

REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS

Utility Billing Software Services for the City of Saint Cloud, MN

The City of Saint Cloud (City) is requesting proposals for the replacement of their Utility Billing System. The proposal(s) shall include all costs (labor, material, licensing, maintenance, etc.) and comply with the requirements outlined and described in this packet.

Proposal

Proposals will ONLY be received and accepted via US mail to:

Christopher Hall
Assistant Finance Director
City of Saint Cloud
1201 7th St South
St. Cloud, MN 56301

All responses must be received by 3:00 p.m. on 23rd May 2025. Please state "Utility Billing Software Services " on the outside of the response package. Include 1 printed copy of the proposal and one PDF version on a flash drive. Technical ability proposals may not exceed 25 one-side 8.5" x 11" pages; this excludes the proposal letter and forms. Contracts and product descriptions can be included in an addendum. Additional material, other than that requested by City, will be disregarded.

Any questions about this RFP or the process must be directed via email to:

Christopher Hall
Assistant Finance Director
christopher.hall@ci.stcloud.mn.us

Deadline for questions is: 4:00 pm on 15th May 2025.

Respondents are prohibited from contacting any other representative of the City of Saint Cloud regarding this RFP. All questions must be asked in writing and question and answer will be shared with all other respondents.

Best Value Selection

This project is extensive, involving many City departments and services. Timing of the project is critical for the financing and operation of the public services provided, and to minimize disruption. Accordingly, the project must be accomplished with a minimum of interruption, on time, and without cost overruns.

Two primary factors will be considered in the selection process: price and technical ability (performance). The process for the consideration of proposals for the award of this Project will take into account not only the amount bid for proposal, but also the proposer's ability and performance on previous similar projects. Technical Ability Documentation must be submitted by each prospective proposer so the vendor/contractor's performance can be evaluated in addition to the bid price.

Technical proposals must include:

1. Cover page that identifies Proposer, the RFP by title and an introductory letter that describes your proposal in summary form
2. Provider background, including the company's legal name, mailing address, telephone number, name of primary contact person, location of headquarters, and services provided
3. The experience and qualifications of the staff to be assigned to this project (deployment and ongoing account rep)
4. Projected hours, tasks, and timeline for conversion/deployment process along with associated cost

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- a. Task details on the conversion/deployment approach
5. Additional information on annual software maintenance and support program
6. A description of the company's prior installations. Include at least three user references from clients using Neptune meters
7. A history of all downtime in the last 3 years
8. Record of updates to software and notices provided to customers for each of those updates
9. Current annual fee and annual fee increases since 2021

Technical proposals will be evaluated according to the following factors:

- Ability to meet core requirements (30%)
- Ability to meet preferred requirements (30%)
- User References & Successful Installations (10%)
- Relative Cost (10%)
- Software Functionality (20%)

The three finalists with the best ranking final scores will be invited for an onsite demonstration. The award will be made to the most qualified offeror whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the City, all factors considered. Unsuccessful offerors will be notified as soon as possible.

The object of the proposal is not to discourage bidding or make it difficult for qualified bidders to file bids, but is intended to make it possible for the Owner to have exact information on the financial ability, personnel, software, past performance and experience of the bidders involved prior to awarding contracts. The Owner reserves the right to require additional information before approving the award of a contract.

SUBMISSION OF BIDS

All bids must be submitted via US mail to Christopher Hall, Assistant Finance Director, City of Saint Cloud, 1201 7th St South, St. Cloud, MN 56301 before 3:00 p.m. on 23rd May 2025. Bids and Technical Proposals received after the time specified shall not be accepted.

Each proposal must contain the full name or names and post office address of the bidder or bidders, and any person submitting a proposal as agent of another, or as a firm, must furnish legal evidence of his authority to do so. A corporation bidder must name the state in which its Articles of Incorporation are filed. A partnership must give the full names and addresses of all partners. The following forms must be submitted with a bid:

- AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT HUMAN RIGHTS ACT, STATE OF MINNESOTA
- AFFIDAVIT OF NONCOLLUSION
- AFFIDAVIT OF RESPONSIBLE CONTRACTOR

In case a corporation submits a proposal, the proposal must be submitted by a duly authorized officer or agent to the corporation and an address given. By signing, the officer represents that he/she has the authority to submit said proposal. In the event that any corporation organized and doing business under the laws of a foreign state is the successful bidder, such corporation shall present evidence that it is authorized to do business in the State of Minnesota before the contract is executed.

More than one proposal form from an individual, firm, partnership or corporation under the same or different names will not be considered.

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The contents of this proposal will be private until the City of Saint Cloud has completed the selection process. At that time, all information will become public, except information that qualifies as trade secret data under Minn. Stat. Sec. 13.37.

Core and preferred technical requirements are outlined in the specifications section beginning on page 5. Core technical requirements are identified using language such as “will”, “shall”, or “must”. Preferred technical requirements are identified with language such as “may”, “should”, or “can”.

If the Owner is not satisfied with the sufficiency of the technical proposal, it may require additional information including a financial statement or it may determine that the contractor is unqualified to bid the project.

The bidder must submit a full, complete, and accurate statement. False information or a material omission will be grounds for disqualifying the potential bidder.

The City is not responsible for any costs associated with proposals.

