

## RFP 2017-09 – Virtual Assistant/ChatBot Platform

### Questions and Answers

Number	Question	Response
1.	<p>We aren't seeing any specific RFP questions to the solution. We see there are forms that we are being asked to fill out regarding [24]7.ai. We can certainly fill out all of those forms, but specific to the VA/Chatbot solution that is being evaluated are there questions that my team and I have missed?</p>	<p>No. The RFP is requesting the vendor to propose a solution.</p>
2.	<p>My team has a question regarding your language requirements in Exhibit A. <i>The platform shall include language capabilities at a minimum of English and Spanish. In addition to English and Spanish, it is preferred that the platform language capabilities include: Arabic, Armenian, Cambodian, Cantonese, Farsi, Hmong, Korean, Lao, Mandarin, Russian, Tagalog and Vietnamese.</i></p> <p>We certainly cover English and Spanish, but we would not have this full list of additional languages available in our virtual agent/chatbot platform at the time of kicking off this project. My team is requesting feedback on whether only supporting the required languages initially would disqualify us from contention. Can you or your team elaborate on what they mean by 'it is preferred'?</p>	<p>English and Spanish are required languages. We would prefer that the chatbot include other languages as set forth in Exhibit A. But, bidders will not be disqualified if they cannot offer these optional languages. The ability to offer additional languages may factor into bidder evaluations.</p>
3.	<p>Will an email submission suffice or are the hard copies mandatory? If hardcopies are mandatory, can these be submitted after the email submission deadline? If yes, what is the deadline for hard copy submission? Section 1.2 Key Action Dates.</p>	<p>Hard copies are mandatory. Hard copies will not be accepted after the submission deadline. For Key Action Dates, please refer to Addendum 1.</p>

4.	<p>Our Chatbot has the capability of handling FAQ, Personalization, and Transactional type of journeys.</p> <p>Question: Are the journeys identified in the RFP being currently serviced by Agents or are there any part of these that are self-served? If serviced by Agents, where is the location, onsite or offshore? Pricing – Exhibit B, Attachment 1 – Cost Worksheet</p>	<p>All journeys are serviced on site by agents and password reset has a self-service option as well.</p>
5.	<p>Please provide volume estimates for each of the type of journeys (Password reset, Form print &amp; FAQ) by regions that you want to solve with this Chatbot? If possible, provide breakdown by languages. Pricing – Exhibit B, Attachment 1 – Cost Worksheet</p>	<p>The Platform will be a new functionality for Covered California; therefore estimates are not available.</p>
6.	<p>Is there an expectation on the success (containment) rate for the journeys? Pricing – Exhibit B – Attachment 1 – Cost Worksheet</p>	<p>Yes, there is an expectation of success and that bidders provide analytics of this success.</p>
7.	<p>Can the State provide more details on the plan to access retained data after the contract with the Digital Assistant vendor has expired?</p> <p>Exhibit A – Statement of Work - e) The Bidder shall provide a plan to maintain all data related to the Chatbot for a duration of ten years.</p>	<p>As defined in the statement of work it is expected that the bidder provide a plan. For more information regarding the ten-year document retention requirement, please see Section E of Exhibit C.</p>
8.	<p>Would Covered California consider extending the deadline to respond by 1 to 2 weeks from Jan. 19?</p> <p>1.2 – Key Dates</p>	<p>Please refer to Addendum 1.</p>
9.	<p>These technologies are very new and emerging and the engagements/projects for these services are often short. Would Covered California be open to making this a 6 months' experience requirement?</p> <p>2.1 – Project Team Minimum Qualifications - Two (2) years' experience of design, implementation and hosting solutions that include natural language processing, search, knowledge and intent engines, dialogue</p>	<p>No.</p>

