testing of firewall, servers, routers, switches, wireless equipment, printers/copiers, etc.
    - Produce report(s) with details of potential vulnerabilities as well as the risk and severity levels

- Internal/External Network Vulnerability Assessment
  - Assess, identify, and provide evidence of potential vulnerabilities with network end points
  - Identify remote users, devices, and 3rd party resources
  - Assess, identify, and provide evidence of potential vulnerabilities with users (including remote users), devices and infrastructure (such as application, host, or network, etc.)
  - Include both wireless and wired networks, firewall, servers, routers, switches, wireless equipment, printers/copiers, etc.
  - Produce report(s) with details of potential vulnerabilities as well as the risk and security levels

- Internal Control Review
  - Perform an analysis of current IT/security policies and procedures, patch management, etc.
  - Identify deficiencies in existing policies and procedures
  - Provide samples of, and assist with the development of, policies and procedures that are needed to conform to industry best practices

- Data Backup Review
  - Identify deficiencies in existing data backup procedures
  - Suggest improvements to ensure preservation of critical data and build into IT Standards and Procedures documentation

- Remediation
  - Identify steps to remediate any deficiencies found in the audit
  - Define short- and long-term measurements for mediation
  - Work with WCLS to develop list of priorities for improvements, including cost estimates and expected timelines for implementation
  - Recommendations for remediation should not utilize the vendor as a solution; WCLS should be able to remediate issues based on report without utilizing vendor (unless WCLS requests afterward)
  - Provide executive summary of the findings

***The following items are optional, please provide cost estimates to add these services:***

• Physical security review onsite – review of physical network security

• Web application testing – identify any potential security issues with WCLS websites (wcls.org; wclsnet.wcls.org; whatcomreads.org)

• Mitigation – Assess for ongoing successful implementation of mitigation efforts

Audit completion must be guaranteed by **July 18, 2025** at the latest. Earlier is preferred.

## 4.2 IT Standards and Procedures REVIEW

Review detailed documentation of IT standards and procedures that clearly assign responsibility for specific tasks, give precise instructions that communicate expectations, and provide a method for confirming that processes have been completed as required. This review should address network resilience, timely documentation of new configurations, routine backups, maintenance and practice of incident response plans. It should also include best practices for all staff regarding network security: password management and responsibility, working with emails or documents that contain patron data or other personal identifiable information (PII), etc.

## 4.3 IT Incident Response Plan

Review IT Incident Response Plan to assure that it aligns with best practices and is specific to WCLS. At a minimum, the plan should include the following:

- Chain of command including roles and responsibilities
- Processes to recognize if the network has been compromised
- Key IT architectural highlights mapping out WCLS assets, data, users, devices, etc. in the IT environment. This should include on-premises hardware, Internet of Things devices, endpoints, cloud-based services, accounts, cyber security tools, domains and more. This should be readily available for reference during an incident.
- Details about cybersecurity insurance policy requirements
- Procedures for gathering information and threat identification and for saving forensic information for later analysis, response, and reporting (e.g. Log and data retention)
- Containment procedures
- Procedures for the actual handling of the security event, addressing common threats to security
- Communication plan for internal stakeholders, staff, trustees, library partners (e.g. Bellingham Public Library and/or vendors), the media and the public
- Details about where to keep the plan for maximum availability during an emergency
- Post-incident debrief and analysis

The Incident Response Plan should help WCLS answer questions like “What happened?” “Is the problem ongoing?” “How do I make it stop?” and “How do I know it stopped?”

## 4.4 Presentation of Findings, Reports, and Documents to Project Team and Board of Trustees IT Services Committee

In addition to the written reports prepared in 4.1 – 4.3, consultant will make an initial presentation of these documents and findings to the Project Team and Board of Trustees IT Services Committee via an online meeting.

# 5 TIMELINE

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|---|---|
| 2/28/2025 | RFP Issued |
| 3/14/2025 | Questions Due by Noon (PDT) |
| 3/21/2025 | Addendum Issued (if necessary) |
| 4/2/2025 | Proposals Due by 5:00 p.m. (PDT) |
| 4/9/2025 | Possible Online Interview with Finalists |
| 4/15/2025 | Contract Award |
| 7/18/2025 | Project Completed (earlier is preferable) |

# 6 PROPOSALS

## 6.1 SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL

Proposals will be accepted via email. The format may be a .docx or .pdf document. The deadline for receipt of submissions is Wednesday, April 2, 2025 by 5:00 p.m. (PDT).

IT Services Manager Geoff Fitzpatrick is the sole point of contact at WCLS for questions regarding this solicitation.

**Questions via telephone will not be accepted.**

All questions must be received via email no later than 12:00 noon PDT on Friday, March 14, 2025.

A list of all the questions and answers will be issued as an addendum on Friday, March 21, 2025.

Submit your questions and/or Proposal to:

Geoff Fitzpatrick, IT Services Manager
geoff.fitzpatrick@wcls.org
In subject line: RFP Response – Cybersecurity Consulting

Whatcom County Library System
5205 Northwest Drive
Bellingham, WA  98226

We will email an acknowledgement of receipt of the Proposal and/or any questions.  If you do not receive an email acknowledgement, please contact Rheannan Pfnister at 360-305-3641 or rheannan.pfnister@wcls.org to assure that the Proposal has been received.

WCLS shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by the firm in preparing, submitting or presenting its response to the RFP.

Proposals received after the designated deadline will not be considered.

## 6.2 REVISION/REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

WCLS reserves the right to "revise" or "amend" the RFP prior to the Proposal deadline by "written addenda."