PROPOSAL GUARANTEE

Each bid proposal shall be accompanied by a Proposal Guarantee in the form of a money order, certified check or bid bond, payable to the order of the City, in an amount not less than five percent (5%) of the total amount of the bid. No proposal will be considered unless accompanied by the Proposal Guarantee.

As soon as a contract is awarded, all Proposal Guarantees shall be returned to the bidders, except that of the successful bidder and second lowest bidder, which shall be retained until the contract has been signed and the bonds of the Contractor have been filed, approved, and accepted, which shall be within thirty (30) days of notice of award of the Contract.

If the successful bidder fails to enter into such contract in accordance with his accepted proposal or shall fail to furnish the required performance bond within thirty (30) days after notice of award, their Proposal Guarantee shall be forfeited to the City as liquidated damages.

WITHDRAWAL OF BIDS

After bidders have submitted proposals, they shall not withdraw or cancel such proposal within 120 days after opening of bids and all sums deposited or a proposal guaranty may be held by the City for said 90 days until all of such proposals submitted have been canvassed, a contract awarded and executed, and the required bonds and insurance furnished and approved.

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EVALUATION OF BIDS

The City reserves the right to reject any and all bids and technical proposals, to waive irregularities and informalities therein and further reserves the right to award the contract to the best interests of the City.

EXECUTION OF CONTRACT

The acceptance of the proposal will be a notice in writing signed by a duly authorized representative of the City. The acceptance of the proposal shall bind the successful bidder to execute the contract within thirty (30) days and to be responsible for liquidated damages for failure to execute the contract. The rights and obligations provided for in the Contract shall become effective upon the parties only with its formal execution by the City. Following approval by the City to award the contract, a "Notice of Award" letter will be mailed to the Bidder together with the prepared contract agreement for his signature and return.

A letter to proceed with the work under this project will be mailed to the Bidder upon satisfaction of the above indicated requirements.

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OBJECTIVE

The City of Saint Cloud, MN (City) requires an integrated solution for utility billing software to serve their approximately 20,000 utility accounts. It is anticipated that all information is stored, accessed, and backed up (hosted) in a cloud environment.

SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

The utility billing software must integrate with the City's current software systems (see the OTHER SOFTWARE CONNECTIONS/INTEGRATIONS section below) and shall update information, at a minimum, once per day (every 24 hours).

The software shall be cloud based (on-demand computing, PaaS or SaaS with a Microsoft Single Sign On ability), meet City cyber-security requirements, and provide a test environment for simulating rate changes, environment improvements, etc.

There shall be multiple user security clearance levels with the ability to customize information users can read, add, modify, and delete by both category and specific item. Any changes to user security levels should be traceable.

The City and select third-party vendor/consultants (with appropriate security clearance) must have the ability to access back-end data for custom applications and reporting. This includes items like AI-driven alerts, mobile apps for various functions, parent-child account relationships, and smart water technologies.

The software must be able to accommodate (load and store) historical utility data. Ideally, 10 years of historical data will be loaded into the new system during deployment. All historical data loaded within the system and any new data generated must be considered property of the City with full access rights to export in an unencrypted format.

SOFTWARE FUNCTIONS

The functional scope of the system must include Utility Billing for water, wastewater, storm water, streetlights, and refuse/recycling services. The software should also be able to accommodate additional services should the City expand billing items.

The functional blocks include billing identification, rate schedule, billing, payment, notes, service requests, and information access (City staff, customer, querying, report) modules. Some blocks must integrate with other City software as stated. Requirements outlined below may be listed under multiple functions.

Billing Identification

The system will be based on four **billing items** (required numbers) for billing identification and are defined as follows:

- Service – utility or service type
- Account – service location
- Customer – responsible billing party
- Property – property location

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Numbers for each item (service, account, customer, and property) can be in multiple segments of unlimited length.

The number of individual billing items (services, accounts, customers, and properties), consumption data, and history shall be unlimited. The purging of any transaction history and/or consumption history must be controlled by a user with the appropriate security (this should be a very controlled function).

The system should have the ability to look up service, account, customer, and property numbers based on any of the following criteria:

- All or a portion of the customer's first and/or last name
- All or a portion of the customer's business name
- All or a portion of the service address
- Owner
- Phone number(s)
- Meter Route
- Meter ID Number
- RPZ meter (reduce pressure zone / fixed meters)
- MXU Number (transmitter)
- Serial Number
- GIS Coordinates or other location
- Parcel #
- Service type
- Outstanding Meter Issues/Non-compliance
- Ability to use wildcards in any search field

The system will provide an audit trail for changes to any item or any transaction that includes username, date, time stamp, what used to be in the field, and what currently is in the field. Functionality to update multiple accounts at one time should be included.