	management, machine learning, user interface that receives request and delivers personalized answers and other actions via voice or text in support of a virtual assistant/ChatBot.	
10.	In section 3.2, the purpose of the RFP is defined as "virtual assistant to provide consumers with navigational assistance with general tasks". However, Exhibit A states "purpose is for Contractor to provide a platform for virtual assistants / chatbots". Is the scope the technical platform for developing chatbots, a general purpose virtual assistant for navigational assistance, or both?	The scope is to provide a Platform on Covered California's website to provide consumers with navigational assistance with general tasks including, but not limited to, Password Reset, Forms Printing, and FAQs. Covered California intends to license the IVA from the Contractor, who will maintain and operate the Virtual Assistant/Platform
11.	Section 3.5 of the RFP states that all tasks performed under the RFP will be paid based on deliverables however the pricing sheet provides many other cost types. Please advise if the cost sheet is more in alignment with Covered California's strategy.	Please use the Cost Worksheet provided.
12.	As there are variable per user costs associated with operating chatbots, is CCA open to licensing fees as part of the payment structure?	Please see Exhibit B Attachment 1 Cost Worksheet. As indicated if licenses are part of the proposal please list this.
13.	Chatbots require access to extensive data to learn. Is training of chatbots on CCA data in scope of the RFP?	Yes. The chatbot will not have access to consumer data since PII/PHI will not be passed to the chatbot.
14.	Is your priority to bring on a learning chatbot framework that gains sophistication over time (natural language processing and other learning) or is the priority to bring on tactical bots quickly that can offload repetitive service center tasks to automation?	We are looking for both.
15.	Would CCA reconsider the dedicated onsite staffing requirements for this procurement? This staffing model may not work with agile business processes for development sprints.	We will consider all staffing models. Please specify your staffing strategy in the proposal.

	Development teams are often not co-located with a client.	
16.	Is the intent of the RFP to deploy certain customer facing chatbots for OE2019 (in the Fall of 2018)?	We anticipate that bidders will provide an implementation timeline that includes deployment prior to September 2018
17.	The multiple hard copy and CD ROM response requirements are not standard and make it challenging for an out of town firm to respond in such a short timeframe. Would Covered California consider modifying the submission to a single electronic copy by email?	No. Please refer to Addendum 1.
18.	Beyond the 99.9% uptime, please confirm if Covered California have additional Service Level Agreements (SLA) and Service Level Objectives (SLO) related to the Chat Bot/Virtual Assistant Platform. Please also confirm if there are any Recovery Time Objective and Recovery Point Objectives	Per Section D(2)(i) of Exhibit A, the bidder shall provide support and service response timeframes for the following categories: Level I, Urgent Priority, Level II, Moderate Priority, Level III, General Assistance.
19.	Regarding RFP page 22, 4.2.1.1.6: "A completed certification form showing, upon contract execution, that the Bidder and applicable staff", please confirm that this requirement does not apply to the bidder entity as the Form 700 is limited to seeking information about individuals.	Per RFP, Section 4.2.1.1.6 – 'A completed certification form showing, upon contract execution, <u>that the Bidder and applicable staff identified as a code filer</u> agree to provide a completed Title 10, California Code of Regulations...' If any key personnel or staff are identified as a code filer, then they must complete a Form 700. Entities do not file Form 700s. Only the individuals who perform work on behalf of the entity may file Form 700s.
20.	Please confirm if PII is to be expected to be passed to and stored by the chat bot as part of the scope.	At this time the Platform is not intended to pass or store PII.

21.	Please confirm if PHI is to be expected to be passed to and stored by the chat bot as part of the scope.	At this time the Platform is not intended to pass or store PHI.
22.	Please provide additional details regarding security requirements (such as encryption of data at rest, and/or in motion)	The solution shall comply with the following standards:  A. MARS-E (current version) B. NIST800-53 C. FIPS140-2 D. FedRamp (if cloud based).
23.	Please confirm a list and details of the systems and data sources that the chat bot is required to integrate with	Integration functionality is a requirement in the scope of work. However it is unknown at this time what system the Platform would integrate with.
24.	Please confirm if the vendor is expected to perform any quality improvements / cleansing of the data that the Chat Bot is expected to integrate with.	The bidder shall ensure that data use for the Platform will facilitate a successful consumer journey.
25.	In order to adequately compare vendor cost estimates, would Covered California consider providing a standard model/estimated number of chat sessions per year?	No. Covered California expects bidders to utilize the provided cost work sheet in reference to the chat sessions.
26.	<b>Document:</b> Exhibit B - Budget Detail & Payment Provisions.docx <b>Question:</b> This document appears to be missing. A Windows shortcut was included in the zip file, but the actual document was not in that zip file.	We have re-checked that file and confirmed that the document is included. Please check again.
27.	<b>Document:</b> Exhibit B Attachment 1 - Cost Worksheet.docx <b>Question:</b> This document (and others) refer to an engagement based on hourly billing – is a fixed-price bid acceptable?	The Cost Worksheet can be used to provide an itemized bid at either an hourly or fixed price.
28.	<b>Document:</b> Exhibit A - Scope of Work 9.17.17 TEMPLATE.docx <b>Section:</b> A, <b>Page:</b> 1	This would be part of the requirements gathering identified in Section D(2) of Exhibit A.

