

Universal Service Administrative Co. (USAC)

Request for Information (RFI) – Appian Hosting and Professional Services

I. INTRODUCTION

The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) seeking information from US-based companies with experience in both (1) hosting the Appian platform in the cloud, separate from Appian's own cloud offering, and (2) Appian professional services.

This is not a solicitation for products and/or services and this inquiry will not result in an award or contract. The specifications and information gathered from this RFI will be used to evaluate the offerings of the current marketplace and may lead to the development and preparation of a formal Request for Proposal (RFP).

II. BACKGROUND

USAC hosts two production systems on the Appian platform, currently hosted by Appian Cloud. The larger of the two is the Schools and Libraries Division E-rate Productivity Center (EPC), which serves as a centralized system supporting nearly all processes within the E-rate program. Its users consist of applicants, service providers, consultants, and internal operations staff. In EPC, program participants complete and certify forms, obtain the status of their applications, submit requests, receive timely reminders and notifications, respond to reviewer's questions, receive official program correspondence, and ask program-related questions.

The system includes complex business rules that automatically flag potential mistakes, inaccuracies, violations, and other anomalies, and utilizes a workflow that spans multiple departments and levels of reviews. Finally, the system has multiple integrations with other USAC systems to allow data from EPC to be shared across the enterprise and to be shared publicly.

III. INFORMATION SOUGHT

USAC is interested to learn about companies who have proven experience with *both* of the following services.

1. **Cloud-based Hosting** – USAC desires that our system be portable from one cloud hosting provider to another cloud hosting provider (i.e., no lock-in with a specific hosting provider).
 - a. Operating the cloud hosting itself, even if using 3rd-party cloud infrastructure;
 - b. Managing comprehensive security around the cloud infrastructure;
 - c. Scaling the infrastructure as needed;
 - d. Providing cloud and platform support within specific SLAs;
 - e. Implementing, monitoring, and reporting on system metrics, alerts, performance degradation, and suspicious activity;
 - f. Managing and implementing Appian upgrades on the cloud platform; and
 - g. Working real-time with Appian to troubleshoot and resolve product issues manifested in the cloud environment(s).
2. **Professional Services**
 - a. Program and Project Management of Appian development and maintenance support

- b. Operations and Maintenance of existing applications includes, but is not limited to, troubleshooting production tickets, documenting and resolving issues, educating and training key staff members to increase knowledge and skill level in supporting production tickets.
- c. SDLC support activities include analysis & planning, design, development, implementation, testing, documentation, deployment & maintenance of Appian solution.
- d. Experience and approach to testing cloud-based solutions with emphasis on use of automated testing to decrease costs and release intervals.

IV. RFI RESPONSE FORMAT

The response must have numbered pages and also include an index, or table of contents, referencing the appropriate page numbers for the below sections.

SECTION 1 – ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Maximum: 3 Pages

Please provide a response that includes the following:

- Years of experience in providing Appian development and hosting services
- Your company's core competencies
- What differentiates your organization and existing solutions in the market
- Number of clients you serve with similar solutions

SECTION 2 - TECHNICAL Q&A

Maximum: 8 pages

Please provide a response to each of the questions below. Answers must be concise and directly address the question.

- Please describe your approach to managing Appian cloud-based solutions where coordination with several stakeholders is necessary. What elements do you consider important to manage and deliver services for a highly visible program?
- What is your approach to providing maintenance for Appian based applications on cloud. Have you developed any IP with goal to automate and reduce efforts for same, while increasing quality?
- What is your approach to providing advanced level (Tier 2 and Tier 3) application support for all Business Center systems?
- What process does the cloud service provider follow to assure the hiring of and oversight of privileged administrators and the controls over their access is adequate?
- What external audits and security certifications/criteria is the cloud service provider subject to or solicits, and on what frequency?
- How will the cloud service provider assure compliance for USAC's requirement above?
- What processes and tools do you use to protect data? Are there server specific security measures?
 - Protection for data at rest and in-transit

- System protection from Internet risks such as viruses, hacking and denial of service attacks
- Overall security of the system including FISMA compliance and FedRAMP compliance (if applicable)
- Access management including levels, roles and ongoing management of user credentials
- Describe your system operations approach, including high availability cluster, redundancy, backups, and disaster recovery.
- What is your approach to system maintenance (patching bugs, adding/modifying features, etc.)?
- What types and levels of user support do you provide?
- What system availability options do you provide? Please share your SLA's, especially as they pertain to system availability and response time.
- What is the company's approach to training for both in-house technical support as well as user support?
- Provide a sample operations and maintenance plan including what professional services the company offers.
- How does the company structure its developmental agreement with USAC? What is the basis for pricing?

SECTION 3 – EXPERIENCE

Maximum: 1 Page

Proposals shall provide a response that addresses the following question:

- What relevant corporate experience does the company have with Appian development and Cloud hosting for a similar sized engagement?
- Please provide your experience and expertise in managing and migrating Appian solutions on FedRAMP certified cloud providers. Additionally, describe your experience with supporting and/or migrating to a hybrid cloud solution where part of the infrastructure is hosted on-premise.
- Describe your experience and approach to transitioning in to mission critical hosted solutions. Please provide your insight to any unique challenges/risks and your approach to mitigate such.
- Describe your experience managing and implementing Appian upgrades on the cloud platform. Specifically describe your experience working with Appian to troubleshoot and resolve product issues manifested in the cloud environment(s).

In addition, proposals shall provide client references that demonstrate similar provided solutions for those organizations.

SECTION 4 – PRICING ESTIMATE

Maximum: 1 Page

(Note: Any prices provided as part of this RFI are intended solely for budgetary analysis and to establish a reasonable target budget).

Responses shall include a cost estimate for the following:

- Estimate cost for Appian hosting services.
- Include an estimate for production support and operations maintenance.
- Include an estimate for additional software components, such as software purchases, licenses and ongoing software support.
- Include an estimate for any environment customization.
- Include an estimate for professional services to lead the implementation effort, develop business processes and provide training.

V. VENDOR INQUIRIES AND QUESTIONS

Questions and inquiries, regarding this RFI, must be submitted by **May 17, 2019 at 12:00**

ET. Please submit all questions to USAC at rfp@usac.org and include “Questions to RFI – Appian Hosting and Professional Services” in the subject line.

Submission Instructions

All responses, to this RFI, are due no later than **May 31, 2019 at 12:00 PM ET.** Responses received after this date and time may not be considered for review.

Responses should be prepared simply and economically, and provide a straightforward and concise explanation of the information requested. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity. The response must have numbered pages and also include an index, or table of contents, referencing the appropriate page numbers for the below sections.

Please submit one (1) electronic copy (PDF) of your response to USAC at rfp@usac.org. All submissions must include “Response to RFI – Appian Hosting and Professional Services” in the subject line. Please note: all electronic submissions must be limited to a maximum size of 25 GB.

Appendix A

Technical Details of USAC’s Appian Implementation

Components	Description
User Base	77,000+
Appian Application Version	18.2
Database	MySQL Standard Edition; More than 800 dB tables with over 200 million distinct rows, and more than 700+ stored procedures
Web Server	Apache HTTP 2.4 Server
Application Server	Red Hat JBoss EAP
Environment	13 Appian instances (production and non-production)
Complexity	About 1,300 Appian process models and 10,000+ other Appian objects
Integration/Interoperability	VPN tunnels to USAC Enterprise Data Solutions (EDS) and Great Plains Financials
Appian Objects	10,000+
Performance SLA	Average response time of less than 3 seconds for all user transactions at peak load at all times