Services shall be identified by type:

- Water – drinking water treatment and distribution
- Sanitary – wastewater collection and treatment
- Storm – storm water conveyance
- Streetlights – public safety area lighting
- Refuse/Recycling –residential through prepaid bags and monthly cans
- Other – additional services as needed by the City

Each service type shall have its own unique recording and billing structure defined by the City (see Rate Schedules area). Services shall have the following abilities at a minimum:

- New service location could generate an email to the specified local government entity. The email information will be drawn from the customer information
- Store date and time of readings, along with identity of meter reader, when captured through automated meter reading system
- Ability to automatically turn services off and back on at specified (scheduled) dates or vice versa
- Ability to turn off and turn on individual services resulting in automatic, user defined, prorating of services
- System will handle multiple meter changes and meter sizes for a single metered service within a single billing period

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- System to allow meters to be reset in a billing cycle (replacement meter will trigger the "correct" meter read)
- System provides a user-defined field tied to meter size for residential fire accounts
- System will handle add, subtract, dump, and sprinkler meters
- System will be able to pull from and push to GIS for all field values

Service information is based upon standardized input fields and shall contain the following information at a minimum:

- Service number
- Service type
- Service status (active, inactive, etc.) for each service type
- Link to historical accounts, customers, and properties
- Service line size (for water, sewer, and storm, and may be connected to GIS)
- Minimum value limit/trigger for each service
- Maximum value limit/trigger for each service
- Application for new service sent
- Application for new service received
- Application status
- Ability to add user defined fields
- Date of information entry (current and historical dates)

Water

- Meter information (manufacturer, size, type, reading units, resolution (support 9 dials min), etc.)
- Meter reading information (cycle, route, sequence, AMI/manual read, etc.)
- Meter location (may be connected to GIS)
- Meter readings (current and historical information, including the 10 years of loaded historical data)
- Estimate or actual reading designation
- Backflow prevention flag
- Fire line size, 1st (may be connected to GIS)
- Fire line size, 2nd (may be connected to GIS)
- Additional fire line sizes as needed

Sanitary

- Base sewer charges that are dependent on water consumption or user defined winter averages.

Storm

- REU or billing factor
- Parcel size (may be connected to GIS)

Streetlights

- Property Type
- Parcel size (may be connected to GIS)

Refuse/Recycling

- Container RFID tag number
- Contain Type
- Container size

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- Date and time of pickup

Accounts shall identify the location of the utility service. Each account can have multiple service types and shall be associated with a single customer.

Each account shall have the following abilities at a minimum:

- Ability for the account service address to include a history of all meters that have been installed including the date removed, all meter information (serial number, size, etc.), and final read
- Ability to look up accounts by service, meter information (accepts a partial meter number, displaying a list of all meters beginning with the numbers input by the user), RPZ, GIS coordinates or other location criteria

Account information is based upon standardized input fields and shall contain the following information at a minimum:

- Account Number
- Account Class
- GPS coordinates (may be connected to GIS)
- Link to historical services, customers, and properties
- Use code (nursing home, type of service) (may be connected to CAMA)
- Account status (e.g., active, paused, inactive, pending ("account in waiting"), etc.)
- Site information (e.g. mean dog, fence, etc.) (unlimited length)
- Billing Information
 - Billing division
 - Billing frequency
 - Billing cycle
 - Read Route
 - Balance for each service
 - Last bill date
 - Last miscellaneous charge balance
 - Last bill total
 - Late payment date
 - Exempt from penalty
 - Current penalty balance
 - Current penalty and arrears balance
 - Current arrears balance
 - 30 day arrears balance
 - 60 day arrears balance
 - Past 60 days arrears balance
- Certification Information
 - Status
 - Balance
 - Filed arrears balance
 - Filed penalty balance
 - Filed certification balance
- Ability to add user defined fields
- Date of information entry (current and historical dates)

Administrators should have the ability to make field entries mandatory. Note whether address validation services are available with your platform.

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In order to facilitate billing of the Street Light Utility fees, the system must allow for multiple parcels to be associated with a single account as well as allowing single parcels to be associated with multiple accounts.

Customers identify the responsible billing party. Each customer shall have the ability to assign a primary and secondary billing party. The primary and secondary parties can be the same. A customer can be tied (or linked) to multiple accounts. System shall be customizable to present criteria for establishing responsible billing parties on the screen where it is done.

Each customer shall have the following abilities at a minimum:

- Ability to view multiple accounts associated with a single contact
- System will transfer customer history to a separate account when property title transfers to a new property owner
- System will provide duplicate data check for various customer information

Customer information is based upon standardized input fields and shall contain the following information at a minimum:

- Customer Number
- Customer or contact Last Name
- Customer or contact First Name (or initial)
- In care of name
- Also Known As (AKA) or nickname
- Business name
- Billing address including 9 character zip code
- Mailing address including 9 character zip code (if different)
- Link to historical services, accounts, and properties
- Email address
- Telephone numbers (daytime, home, mobile, etc. - allow at least five alternate numbers)
- Bankruptcy type code
- Medical flag
- City defined flags (e.g. rental license, liquor license, contract for deed, etc.) (option for a minimum of at least 10, but greater weight given to unlimited)
- Special flag (used for emergency management) with user defined entries
- Access Security Information (for customer portal)
 - Username
 - Password reset (do NOT set or show passwords, set password standards (number of characters, character types, caps, numbers, etc., do not allow password reuse for a set time period)
 - Security question(s) and answers
 - Two factor authentication
- Ability to add user defined fields
- Date of information entry (current and historical dates)
- Bank Information
 - Automatic bill pay (Y/N)
 - Online banking (Y/N)
 - Cash only flag
 - Minimum billing amount trigger

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- Maximum billing amount trigger

Property identifies the property location and shall be associated with a parcel identification number (PIN, PID, etc. linked via GIS to the County system). Each parcel can have multiple properties, each property can have multiple accounts, and multiple parcels may be associated with multiple accounts.

