
Request for Proposal (RFP)

Data Center Cooling Capacity Expansion with N+1 Redundancy and Aisle Containment Design & Installation

RFP Number: 2025-DC04

Issue Date: November 14, 2025

Submission Deadline: December 22, 2025

Contacts:

Technical Questions: Marc Hopkins, CTO, marc@swoca.net

Response Documents and NDA: SWOCA Admin Team: adm@swoca.net

(Phone Calls about this RFP will not be accepted.)

1. Introduction

1.1: Background on Request for Proposal

The Southwest Ohio Computer Association (SWOCA) is soliciting proposals from qualified vendors to design, supply, install, and commission an expanded cooling solution for our primary data center, located in Hamilton, Ohio. The objective is to increase cooling capacity to support current and projected IT loads, achieve N+1 redundancy, and implement a hot/cold aisle containment system to improve cooling efficiency.

Upon completion of the evaluation, and if the cost-benefit analysis supports proceeding, SWOCA intends to enter into an agreement with the selected vendor for the project and ongoing support.

1.2 Overview of SWOCA

SWOCA is a member-owned consortium of public K-12 school districts in southwestern Ohio. We provide trusted IT solutions exclusively for government and education entities. We are structured as an Ohio Council of Governments under

Ohio Revised Code Chapter 167 and are Ohio's largest single-site Information Technology Center (ITC). We currently serve 48 public and community school districts located in seven counties, educating over 140,000 students each day. We also provide services to non-public schools and offer complete IT solutions for local governments.

1.3 RFP Section: Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure

To protect the integrity and security of the data center infrastructure, all vendors responding to this RFP must execute a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) prior to receiving detailed technical specifications, diagrams, or other sensitive materials related to the project.

Parts of this RFP and associated documentation shall be considered a "Security Record" under Ohio Revised Code §149.433. As such, certain information is exempt from public disclosure and shall be treated as confidential.

All vendors must complete and submit the NDA form provided in Appendix B of this RFP. Failure to submit a signed NDA will result in disqualification from the bidding process.

2. Project Scope

The selected vendor will provide a turnkey solution that includes two distinct deliverables:

Current State Summary:

- SWOCA's data center currently utilizes two 5.6 ton rated In-Row cooling units with traditional refrigerants, but no re-humidification.
- The current data center has a hot/cold aisle design, with a central cold aisle. No formal hot/cold containment in place.
- The current data center has an external humidifier to return humidity to the room.
- The In-row CRAC units are integrated both with our building automation system via BAC net, and monitored via SNMP by our network monitoring system.
- The current cooling capacity is sufficient for data center operations, but our data center needs and power consumption have grown to the point where this 2X design no longer provides sufficient cooling in the event of a unit failure.

Deliverable A: Cooling System Expansion

- Engineering design and layout to expand our cooling capacity to a total of 11.2 tons in an N+1 configuration.
- Preference will be given to designs that allow for modular growth as our data center needs expand.
- Supply and installation of cooling units (e.g., CRAC/CRAH or in-row units).
- Review current Humidity Control systems and recommend enhancements. Units with internal humidity control will be considered based on their cost-effectiveness and reliability.
- Integration with existing infrastructure (power, cooling, & monitoring).
- Commissioning and performance validation.
- Documentation and training.

Deliverable B: Aisle Containment Design & Installation

- Design of hot/cold aisle containment system compatible with existing rack layout.
- Supply and installation of containment components (e.g., end-of-row doors, ceiling panels, blanking panels, baffles).
- Integration with cooling airflow and environmental controls.
- Commissioning and airflow validation.
- Documentation and training.

3. Technical Requirements

- **Cooling Capacity:** Minimum of 10 tons of total cooling in an N+1 configuration.
- **Redundancy:** System must maintain full cooling capacity with one unit offline.
- **Containment Design:** Must support full separation of hot and cold air streams; include airflow modeling and pressure management.
- **Environmental Standards:** Maintain industry standard recommended temperature and humidity ranges, with ASHRAE TC 9.9 being the primary guideline of consideration.
- **Monitoring Integration:** SNMP/Modbus or equivalent for integration with current building management and network monitoring systems.

