

Utility Billing RFP-Questions from Vendors

1. Is the City open to considering bids for a subset of services described in the scope?
Please review Section 3 “Approach” in the RFP regarding how proposals will be scored.
2. What type of data will be exported for print?
Data will include typical water usage and sewer rate information.
3. What is the average number of bills that go into delinquency and average amount of those bills?
Please see Attachment A titled “Chico AR Summary” for this information.
4. At what point of non-payment is it expected to begin the collection process? 60 days, 90 days, etc? OR is it just collections from people who are no longer active in their systems?
Currently, Cal Water sends a termination letter to the customer 54 days after the initial bill date. A 10-day door hanger is placed 69 days from the bill date and termination of waster services occurs at day 79. The City will work with the selected Vendor to determine processes moving forward.
5. Is the project start date firm?
The City’s contract with Cal Water will terminate on June 30, 2023. The City would like to ensure a smooth transition from Cal Water to the new Vendor and will work with both entities to ensure the Vendor will be adequately prepared for all billing prior to the termination date.
6. Is it possible to get a copy of the billing agreement of Cal Water and the City of Chico?
The previous contract is not relevant to the current RFP, however public documents may be requested through the City’s Public Records Act process.
7. Are you able to provide an example of how the "water consumption data" will be provided to the utility billing company?
Please see Attachment B titled “Chico Water Consumption Data”.
8. What do you mean by total billing per address? What do you mean by total cost per utility? What do you mean by broadband billing?
We would like the Vendor to show what the cost per address would be (if there is more than one utility being billed). While we will need Utility billing services at this time, we may also need additional billing services for broadband in the future. On page 2 of the RFP it states “the City may have broadband billing in the future that may require additional billing capacity.
9. Does the City wish to use postcard bills or letter-style bills in an envelope? If letter-style bills, do you wish to include a return envelope?
The City would like to utilize letter-style bills with an envelope included.

10. Do you bill more than one cycle per month? If so, how many cycles?
There is only one billing cycle per month.
11. How frequently do you anticipate using billing inserts? Are inserts ever more than one sheet?
Typically, inserts are only sent when there are annual rate increases. These inserts are usually only a single page.
12. Approximately how many accounts receive a late notice each month?
Please see Attachment C titled "AR Detail Report" for account receivable information.
13. Approximately how many accounts receive a second notice each month?
See the answer for Q12 above.
14. Approximately how many accounts receive a shut off notice each month?
Currently, shutoff notices happen after 79 days. Please see Attachment C for accounts that have gone past 79 days.
15. Approximately how many accounts close their accounts and require final bills each month?
Please see Attachment C titled "AR Detail Report" for information regarding account status.
16. Approximately how many customer service calls did the City or Cal Water receive each month?
This information is currently unknown as Cal Water doesn't track calls for sewer services separate from water calls.
17. When will the City want to bill for other services such as fiber? What would the timeline be?
This information is currently unknown.
18. What type support would the city provide to the transition or would it be working with Cal Water directly?
The City will work cooperatively with Cal Water and the Vendor to ensure a smooth transition.
19. Can we get a copy of the current "contract" with the existing contractor for providing "Utility Billing Services"?
See the answer to Q6 above.
20. What are the areas of the existing services the city is not very satisfied with? Please give us some examples.
There are no areas of existing services the City is not satisfied with at this time.
21. What are the new features/services that City is looking to implement in the proposed

services?

The City is looking for the features and services as described in the RFP.

22. Currently, how much the city is spending Annually on the “Utility Billing Services”?

See the answer to Q6 above.

23. What is the budget range for the current project’s implementation cost and annual cost?

The purpose of the RFP is to develop those numbers.

24. How many bills are generated monthly?

There are approximately 24,000 customers billed monthly. This number will increase as mentioned under “Description of Project” on page 2 of the RFP.

25. What is the percentage of monthly e-bills?

Roughly half of the bills are e-bills.

26. Can you share a sample Billing PDF?

Please see Attachment E titled “Billing Sample”. Please note Cal Water combined water and sewer.

27. What is the scope of Broadband Billing?

This information is currently unknown.

28. Apart from the Billing information, what other information like due notices, additional notices, delinquency notices, etc. are sent to the customer under printing and mailing services? Can some samples be shared with us?