## 6.3 PROPRIETARY INFORMATION/PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

All Proposals received shall become the property of WCLS. The Proposals shall be deemed public records as defined in Chapter 42.56 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

Any information contained in the Proposal that is proprietary must be clearly designated.

## 6.4 PROPOSAL CONTENTS

WCLS is looking for succinct answers with relevant information. Please limit your Proposal to no more than a dozen pages. In addition, there will also be one "Certifications and Assurances" page you will include as part of your Proposal.

### 6.4.1 Cover Letter

Please include the following: (1) a letter of interest signed by the firm principal with a statement of availability to complete the work; (2) the identification of the proposer, including name, address, email address and telephone number; (3) the name, title, address, email and telephone number of contact person during period of Proposal evaluation; and (4) the signature of a person authorized to bind proposer to the terms of this Proposal.

### 6.4.2 General Company Profile and Experience

Briefly provide general information about the firm’s experience, capabilities, and length of time the firm has been in the business of performing work of a similar nature to the work outlined in the proposal. Highlight previous work with public libraries, government agencies, Washington State regulations, Microsoft 365, or other applicable experience.

### 6.4.3 Professional Credentials of Key Staff

Briefly describe the professional credentials and experience of the staff who will work to create the project deliverables. Include any Microsoft certifications and all security certifications. Do not include lengthy résumés or vitae.

### 6.4.4 Project Approach

Describe your vision for how you will address this project. Provide links (preferred) or examples of other projects you have created which are similar to your vision for this project. If the reports are lengthy, some sample pages, including a table of contents, will be sufficient. Include a proposed schedule for completion of the project no later than July 18, 2025. Earlier completion is preferable.

### 6.4.5 Information Request of WCLS Staff

What information would you request WCLS staff provide to help you create the deliverables?

### 6.4.6 Budget/Cost Scenarios

Provide a not-to-exceed budget amount with high-level detail showing projected costs. Proposers may submit as many cost scenarios as desired. For each cost scenario, include related assumptions and explanatory comments. Summarize the costs and attach all detail necessary to support the summarized costs. Note: cost Proposals must be all-inclusive and must include the hourly/daily rate, estimate number of hours/days to complete the project and a detailed estimate of all other costs, such as travel. No other monies will be paid for items omitted by the proposer.

### 6.4.7 References

Provide contact information for three references who can describe work you have done which is similar or related to the deliverables we are seeking.

### 6.4.8 Signed Certifications and Assurances

Sign and submit the attached Certifications and Assurances document as part of your Proposal.

## 7 EVALUATION PROCESS

Via email, WCLS staff will confirm receipt of all Proposals received by the due date, and will later inform vendors of the status of their Proposals.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

> Firm Profile, Staff Experience (including references) and experience with similar organizations: 30 possible points
>
> Project Approach: 50 possible points
>
> Budget/Cost Scenario(s): 15 possible points
>
> Adherence to RFP Directions: 5 possible points

WCLS staff may elect to conduct interviews, either via Teams or by telephone, with finalist candidate(s) on April 9, 2025.

WCLS will select the vendor with the best overall solution and value. A number of factors will influence WCLS's decision in selecting the vendor.

WCLS intends that the final selection and award of the bid will be made at the Board of Trustees meeting on April 15, 2025.

## 8 TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The successful Proposer will be required to sign a written Contract with WCLS.

The Proposer, by submitting a response to this RFP, waives all rights to protest or seek any legal remedies whatsoever regarding any aspect of this RFP.

WCLS reserves the right to negotiate with the selected Proposer the exact terms and conditions of the contract agreement.

WCLS is under no obligation to award this project to the Proposer offering the overall lowest fee or contract terms. Evaluation criteria, included in the document, shall be used in evaluating Proposals.

Thank you for considering this RFP and for the efforts you may undertake to submit a Proposal.

Geoff Fitzpatrick – IT Services Manager
Whatcom County Library System

## CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

I/we make the following certifications and assurances as a required element of the proposal to which it is attached, understanding that the truthfulness of the facts affirmed here and the continuing compliance with these requirements are conditions precedent to the award or continuation of the related contract:

1) I/we declare that all answers and statements made in the proposal are true and correct.

2) The prices and/or cost data have been determined independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement with others for the purpose of restricting competition. However, I/we may freely join with other persons or organization for the purpose of presenting a single proposal.

3) The attached proposal is a firm offer for a period of 60 days following receipt, and it may be accepted by WCLS without further negotiation (except where obviously required by lack of certainty in key terms) at any time within the 60-day period.

4) In preparing this proposal, I/we have not been assisted by any current or former employee of WCLS whose duties relate (or did relate) to this proposal or prospective contract, and who was assisting in other than their official, public capacity. If there are exceptions to these assurances, I/we have descried them in full detail on a separate page attached to this document.

5) I/we understand that WCLS will not reimburse me/us for any costs incurred in the preparation of this proposal. All proposals become the property of WCLS, and I/we claim no proprietary right to the ideas, writings, items, or samples, unless so stated in this proposal.

6) Unless otherwise required by law, the prices and/or cost data which have been submitted have not been knowingly disclosed by the Proposer and will not knowingly by disclosed by him/her prior to opening, directly or indirectly, to any other Proposer or to any competitor.

7) I/we agree that submission of the attached proposal constitutes acceptance of the solicitation contents and general terms and conditions. If there are any exceptions to these terms, I/we have described those exceptions in detail on a page attached to this document.

8) No attempt has been made or will be made by the Proposer to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition.

9) I/we grant WCLS the right to contact references and others, who may have pertinent information regarding the ability of the Contractor and the lead staff person to perform the services contemplated by this Request.

On behalf of the Contractor submitting this proposal, my name below attests to the accuracy of the above statement.

Signature of Proposer                                        Date