- **Power:** Generator compatibility required with automatic restart upon power restoration.
 - **Lead/Lag:** All units shall be configured to rotate load in a Lead/Lag approach to maximize lifespan of all new and current cooling equipment.
 - **Lifecycle:** Proposed solution should have an estimated manufacturing life span of at least 15 years.
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4. Site Conditions

- Existing cooling infrastructure will remain operational during installation.
 - Physical layout and rack configuration details are summarized in the attachments. More details will be provided upon request or during a scheduled site visit.
 - Installation must be performed with minimal disruption to live operations and ZERO down time for core operations.
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5. Vendor Qualifications

- A minimum of 3 completed data center cooling and containment projects of similar scale in the past 5 years. SWOCA prefers Government and Educational references wherever possible and reserves the right to prioritize references from similar organizations.
 - Ability to provide 24/7 support and emergency response.
 - Licensed and insured to perform work in Butler County, Ohio.
 - Positive References from previous clients required.
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6. Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include:

- Detailed technical solution for both Deliverables, A and B
- Project timeline and milestones
- Cost breakdown (equipment, labor, optional services) for each deliverable

- Warranty and support terms
- Payment structure (monthly, quarterly, or milestone-based)
- Optional value-added services (e.g., energy efficiency analysis, DCIM integration)

7. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- 30% Technical compliance to purpose
- 25% Vendor experience
- 15% Total Cost and pricing transparency
- 15% Support and warranty terms
- 15% Value-added features

8. Submission Instructions and timeline

Proposals must be received by SWOCA no later 4:00 PM EST on December 22, 2025, via e-mail to adm@swoca.net, and/or physical hard copy delivered to the SWOCA offices listed below. Proposals must be limited to ten 8 ½ “ x 11” pages and clearly marked SWOCA RFP #**2025-DC04**. Electronic submissions should have this clearly in the subject line of the e-mail and are expected to be in PDF format.

SWOCA may, at its sole discretion, choose to extend this timeline. Interested respondents are encouraged to refer to our website at <https://www.swoca.net/> to check the latest version of this document.

DATE	Activity
November 14, 2025	RFP Published
December 1, 2025 5:00 PM	Deadline for NDA / Respondent form in Attachment A to be returned to adm@swoca.net .
December 8, 2025: 2:00 PM	Site visit and walk through with all respondents. Inspection of physical records including above-mentioned architectural drawings.
December 8 – December 15, 2025	Questions from interested respondents accepted. All questions (and their answers) will be published as an appendix to this RFP.

December 16, 2025	Q&A Appendix published to SWOCA Website.
December 22, 2025 4:00 PM	Proposals due via e-mail to adm@swoca.net .
January 5 – January 16 th , 2026	Potential respondent interviews and presentations.
January 30, 2026	Negotiations begin with selected respondent(s).

9. List of attachments to the RFP

Appendix A: Current Data Center Summary

Appendix B: Respondent's Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)

Appendix C: Data Center Diagrams*

Appendix D: Architectural Diagrams*

Appendix E: Reserved for Questions and Answers from respondents

Appendix C and D are only available to respondents who have returned the signed NDA in Appendix B and will be sent via secure file transfer.

Appendix E will be published on the SWOCA Web site on December 16th.

Appendix A: Current Data Center Summary

A.1: Data Center Physical Layout

- The current Data Center is roughly 40.5 by 19 feet, with 11-foot-high ceilings.
- The Data Center is laid out with two rows of approximately 7 racks each, configured with a center facing Cold aisle. There is not currently containment aside from the Structured cabling racks, but testing of temporary cold isle containment proved effective.
- The Cold aisle space between the racks is approximately 131 square feet.
- Cold aisle containment can be achieved either at the top of the racks, approximately 6.5' off the floor, or at the ceiling, at 11'.
- The Cold aisle is approximately 72" in width between the two racks.
- The Hot aisle behind the racks is approximately 38" to the exterior wall.
- The Data center is a poured concrete floor. All Data and Electric are run overhead.
- Architectural drawings are available for inspection at the location upon request.
- Upon completion of the NDA in appendix B, A Digital copy may or may not be available.
- Bidders are responsible for verifying all field measurements and adjusting their bids accordingly.