Each property shall have the following abilities at a minimum:

- Accounts can be set up as a parent/child relationship (property owner/tenants, etc.)
- Ability to see all accounts (current and prior) at a given property
- Ability to set multiple accounts for a given parcel (i.e., condo)
- System property account records can be defined via postal address
- System property account records can be defined via tax assessment folios

Property information is based upon standardized input fields and shall contain the following information at a minimum:

- Property Number
- Parcel # (tied to GIS)
- GPS coordinates (tie to GIS)
- Property address including 9 digit zip code
- County of property
- Property owner, first name
- Property owner, last name
- Property owner mailing address including 9 digit zip code
- Foreclosure flag
- Property Contact, first name
- Property Contact, last name
- Property Contact mailing address including 9 digit zip code
- Property type (residential, multi-family, commercial, industrial, etc.)
- Land use/zoning account type (residential, multi-family, commercial, industrial, etc.)
- Number of units on the property
- Property size
- Municipal code
- Property development code
- Link to historical services, accounts, and customers
- Ability to add user defined fields
- Date of information entry

Rate Schedule Module

The software solution must be able to handle complex Rate Structures and Changes on a variety of billing base types (parcel, address, customer, account, etc.) for all utility types.

The rate schedule module shall have the following abilities at a minimum:

- Have an unlimited amount of rate codes per service, per account
- Provide user-specified and maintained rate tables
- Support unlimited rate revisions and store prior rate tables in history
- Define rates for conservation based usage (frugal rates)
- Support rate revision in the middle of the billing cycle and have the system prorate automatically
- Schedule future rate changes

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- Support flat rate billings or one-time special charges, including annual water tax, special pickups (by type – couch, tree down, yard waste), and seasonal / one-time charges
- Provide for billing for demand meters on any service and calculated from a rate table using the demand reading
- Automatically update rate codes to accommodate newly added services
- Automatically add late penalties or interest charges to delinquent accounts according to a flexible rate structure determined by the user
- Prorate service fees for partial month billing on initiation and termination of accounts

The system should have the ability to:

- Base charges for non-metered services, like sewer rates on winter water consumption (WAV or winter average volume) (sewer assessment) (or other defined timeframe)
- Vary rate structure to accommodate an unlimited number of rate tables for each service
- Vary rate structure for different rate types for each service as city ordinances change. This includes the minimum consumption, billing rate breaks for consumption and dollars, penalty amount, base charge, minimum charge and maximum charge
- Bill for residential flat rate services
- Bill for certain services based on any numeric field in the property information record
- Accommodate unlimited sales tax rates
- Provide rate modeling and analysis tools
- Allow for contracted rates
- Provide for billing on a rental basis (e.g. construction meters, etc.)
- Accommodate certification process for delinquent accounts
- Support one-time charges for special services (e.g. special garbage pickup fees)
- Round up service charges to fund special initiatives

Ideally, the system can allow (workflow) documented approval for any changes/updates to rates, bills, (track changes).

Billing Module

Using the service information and rate schedule information, the billing module shall calculate the cost of service for customers for each account.

The billing module shall have the following abilities at a minimum:

- Bill by cycle and produce corresponding billing registers and journal entries
- Bill cycle will support varied time lengths (i.e., monthly, bimonthly, quarterly, annually, etc.)
- Accommodate sales tax charges in excess of six digits, including two digits to the right of the decimal
- Account for sales tax rates based on service zip code
- Ability to conduct a mass estimate for meter readings
- Ability to bill for sewer services based on residential account usages
- Ability to run billing for accounts, but not generate a bill based on City defined fields
- Have at least one integrated budget billing option with the ability for additional City defined budget billing options
- System will still support billing for accounts when one or more service may be set to inactive
- System will show separate individual meter readings and consumption, and to show total consumption and billing amount on the same bill where meters have been changed out
- System should accommodate billing wholesale customers with unique rate codes in the same

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billing cycle as regular customers