	<p><b>Relevant text:</b> ... <i>including, but not limited to, Password Reset, Forms Printing, and FAQs...</i></p> <p><b>Question:</b> Please provide more detail on the three named use cases in terms of envisioned functionality. Would the VA just navigate the user to existing web functionality; would it provide guidance as the user moved through the task on the existing page; would those use cases be executed within the VA interface; would all those be in scope; are there other engagements envisioned? If the VA executes those tasks, what sort of integration would be required, in terms of number of backends and number of backend hits?</p>	
29.	<p><b>Document:</b> Exhibit A - Scope of Work 9.17.17 TEMPLATE.docx</p> <p><b>Section:</b> A, <b>Page:</b> 1</p> <p><b>Relevant text:</b> <i>The Platform shall integrate with an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) solution</i></p> <p><b>Question:</b> What is the goal and use case related to IVR integration?</p>	Our goal would be for the Platform to integrate with systems to assist with transferring consumer to a live agent.
30.	<p><b>Document:</b> Exhibit A - Scope of Work 9.17.17 TEMPLATE.docx</p> <p><b>Section:</b> D.2.e, <b>Page:</b> 4</p> <p><b>Relevant text:</b> ...<i>maintain all data related to the Chatbot for a duration of ten years</i></p> <p><b>Question:</b> Is the data to be preserved log data or some other data? If other data, please describe.</p>	As required by Section E of Exhibit C, Covered California contractors must maintain all records and supporting documentation related to the performance of the agreement for a minimum of ten years in order to comply with state and federal auditing requirements. Therefore, all data related to the performance of the agreement must be maintained pursuant to the requirements of Section
31.	<p><b>Document:</b> RFP-Chatbot 11-28-17.pdf</p> <p><b>Section:</b> 1.11, <b>Page:</b> 11</p>	That is the correct link: <a href="https://www.ftb.ca.gov">https://www.ftb.ca.gov</a>

	<p><b>Relevant text:</b>  <a href="https://www.ftb.ca.gov/aboutFTB/Delinquent_Taxpayers.shtml">https://www.ftb.ca.gov/aboutFTB/Delinquent_Taxpayers.shtml</a></p> <p><b>Question:</b> Link isn't valid; please provide an up to date link</p>	<p><a href="/aboutFTB/Delinquent-Taxpayers.shtml">/aboutFTB/Delinquent-Taxpayers.shtml</a></p>
32.	<p><b>Requirement Reference: Section 1.9 Format of Proposals</b></p> <p><b>Copies Required – Provide one hardcopy marked “MASTER”, seven (7) additional hard copies marked “COPIES” and one CD-ROM.</b></p> <p><i>As a signatory to the ISO 14001 environmental management standard, our organization follows the standard’s guidelines to reduce any negative impact from our workplace activities on the environment. As part of our alignment with the standard, we make every effort to limit the number of printed materials we generate. Would Covered California consider accepting only electronic copies of the RFP response?</i></p>	<p>No. Please refer to Addendum 1.</p>
33.	<p>How many Chatbot ports will be needed initially?</p>	<p>Initially web chat.</p>
34.	<p>What will be the Chatbot’s sources of data and data access methods? Are the data sources tagged as to content, key words, subject matter, etc?</p>	<p>This would be part of the requirements gathering.</p>
35.	<p>Is it a requirement to interface with the existing Oracle RightNow solution or may an alternative be requested?</p>	<p>Integration functionality is a requirement in the scope of work. However it is unknown at this time what system the Platform would integrate with.</p>
36.	<p>Are there dialogs or decision trees that can be leveraged by the chat bot?</p>	<p>No.</p>
37.	<p>Is it possible to extract the existing decision logic into an XML format?</p>	<p>There is no existing decision logic.</p>