

**HESAA 2026 Request for Proposals (RFP)**  
**Phone Support**  
**Potential Contractor's Questions & HESAA's Answers**

**Below are the responses to questions received by the deadline.**

1. From Section 1.0, the RFP mandates integration and interoperability with HESAA's existing Cisco Firepower and Cisco Umbrella security stack. To ensure the highest level of call quality and maintain a 99.999% uptime standard, will HESAA's IT team allow secure, encrypted real-time traffic (SIP over TLS on Port 5061 and SRTP media) to bypass deep packet SSL inspection and decryption on the Cisco Firepower firewalls, which typically introduces latency and certificate validation failures for cloud-delivered voice?

***Yes, HESAA's IT team will allow secure and encrypted real-time traffic to bypass deep packet SSL inspection and decryption on the CISCO Firepower firewalls.***

2. From Section 4.1 A, it is indicated that meetings features are required. Please provide the requirements for WebEx Meetings.

***Requirements include basic features provided with the UCaaS standard license pertaining to WebEx Meetings.***

3. From Section 4.1 B, what are the phone features and specifications required?

- Number of lines supported?  
***HESAA requires four lines per phone.***
- Bluetooth capable?  
***Yes, the phones must be Bluetooth capable.***
- Wireless capable?  
***Yes, the phones must be wireless capable.***

4. From Section 4.1 B, can the Authority clarify the exact model numbers and current firmware versions of the existing Cisco desk phones they intend to reuse? Specifically, are these devices currently running standard Cisco Enterprise/Unified Communications Manager Firmware (e.g., K9 SKUs) or Cisco Multiplatform/3PCC Firmware (e.g., 3PCC SKUs)? If they are running Enterprise Firmware, will HESAA be responsible for procuring the necessary Cisco migration licenses to convert the devices to open-SIP multiplatform firmware, or does the Authority expect the bidding vendor to include this conversion in the professional services scope?

***HESAA does not currently use Cisco desk phones.***

5. From Section 4.1 B & C, the technical scope outlines support for physical SIP desk

phones, attendant sidecars, and shared area phones with strict feature parity. To help us evaluate hardware compatibility, could HESAA provide the exact makes and models of the current physical phone inventory? Additionally, for the 250 standard manned users, will a standard browser-based WebRTC softphone interface be acceptable in place of physical equipment?

***HESAA requires physical phones. Current models consist of ShoreTel/Mitel 200 and 400 series.***

6. From Section 4.1 C, does HESAA intend to utilize an existing state telecommunications contract via a Bring Your Own Carrier (BYOC) SIP trunk model, or does HESAA expect the awarded contractor to provide complete cloud-native PSTN dialing and inbound toll-free services as part of the primary solution package?

***HESAA requests bids include information on the carriers the bidders work with, and all associated costs.***

7. From Section 4.1 C3, for the 10 requested E-Fax accounts, is HESAA looking for a built-in virtual fax tool running directly inside the user desktop application, or will a standalone secure digital fax-to-email routing architecture meet your operational needs?

***HESAA does not require a stand-alone fax-to-email system. The Authority currently uses eFax through Verizon for the 10 existing accounts.***

8. From Section 4.2 C, how many voice queues are required?

***Between four and ten voice queues are required.***

- Are any other queues required for email, web chat, SMS, or social?

***HESAA's current system only uses voice queues. The proposal should include capabilities for email, chat, and SMS, along with any associated costs.***

9. From Section 4.2 D, how many IVRs/Flows are required for the contact center?

***HESAA requires 60 IVRs/Flows for the contact center.***

10. From Section 4.2 D, the scope details an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) menu system that requires API data integrations. Can you specify the target customer databases, CRM systems, or student financial aid applications that the system will need to query against to validate caller data in real time?

***No API data integration is in use at this time. HESAA will work with the selected contractor to determine the databases, CRM system and/or applications the system will need to query against to validate data in real time..***

11. From Section 4.3 D, regarding the Workforce Management (WFM) requirement for demand forecasting, automated agent scheduling, and real-time adherence tracking: Will the Authority accept an industry-leading, pre-integrated WFM partner solution that is natively embedded into the CCaaS supervisor dashboard, or is HESAA strictly seeking a CCaaS platform where the WFM engine is built entirely on the vendor's proprietary codebase?