- Support both accrual and cash accounting methods and the ability to automate journal entries in the General Ledger
- System can manage cash only accounts
- Generate AR report by utility type (water, sewer, recycling, etc.)
- System will calculate and bill on level or average-monthly-payment basis. This can be a continuous twelve-month rolling-average calculation or once calculated, billed on a flat basis until recalculated or removed from enrollment on level payment plan.
- System will print edit report for all bank draft accounts, make necessary changes. Posting program posts all bank drafts as a single process
- System will show individual meter readings and consumption, a message that the meters were exchanged, and total consumption and amount on the bill where meters have been exchanged
- System will accommodate different distribution rules for current and past due balances
- System provides data entry correction of any distribution errors
- Transaction history screen should be in reverse chronological order and should include postdate, transaction date, type transaction (bill, payment, deposit, deposit refund, adjustment, etc.), references (check number, adjustment type, etc.), debits, or credits
- System transaction history fields (bill, payment, adjustment, etc.) should support drill-down functionality to source entry
- System will process NSF checks reverse payment and reestablish account balance
- System to accommodate lock-box capabilities for payment processing
- System provides internet billing delivery and payments
- Print multiple user defined messages on bills and provide capability to select specific messages to appear on user selected accounts
- Print bar codes on bills representing the customer's utility account numbers
- Read bar codes with bar code scanners upon receipt of payment from customer
- System provides integration to cash collection system supporting real-time, on-line cash receipts entry, with entry validation and individual cashier totals
- System allows the cashier to modify the distribution of moneys to various services
- System deposit information must include type deposit, date of deposit, amount, receipt number, check number, and refund date
- Cash collection system should interface with deposit programs in utility billing system to capture deposit information including amount, receipt number, reference, etc.
- System will calculate interest on deposits. Interest may be applied to account, added to deposit, or disbursed to customer by check
- System will automatically refund deposited funds plus accrued interest, if applicable, when the account is closed
- System will transfer deposit(s) from one active billing account to another, as when a customer moves and wants the old deposit to transfer to his new location
- System should fully integrate with the general ledger for posting billings, adjustments, and collections
- System should integrate fully with the City's accounts payable module for processing refund checks to customers
- System will support ACH and EFT payments
- System will support transfer payment type from cashier system to UB or vice versa (counter payments) as well as bank transfer payments
- System will allow for export of bulk bills for processing by mailing entity
- System will allow for option of integrated electronic mailing of bills

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Payment Module

The payment module takes the billing information and provides a tool for the customer to pay for their service.

The module shall have the following abilities at a minimum:

- support encryption for all information within the module
- integrate with third party payment providers
- accept full, partial, and pre-payments (potentially problematic)
- allow for a customer number to pay for multiple accounts (only that they are tied to)
- handle recurring payments
- process NSF checks reverse payment and reestablish account balance
- accommodate payments via IVR technology
- provide for bank draft option for customers and bills marked "Paid by Draft" should be printed for customers on bank draft
- distribute partial payments received on a pro-rata basis of what is owed based on user defined formula

Notes Module

The notes module provides a tool for Utility Billing staff to document comments, actions, thoughts about any service, account, customer, and property.

The notes module shall have the following abilities at a minimum:

- Enter notes and attach unlimited documents (pdfs) and pictures (JPGs, GIFs, PNGs, and TIFFs) to any number (service, customer, account, or property). All attachments should integrate with (be stored in) the City's software (Laserfiche)
- Attach unlimited text or notes to a customer's accounts and identify as occupant related or address related notes.
- Have specific notes flagged upon account entry for priority action
- Attach an alert code to a comment. (an alert code would automatically provide a pop-up alert during cash receipts or maintenance inquiry)
- Assign alert flags to accounts with notes making them searchable (required)
- Allow for standard icons associated with alert flags as well as to customize those alert icons

Service Request Module

The service request module should have the ability to enter, update, and close service requests initiated by the customer or Utility Billing staff.

The service request module shall have the following abilities at a minimum:

- Service order creation, completion, and inquiry from either the internal or external portals
- Display information (requests, status, etc.) In real time
- Allow for service scheduling
 - List the service requests scheduled for the day
 - Summarize service orders scheduled for future dates, by date and type
- Notify city staff of open and pending service orders, including aging
- Track the type and number of customer calls for service
- Create recurring service orders to prompt annual inspections of backflow devices

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- Relate a service request/order with a work order (integrate with City's computerized maintenance management software (CMMS))
- Display a history of all service orders related to a service address (of any status)
- Display the status of each service order
- Inquire and access service requests via multiple means (PDA, direct entry, etc.)
- Ability to email for service requests directly from the software to select staff or customers
- A history of all service orders at a service address should be displayed in each utility account
- System will develop letter and customer communications regarding issue resolution
- Ability track the type and number of customer calls for service
- System will track customers' calls by property
- System will track call by area, e.g., development, township, or other user defined
- Keep record of number of repeat customer trouble calls with code for call type
- System will identify codes for various service request types and access history

A service request order shall include the following information:

- Service order number (tied to a specific service, account, customer, and property)
- Description of request (pre-fill user-defined descriptions in service requests or work orders based on either type of work or through user-selected drop down menus)
- Order source code
- Order type
- Priority code
- Field notes in a free form text field
- Date requested
- Promised date of service
- Date resolved
- Calculate the response time based upon the request date and completion date fields
- Person / technician assigned
- Service request status (open, closed, etc.)
- Additional notes (information only seen by City staff – not accessible by the customer)
- Attach pictures and documents for reference (tied to Laserfiche)

The system will have the ability to search and report (via the query and report functions) service requests based on:

- Location
- Address
- Billing cycle
- Priority
- Status
- Input by name
- Date requested
- Date resolved (default to same day for SO, user can edit field)
- Service request

INFORMATION ACCESS

The system shall have an internal Utility Billing staff (UBS) portal and an external customer (CS) portal. Included in the Utility Billing staff portal shall be query and report functions.

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Utility Billing Staff Portal (Internal)

For each billing item number, the system will identify the associated parcel, property(s), customer(s), account(s), service(s), billing, and payment information. In addition, this portal can review rate schedules, notes, and service requests, and perform search, export, and reporting functions.

The internal UB staff portal shall have the following abilities at a minimum:

At any point, show the exact same view as is available to customers.