See the answer to Q11 above.

29. What water meters are installed? Is it AMI?

Water meters are not AMR or AMI, they are manual.

30. Will Cal Water continue providing Water Consumption for the Billing process in case a new Vendor is selected?

Cal Water will continue to provide consumption data to assist in the billing process.

31. How is water Consumption integrated with the present Billing System? Is it via file uploading or API integration?

This is done via file upload through Cal Water’s meter reading software, Itron FCS.

32. Which payment processor is implemented in the City? What current payment options (credit/debit/ACH, etc.) are exercised by the Customers?

Customers can currently pay by credit card, debit card and check.

33. What is the average Customer calls in a day attended by customer service representatives?

See the answer to Q16 above.

34. How many customer service representatives are currently serving the Customers?
There are currently five (5) customer services representatives for Cal Water. Please note this is for both water and sewer inquiries.
35. What languages the city is looking for in Customer Services?
The City would like to ensure there are customer services representatives available to speak in Spanish and English.
36. What field services are provided by the City?
Collections systems, operations, and maintenance.
37. Is City looking for a cloud-based system?
The City would like a cloud-based system that allows for access by both customers and City representatives.
38. Is City looking for Customer Self Service Portal and Mobile App for the Customers?
The City would like to have a customer self-service portal as mentioned in the RFP.
39. How many years of data need to be migrated from Cal Water?
One year of data will need to be migrated from Cal Water.
40. What is the platform (Front-end and Database) of the current Billing System from Cal water?
Cal Water currently uses Oracle Software called Customer Care and Billing.
41. What does the City expect from “Per address and per utility cost”?
See the answer to Q8 above.
42. Which financial system will be integrated with the proposed system?
OneSolution.
43. Does City have a centralized cashiering System that will be integrated with the proposed system?
OneSolution.
44. Is the City looking for a Commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) product that can be customized as per the City’s Needs?
The City would like the Vendor to handle the billing processes as fully described under “Description of Project”. The Vendor should note which software they intend to utilize for the process.
45. When the project will start?
The City will work with the chosen Vendor to ensure a smooth transition from Cal Water to occur prior to June 30, 2023.

46. When City is planning to Go-Live?
See the answer to Q5 above.
47. Is City looking for a Parallel run with the Current system before going live?
Yes.
48. Will City's IT department will help in Transition from Cal Water?
The City's IT department will assist in the transition from Cal Water.
49. The City is looking for a four year annual maintenance contract post implementation of the proposed System. Please confirm?
The City has not set the timeframe for the contract at this time and will work with the chosen Vendor regarding the contract details.
50. Is the City looking to change the current Payment Processor?
See the answer to Q32 above..
51. Will the Vendor be expected to work directly with Cal Water and will this be on a one time basis or will it be for every bill file the City uploads going forward?
The Vendor will be required to work cooperatively with Cal Water. This will typically be for water consumption data.
52. Is the City asking for the Vendor to have some sort of call center to deal with the City's customers directly?
As stated in the RFP, the City will require the Vendor to handle customer service calls.
53. What utility billing software is the city using?
See the answer to Q40 above.
54. What are the bill specifications? (One or two-sided, how many colors on each side)
The City doesn't anticipate it will be more than one page and would prefer black ink be utilized.
55. Can you please provide a sample of the current utility bill?
See the answer to Q26 above.
56. Does the city issue any late or shutoff notices? If so, can you please provide a sample of these and indicate one or two sided and how many colors on each side?
The Vendor will be required to issue these types of notices. There is not a requirement for it to be two sided or for specific colors.
57. Can you please provide samples of the outer envelope and return envelope?
There are no specific requirements in the RFP for the size and format of the outer envelope.
58. Does Cal Water currently bill all 24,000 customers at the same time - utilizing one

billing cycle (same bill and due date)? If not, how many billing cycles per month are utilized?

Yes, there is one billing cycle per month.

59. Does the City of Chico desire to continue the same practice as currently in place for billing as currently utilized by Cal Water?

The City would like the services as described in the RFP.

Attachment A: Chico AR Summary

Attachment B: Water Consumption Data

Attachment C: AR Detail Report

Attachment D: Chico Sewer Aged AR Details

Attachment E: Billing Sample