***HESAA will accept WFM partner solutions.***

12. From Section 4.4 A, regarding interoperability with Cisco Firepower and Umbrella, does HESAA require the cloud telephony platform to feed active security event logs directly into a centralized state-managed SIEM (Security Information and Event Management) system, or is standalone secure administrative logging sufficient?

***Yes, HESAA requires active security event logs to feed directly into SIEM.***

13. From Section 4.4 F & H, to remain compliant with the zero-data-retention mandates for AI and transcription elements, is it permissible for the cloud platform to run short-term, transient text processing caches, provided that all finalized call logs, audio transcripts, and recordings are immediately written to HESAA-owned secure storage buckets and completely wiped from the platform's temporary cache?

***Yes, it is permissible for the cloud platform to run short-term, transient text processing caches, provided that all finalized call logs, audio transcripts, and recordings are immediately written to HESAA-owned secure storage buckets and completely wiped from the platform's temporary cache.***

14. From Section 4.4 H, it states that AI components must support a zero-data-retention processing option. Can HESAA confirm if this zero-retention requirement is intended strictly for live, real-time transient AI processes (such as live transcription, real-time agent assist prompts, and call routing)? Or does this zero-retention requirement also apply to post-call AI summaries and automated quality scoring records, which must be securely stored in the cloud for HESAA's historical QA auditing and reporting?

***The zero-retention requirement applies to post-call AI summaries and automated quality scoring records in addition to real-time transient AI processes.***

15. From Section 4.4 F & I, in compliance with N.J.S.A. 52:34-13.2 (Public Law 2005, Chapter 92), which mandates that all services be performed within the United States, can the Authority confirm if the use of major cloud-native AI sub-processors (e.g., OpenAI or

Microsoft Azure AI Services) is permitted for real-time translation, speech-to-text, and call summarization, provided that all data transit, hosting, and backup storage remain strictly within U.S.-based cloud regions and adhere to the strict zero-data retention rules?

***HESAA confirms that the use of major cloud-native AI sub-processors is permitted for real-time translation, speech-to-text, and call summarization, provided that all data transit, hosting, and backup storage remain strictly within U.S.-based cloud regions and adhere to the strict zero-data retention rules.***

16. From Section 4.7 A, will the awarded contractor be required to build custom application screen-pops or wrap-up code interfaces inside a CRM for agents at the time of system deployment, or will standard out-of-the-box communication panel features suffice for launch?

***While HESAA uses custom wrap-up codes they are not currently tied to APIs nor are they expected to have interfaces inside the CRM at this time.***

17. From Section 4.8 B, 30 day hyper-care for S1 and S2 incidents, is this required to come from the deployment team or managed services team, or does that not matter?

***Proposals should indicate how the bidder's solution handles hyper-care. A combination from both the deployment team and the management services team is acceptable.***

18. From Section 4.8 C, will the AI pilot to take place be then deployed and moved to production in front of the voice queues within the flow builder?

***Whether the AI pilot is deployed and moved to production in front of the voice queues will depend on the results of the pilot.***

- Will the AI agent handle all calls from all the required flows?

***No, the AI agent will not handle all calls from the required flows.***

- If so, is the AI agent to be Autonomous or scripted?

***The AI agent is to be scripted for the flows selected.***

- Describe any database dips required by the AI agent or self-service required?

***HESAA requests that bidders provide their solution capabilities.***

19. From Section 6.4 & Exhibit A, because modern cloud-hosted communications suites utilize an on-demand consumption model (per-minute carrier routing, per-interaction SMS/Chat, and variable IVR usage data processing) rather than legacy fixed software licenses, how

should the bidder structure the Fee Schedule? Does HESAA prefer to see a baseline usage estimate bundled into a flat monthly/annual fixed seat cost, or should we break out the actual utility consumption rates alongside our implementation fees?

***HESAA has a 2-3 month period each year when usage increases significantly while the rest of the year is more uniform. Therefore, HESAA requests both a baseline usage estimate bundled into a flat monthly/annual seat cost and fees broken out by actual utility consumption rates be due to the fact that.***

20. From Exhibit A, what devices are required for quoting?

**HESAA requires the following devices:**

- a. Cisco Desk Phone 9861, or comparable – quantity 250.***
- b. Cisco 8832 with accessories, PoE, and Microphone Kit, or comparable – quantity six.***