Upon entry to the system:

- Display administrator defined messages or reminders
- Search for any services, accounts, customers, or properties to identify the appropriate numbers
- Perform reporting on any canned report selected by the user

For any service:

- Display the balance for each service
- Display consumption history by occupant and consolidated together for a service address
- System will support calculation of consumption using current and previous meter readings multiplied by user-defined multipliers
- System will support different consumption multipliers on each meter if a meter change occurs during the billing period
- System will estimate consumption for a complete route or routes in the event of emergencies and produce bills
- System will allow estimate bills for single accounts of all un-read meters
- System will have estimated readings flagged in consumption history to differentiate from actual readings
- System will change meter reading sequence without changing the customer account number individually and in mass
- System will change class code and or billing cycle in mass by user defined sequence range
- System provides a flexible high/low feature (algorithm programmable by user) that allows the user to adjust the range of parameters. This high/low would be both on the information sent to the Automated Meter Reading system before readings, and on the edit (consumption journal)
- For all utilities, the system shall support an unlimited number of accounts per billing book/route, an unlimited number of books/routes per billing cycle, and an unlimited number of billing cycles per month.
- System provides multiple segment fields for meter identification of unlimited length, meter identification (domestic, industrial, irrigation, fire, and sewer), known read units (gal, kgals, etc.), number of dials (min 9 dial resolution)
- System will prompt user if assigning an address to an account that is already assigned (e.g., validates that address is multi-unit property)
- System will clearly record meter, radio, and all other associated parts
- System will flag a customer change, meter change, and estimates on usage history
- System will allow estimate of final usage based on a defective meter
- System will block estimated reading from rollover to the next account
- Notification for disconnected accounts receiving service

For any customer:

- Identify and display usage and billing for the current and historical periods

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- Identify any duplicate customers
- Identify if a customer owes a balance
- Identify if a customer has been written off as a bad debt
- Identify any outstanding issues or non-compliance exist
- Identify any estimated readings flagged by the system
- Identify associated customer accounts on a map

For any billing:

- System will provide billing multiple services (i.e., water, sprinkler meters, wastewater, reclaimed water) per service address, with an unlimited number of categories for each service and an unlimited number of rates
- System will provide for billing multiple meters for a single service address
- System will age accounts in 30, 60, 90, and 120-day increments
- Report for all customers that have not had their meter reading posted since the last billing
- System provides for address certification to maximize postage discount.
- System will automatically generate a cut off list after printing a preview report, which can be reviewed for possible revisions
- Ability to automatically generate cut-off letter notices or other suitable shut-off notices after printing a preview report, which can be reviewed for possible revisions
- System will produce delinquent bills for customers that have already received a final bill but continue to maintain an unpaid balance
- System will calculate final bills during any cycle, based on the internal system issuance of a turn-off service order, or closing of a customer account
- System will provide seasonal billing capability (holds, multiple addresses, etc.)
- System will have the ability, as soon as a meter reading is obtained, to calculate a final bill with deposit applied
- System will sort bills by zip plus four and carrier route or complete CASS certification to take advantages of available postage discount as well as export for use by 3rd party billing service
- System will permit off-cycle billing for accounts that have been disconnected in order to get final bills to customers as soon as possible
- System provides consumption reports prior to generating the billing that include Proof list, meter change-out, possible misreads, and unread meters
- System will place an account on hold, resulting in the account not being billed until taken off hold
- Override service fees based upon user defined security rules
- System will handle non-utility services such as sales of merchandise, meter damage, billings for hydrant meters, and repairs
- System will identify if the account is receiving a physical or electronic bill

For accounting services:

- Capture customer deposits in a subsidiary ledger and associate with the customer record in relation to status changes (e.g., deactivation) to prompt an action by user.

For any service requests:

- Identify any open service requests for a service, account, customer, or property

The Utility Billing staff shall have the ability to add, change or update, or delete customer portal accounts. Information accessible to UB staff includes:

- Contact information

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Utility Billing Software Services for the City of Saint Cloud, MN

- Phone number
- Email
- Preferred contact address (e.g. Snowbirds)
- Login security information
 - Password reset only (UB staff should not have the ability to see any passwords)
 - Enable or disable two factor authentication (via phone number or email)
- Enable or disable preferences (email notification) for:
 - Bill availability
 - Past due bills
 - Non-compliance issues
 - Service request action

For the purposes of cyber-security, Utility Billing or IT staff should have the ability to stop all external network traffic at any time if a perceived threat is detected.

Customer Portal (External)

For each customer, the system will identify the associated parcel, property(s), customer(s), account(s), service(s), billing, and payment information.

The external customer portal shall have the following abilities at a minimum:

- Submit a request to start, stop, or pause service
- Submit a request to move service address
- Identify usage (real time data not more than 24 hrs. Old) and billing information
- Alert the customer to abnormal conditions or consumption
- Identify and display balances by service (i.e., water, sewer, storm, garbage).
- Display prior bills and consumption amounts
- Access a payment portal to submit any payments (see payment portal section above)
- Have the ability to electronically communicate with UB staff
- Identify and notify if a customer has been written off as a bad debt
- Identify and notify the customer if they are in “certification” for unpaid or underpaid accounts
- Notify and address any outstanding meter issues or non-compliance
- Have the ability for the customer to initiate and follow up on a service request

The customer should have the ability to change or update:

- Contact information
 - Phone number
 - Email
 - Preferred contact address (e.g. Snowbirds)
- Login security information
 - Password reset (do not allow the reuse of old passwords)
 - Add two factor authentication (via phone number or email)
- Preferences (email notification) for:
 - Bill availability
 - Past due bills
 - Non-compliance issues
 - Service request action

System will support a customer service request for a defined group of tasks (meter or service shut-off with an associated fee, questions or inquiries, etc.)