A.2 Fire Suppression

- Construction of the data center includes fire-stop walls, which much be preserved, and a third-party pressure test of the fire suppression containment will be conducted to confirm pressure containment.
- The selected party shall be responsible for performing all corrective measures required to achieve a successful pressure test upon completion of the work.
- This fire suppression system was installed post-construction and is therefore not shown on the architectural drawings.

A.3 Current Cooling: Additional Details

- SWOCA currently uses a 2 row 5.6 ton CRAC's with a traditional refrigerant and an internal/external split configuration. (Exact Makes/Models can be [provided once an NDA is executed](#).)
- Condensers are located outside of the physical building, roughly 36 and 44 feet from the CRAC units.
- There is room near the current condensers for a third unit of a similar size. Any pad or construction for this condenser is required to be part of respondent's proposal.

- Current Condenser and CRAC units run 208v 3 Phase and are powered by the on-site generator and automatic transfer switch. It is believed that sufficient capacity exists on this system to add cooling. Respondents are expected to coordinate with our electrical contractor to ensure proper power is available.
- All condensation lines are (and any new lines must be) run in a way to minimize risk of a water leak happening over the data center.
- The current units run at roughly 75% of capacity but vary based on the cyclical load of processing as it relates to our operations.

A.4 Exempt from Public Records

- As defined in Section 1.3, SWOCA classifies several components of this project as Security Records under ORC 149.433. As such, these records are exempt from Ohio's Public Records release.
- Vendor responses shall also be considered Security Records under ORC 149.433
- The non-disclosure agreement in Appendix B must be signed and returned to adm@swoca.net before interested vendors will be granted access to the additional details in Appendices C and onward.

Appendix B: Respondent's Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)

RFP 2025-DC03

Project Title: Data Center Cooling Capacity Expansion with N+1 Redundancy and Aisle Containment Design & Installation

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

This Non-Disclosure Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into by and between:

Disclosing Party:

Southwest Ohio Computer Association (SWOCA)
J. Marc Hopkins, Chief Technology Officer
3611 Hamilton-Middleton Rd
Hamilton, OH 45011

Receiving Party (Vendor):

Company Name: _____
Authorized Representative: _____
Title: _____
Address: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

1. Purpose

The Receiving Party desires to participate in the RFP process for the above-referenced project. In connection with this process, SWOCA may disclose certain confidential and security-sensitive information, including, but not limited to, technical specifications, infrastructure diagrams, operational procedures, and facility layouts.

2. Definition of Confidential Information

"Confidential Information" includes all documents, data, and communications marked as confidential or reasonably understood to be confidential, including any information designated as a "Security Record" under Ohio Revised Code §149.433.

3. Obligations of Receiving Party

The unsigned, on behalf of the Receiving Party agrees that/to:

- Is a duly authorized representative of the respondent listed below.
- Has read and understand the RFP requirements.
- Maintain the confidentiality of all Confidential Information received.
- Use Confidential Information solely for the purpose of preparing a response to the RFP.
- Not disclose Confidential Information to any third party without prior written consent from the Disclosing Party.
- Take reasonable steps to protect Confidential Information from unauthorized access or disclosure.

4. Exceptions

Confidential Information does not include information that:

- Is already publicly available;
- Is lawfully obtained from a third party without restriction;
- Is independently developed by the Receiving Party without reference to Confidential Information.

5. Duration

This Agreement shall remain in effect for a period of five (5) years from the date of execution or until the Confidential Information is no longer protected under applicable law, whichever is longer.

6. Return or Destruction

Upon request, the Receiving Party shall return or destroy all Confidential Information, including any copies or derivatives within 7 days.

7. Governing Law

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Ohio.

The parties acknowledge that certain information disclosed under this Agreement is protected as a “Security Record” pursuant to Ohio Revised Code §149.433.

8. Entire Agreement

This Agreement constitutes the entire understanding between the parties and supersedes all prior agreements or understandings regarding the subject matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement as of the date below.

Signature (Vendor)

Date

Signature (Disclosing Party)

Date
