

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

**Request for Information (RFI)**

**RFI – VENDING SERVICES AND CASH TO CARD SERVICES**

***Summary.***

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Commonwealth), Department of Corrections issues this Request for Information (RFI) to solicit information that may be used to assist with the development of a solicitation for VENDING SERVICES AND CASH TO CARD SERVICES which may be released by the Commonwealth in the near future.

Specifically, this request seeks information from which the Commonwealth can formulate specifications and requirements, realistic timeframes and cost structures for the referenced procurement and project. The Commonwealth desires to produce a solicitation that promotes vendor competition and creative technical solutions. The Commonwealth is open to any and all ideas in relation to this project and encourages alternative ideas that will help the Commonwealth better define its requirements. This RFI is an earnest attempt to become aware of and knowledgeable about current solutions to support the project requirements of the Commonwealth. This RFI will also help the Commonwealth identify vendors who are able to provide the required services to support this goal.

***Background.***

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA DOC) finds value in providing food, beverage, snacks and other vending services to visitors and incarcerated individuals. Vending services are varied, with different expectations based on the location to the public and internally to incarcerated individuals. Technology, hardware, and communications are also dependent upon the location vending equipment is installed. PA DOC recognizes changes in technology but is limited to technology that demands consideration of our commitment to the safety and security of the community.

These services are valued by all and the current and past expectation is excellence in product availability, quality as well as excellence in service by contracted vending companies.

***Issues to Be Addressed.***

The Commonwealth is requesting feedback from firms with expertise in VENDING SERVICES AND CASH TO CARD SERVICES as set forth below:

- 1) Include a cover letter, with the RFI response, on Company Letterhead, which includes a point of contact name, phone number and email address.
- 2) Complete Attachment A, VENDING SERVICES AND CASH TO CARD SERVICES Questionnaire. Please respond to the questions in the questionnaire and limit the responses to these questions only.

***Point of Contact:***

The sole point of contact for this RFI shall be Elizabeth Lenhart at [elenhart@pa.gov](mailto:elenhart@pa.gov).

***Due Date.***

The Commonwealth is requesting that all responses to this RFI be submitted via email to [Elizabeth Lenhart, at elenhart@pa.gov](mailto:elenhart@pa.gov) by 2:00 EDT on November 22, 2022 with the subject line of RFI – VENDING SERVICES AND CASH TO CARD SERVICES .

***Disclaimer.***

This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes only and does not constitute a solicitation for future business, an offer for procurement or any other type of current or future procurement or contractual action and is only intended to gather input. The Commonwealth will not award a contract on the basis of this RFI nor will it pay for information it receives. Responses to this notice are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Commonwealth to form a binding contract. No party is bound by the information provided in response to this RFI.

Respondents are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding to this RFI. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is not liable for any costs or expenses incurred by the Respondent in the preparation of its responses.

Respondents needing confidential treatment for any proprietary information they furnish must clearly identify that in their respective Responses. All information received in response to this RFI that is marked Proprietary will be handled in accordance with applicable law including the Right To Know Law, as amended.

All material submitted shall be considered the property of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and may be returned only at the Commonwealth's option. Notwithstanding any Respondents copyright designations contained on responses, the Commonwealth shall have the right to make copies and distribute responses internally and to comply with public record or other disclosure requirements under the provisions of any Commonwealth or United States statute or regulation, or rule or order of any court of competent jurisdiction.

Respondents to this Request shall not provide recommendations as to specific courses of action and shall not be deemed to be an advisor or consultant to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth will evaluate the information presented and determine any subsequent course of action, which may consist of contracting for implementation of Commonwealth-determined work. Such work may be procured through any procurement method available, and respondents to this Request may be considered for selection to perform such work.

Responses to this RFI will not be returned. Respondents will not be notified of the result of the review, nor will they be provided copies of it.

***Commonwealth Reservation of Rights.***

The Commonwealth reserves the right to consider or reject any and all responses to this Request, to amend and/or reissue this Request and to abandon and then recommence at any time, or not recommence, this process. All costs of any response to this Request and participation in any presentations to the Commonwealth are solely the responsibility of the Respondent and the Commonwealth shall not be liable for payment of any such costs.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION  
ATTACHMENT A  
VENDING SERVICES AND CASH TO CARD SERVICES

1. What is your experience in providing food and refreshment (beverage) machine services with correctional institutions at the county, state, or federal levels.
2. The vending services would be needed in a correctional setting, and a supplier would be required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. This includes the provision of labeling that complies with the federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. Is this a requirement your company could meet?
3. The contractor must also abide by the security regulations of the DOC and specific correction institutions. Is this a requirement your company could meet?
4. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania operates correctional institutions throughout the state, please include in your response which locations you could service. Link to locations: <https://www.cor.pa.gov/Facilities/StatePrisons/Pages/default.aspx>
5. Identify any offeror qualifications (i.e. years of experience, certifications, etc.) that the Commonwealth should consider during the development of the solicitation?
6. What type of foods and beverages does your company offer?
7. Due to the unique operations of an SCI, the following conditions must be met:  
Vending areas may require a selection of snacks, sandwiches, soft drinks, and any other agreed-upon products that take into consideration various dietary restrictions such as fat-free, low calorie, dairy free, gluten free and sugar-free items as well as religious restrictions such as pork.
  - a. Beverage vending machines will be limited to clear liquids such as water, Mt. Dew, Sprite, etc. (No wide mouth containers such as Gatorade)
  - b. Containers and wrappings are limited to plastic (no glass or cans).
  - c. Food vending machines will be limited to snacks, cold sandwiches, wraps, etc.Are these acceptable requirements? Do you have recommendations for additional requirements?
8. Does your companies service include condiments, napkins, utensils and paper plates? Please describe the types of items included.
9. Does your company offer photo vending services?
10. Are you able to provide services without the use of WIFI?
11. Please describe your company's attendant/vending machine ratio.

12. Please describe your company's service and repair operations and availability, such as ability to address hardware failures, typical response time, maximum response time.
13. For safety and security concerns, cash is prohibited for use in the vending services at a DOC SCI, please describe your ability to provide a cashless system for vending purchases.
14. Some facilities also utilize a closed cashless transaction management system within the perimeter of the facility. Vending machines on this system must be outfitted with ITC Systems compatible pin pad devices. Can you provide this feature? Will you provide this feature without cost to PA DOC?
15. Please describe your refund process.
16. Please advise what type of sales and collections reports are available.
17. Please describe how commission are structured: percentage? Negotiable? Incremental over a period of time? Etc. How commission proceeds are distributed? Paid monthly?
18. How much time is needed for a transition and why?
  - a. What type of information is needed from the outgoing contractor in order to provide a smooth transition to the incoming contractor?
19. What is the typical cost structure for the services identified? With the often unstable, fluctuating supply chain how frequently are prices changed? How much of an increase is passed on to the customer?
20. Are there any value-add services that have not mentioned that we should consider when developing a new solicitation? Please describe.
21. Are there any other recommendations from your experience and knowledge in vending services in a correctional setting that have not already been mentioned but that the PA DOC should consider?