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Querying (Search)

The software solution must be able to handle basic and complex searches for information on a variety of billing base types (parcel, address, customer, account, etc.) for all utility types.

The query module shall have the following abilities at a minimum:

- Provide for displaying and/or printing any customer account information.
- Provide for displaying and/or printing any customer account history (financial and consumption) upon request.
- Have a prebuilt utility consumption and revenue summary by rate class query.
- Export information to Word for use of templates for customer correspondence and Excel for billing and land use reporting
- System provides a direct interface to MS Word for single letter generation and mail merge capabilities from a selected group of accounts
- Perform mass updates to text fields within the database with proper security access and within relational database constraints
- Query on disconnected meters that are receiving service
- Link / export data (including historical water use data) and reports to commonly used desktop application software
- Query multiple fields from the streetlight utility

The system should be able to inquire about any information based on any one of the following items:

- Parcel ID number
- Account number
- Account name
- Account type (residential, multi-family, commercial, etc.)
- Meter number
- Meter type
- Service address (number and/or street name)
- Acct status (i.e.. active, inactive, turn-on, turn-off, etc.)
- Billing history

As stated in the software requirements, the City and select third-party vendor/consultants (with appropriate security clearance) must have the ability to access back-end data for custom applications and reporting.

Reporting

The software solution must be able to handle basic and complex reporting of information on a variety of billing base types (parcel, address, customer, account, etc.) for all utility types. End user reporting tools must be available to create queries and/or reports, using data from any of the fields within the Utility Billing system. A full list of predefined reports should be included in the addendum to the proposal.

The report module shall have the following abilities at a minimum:

- Queries and prepares ad hoc reports on any and all fields
- Restrict modifications of reports to creator
- Restrict modification of reports to group level security
- Provide report of the accounts that are estimated
- Report to produce account that have zero consumption

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- Save standard reports and use across the network depending on security access
- Print a mailing list based on user-defined criteria
- Print labels by billing and/or service address, meter classification, meter size for all accounts or selected accounts within a user defined sequence range, billing cycle or class code
- Tax profile (for commercial properties) – identify if they are exempt and the percentage
- Create customer-contact template letters similar to dunning letter format as described in Billing
- System provides automatic printing of disconnect notices and cut-off service orders
- System should have the ability to import and export data (including; excel, SQL, csv, xml, etc.)
- Ability to save an ad hoc or user created report for future use
- Provide an audit report for cycle and route renumbering showing old and new cycle and route numbers for future reference
- Top water users report, by consumption and by dollars billed, under user defined criteria
- Total utility usage by month, by class, by rate, etc.
- Total number of utility customers by class, by month, by rate, etc.
- Historical Consumption Reports by user/address account/account type (residential, multi-family, commercial, industrial, etc.)
- Generate an estimated consumption report by month
- Create custom reports at the user level
- Produce a Revenue Summary report by each item on the rate schedule for customers, revenue, and consumption.
- Automate all queries and distribution of resulting reports on a user defined schedule
- Multiple formats should be available for reports, including PDF, Excel, etc.

OTHER SOFTWARE CONNECTIONS/INTEGRATIONS

Per the software requirements, the utility billing software must integrate with the City's current software systems (either directly or a confirmed API). Any change made through integration should be noted in a change log along with being accessible through the reporting module.

Finance System

System will interface to City finance system Central Square for accounting purposes. This is to include transfer of counter payments from cashier system to UB or vice versa.

Special Assessments

System will interface to a Special Assessments module that would incorporate different installment bills on the utility bill.

File Archive System

System will interface to Laserfiche for document retention and storage purposes.

Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI)

System will interface and handle data transfer from multiple Automated Reading systems including Neptune My360. This data transfer is handled through a pre-defined system routine for upload/download from the AMR route management software.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

System will interface to GIS (ESRI) for spatial and parcel information.
Customer data in the GIS should be updated daily

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System will apply flat rate to bills in a user defined area by GIS feed (line extension fee)

CMMS Work Order Management (WO)

System will interface with CMMS and may have the ability to generate service requests for the following assets: vehicles, equipment, facilities/sites, buildings, infrastructure, land, and other assets.

CAMA System

System will interface with Production Assess Pro – Assessing system for parcel changes (split/combined, etc.) owner changes, parcel type changes

Licensing Database (Accela)

System will interface with Accela and have the ability to automatically update the user defined field for rental license or liquor licenses.

BSI Online

System will interface with BSI Online and have the ability to automatically update the user defined field for backflow prevention.

Proposal Letter

Utility Billing Software Services for the City of Saint Cloud, MN

CITY CONTRACT 2025-15
SAINT CLOUD, MINNESOTA
Due Date & Time: May 23, 2025 by 3:00pm

Honorable City Council
City of Saint Cloud
1201 7th St South
St Cloud, MN 56301

Dear Council Members:

The undersigned, being familiar with your conditions, having made any inspections and investigations deemed necessary, having studied the Request for Proposal and being familiar with all factors and other conditions affecting the work and cost thereof, hereby proposes to furnish all labor, tools, hardware, software, materials, skills, equipment and all else necessary to complete this project in accordance with the details provided in the Request for Proposal.

The final amount of the contract shall be determined by summing all the costs documented on the proposal form.

Accompanying this bid is a bidder's bond, money order, certified check, or cash deposit in the amount of \$_____, which is at least five percent (5%) of the amount of my/our bid made payable to the Owner, and the same is subject to forfeiture in the event of default on the part of the undersigned or failure on the part of the undersigned to execute the prescribed contract and bond within thirty (30) days after notification by me/us.

In submitting this bid, it is understood that this contract will be awarded based on Best Value Contracting authority as allowed by MN Statue 161.3206.

In submitting this bid, it is understood that the Owner retains the right to reject any and all bids and to waive irregularities and informalities therein and to award the contract to and the best interests of the Owner.

In submitting this bid, it is understood that payment will be by cash or check. It is understood that bids may not be withdrawn for a period of 120 days after the date and time set for the opening of bids. It is understood that the Owner reserves the right to retain the certified check or bond of the three lowest bidders as determined by the Owner for a period not to exceed 90 days after the date set for the opening of bids.

Respectfully submitted,

Name

(A Corporation)
(An Individual)
(A Partnership)

Signer

Title

Printed Name of Signer

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Proposal Form

Utility Billing Software Services for the City of Saint Cloud, MN

CITY CONTRACT 2025-15
SAINT CLOUD, MINNESOTA
Due Date & Time: May 23, 2025 by 3:00pm

Best Value Contracting submittal requirements:

- Proposal
 - A fully signed proposal letter
 - A bidder's bond, money order, certified check, or cash deposit of at least five percent (5%) of the bid amount payable to the Owner
- Technical Ability Documentation (25 page maximum)
 - Cover page identifying Proposer, the RFP by title and an introductory letter that describes your proposal in summary form
 - Proposer background, including the company's legal name, mailing address, telephone number, name of primary contact person, location of headquarters, and services provided
 - The experience and qualifications of the staff to be assigned to this project (deployment and ongoing account rep)
 - Projected hours, tasks, and timeline for conversion/deployment process along with associated cost
 - Details on conversion/deployment approach
 - Details on software maintenance and support program
 - A description of the company's prior installations. Including at least three user references from clients using the same meter reading system
 - A history of all downtime in the last 3 years
 - Record of updates to software and notices provided to customers for each of those updates
 - Current annual fee and annual fee increases since 2021; both licensing and maintenance & support
- Bid Pricing
 - Software purchase\$ _____
 - Software licensing for 1 year (annual cost).....\$ _____
 - Labor and material cost for complete installation.....\$ _____
 - Software maintenance and support for 3 years\$ _____
 - **BID TOTAL**\$ _____

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT
HUMAN RIGHTS ACT, STATE OF MINNESOTA**

Contractor hereby represents and states that the contractor shall be in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 USC § 12101-12214 as amended (ADA) and in compliance with the State law, specifically the Human Rights Acts, Minn. Stat. §363.01, et al. Contractor assumes all liability with respect to any complaints or violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of Minn. Ch. 363.01, et al, and contractor agrees to save harmless or indemnify the City from any such claims including, but not limited to costs, expenses, and attorneys' fees resulting in noncompliance or violation of said Act by contractor.

Signature

Company

Date

AFFIDAVIT OF NONCOLLUSION

I hereby swear (or affirm) under the penalty for perjury:

1. That I am a bidder (if the bidder is an individual), a partner in the bidding partnership (if the bidder is a partnership), or an officer or employee of the bidding corporation (if the bidder is a corporation) having authority to sign on its behalf.
2. That the attached bid or bids have been arrived at by the bidder independently, and have been submitted without collusion with, or without any other vendor of materials, supplies, equipment, or services described in the invitation to bid.
3. That the contents of the bid or bids have not been communicated by the bidder or its employees or agents to any person not an employee or agent of the bidder or its surety on a bond furnished with the bid or bids, and will not be communicated to any such person prior to the official opening of the bid or bids; and
4. That I have fully informed myself regarding the accuracy of the statements made in this affidavit.

Signed _____

Firm Name _____

Bidder's E.I. Number: _____
(Number used on Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return, U.S. Treasury Department Form 941)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____ 2025.

(SEAL)

Notary Public

AFFIDAVIT OF RESPONSIBLE CONTRACTOR

I hereby swear (or affirm) under the penalty for perjury:

1. That I am a contractor within the meaning of MINN. STAT. § 16C.285, subd 1(c);
2. That I am in compliance with worker's compensation and unemployment insurance requirements;
3. That I am currently registered with the Department of Revenue and the Department of Employment and Economic Development;
4. That I have a valid Federal Tax Identification Number;
5. That I have filed a Certificate of Authority to transact business in Minnesota with the Secretary of State.

Signed _____

Firm Name _____

Bidder's E.I. Number: _____
(Number used on Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return, U.S. Treasury Department Form 941)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____, 2025.

(SEAL)

Notary Public