



Deafblind and Sensory  
Support Network of Canada

Réseau canadien de soutien à la  
surdicécité et troubles sensoriels

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

**Strictly Private and Confidential**

Sensity Deafblind and Sensory Support Network of Canada

October 2023

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Issued: October 23, 2023  
Deadline for reply: November 23, 2023 at 5 p.m.

Submissions should be sent to:

Linda Grgurich  
CHRO  
Sensity  
50 Main St.  
Paris, Ontario N3L 2E2  
[lgrgurich@sensity.ca](mailto:lgrgurich@sensity.ca)  
[www.sensity.ca](http://www.sensity.ca)

LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Sensity is accepting proposals from qualified professional technology vendors for a full range of Information Technology (IT) support services. The qualified vendor will provide necessary technical services that will enable Sensity to:

- Ensure the efficient operation of its computer system for staff whether located in the administrative headquarters, locations in the field, working remotely from home offices and/or telecommuting.
- Ensure the security of Sensity's computer system infrastructure.
- Minimize spending and maximize the return on investment for expenditures on technology support.
- Provide recommendations regarding best practices for IT services and security for Sensity IT users.
- Enhance the quality of IT support service for Sensity IT users.

The ideal vendor will resolve computer system and network issues in accordance with standard and acceptable maintenance and support benchmarks. The successful vendor will be expected to implement and maintain a help desk service that efficiently and consistently responds to the needs of Sensity staff and ensure that there is no significant computer downtime during working hours in the Sensity office as well as field locations in communities in Ontario including Kingston, London, St. Catharines, Sudbury and others. The vendor is expected to report on the status of technology issues and communicate effectively with Sensity staff.

Sensity anticipates awarding a fixed priced three-year contract with an option for an additional two years of service contingent upon performance during the first three years.

## **ABOUT SENSITY**

Sensity is a not for profit, registered charity that provides services and supports across Ontario to members of the deafblind community and others with sensory loss. Sensity is recognized within Canada and around the world as a leader in the provision of Intervenor Services.

Sensity envisions a world embracing human connections and diversity.

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Sensity understands that people who are deafblind or affected by sensory loss connect, communicate, and experience the world differently. Sensity creates meaningful experiences by delivering individualized programming, support services, training, education, and awareness. In all it does, Sensity is guided by the values: We Lead. We Grow. We Do. We Innovate.

Sensity employs approximately 300 people across Ontario, comprised of full-time, part-time, and casual employees. All staff have O365 accounts for email purposes. The largest group of employees are intervenors. An intervenor mediates between the person who is deafblind and their environment to enable the individual to communicate effectively with and receive non-distorted information from the world around them. In other words, an intervenor acts as the “eyes” and “ears” of the person who is deafblind.

Sensity’s Board of Directors has approved the following Strategic Plan (2023 – 2025):

1. Invest in our Team
2. Evolve our Services
3. Build on Partnerships

## **BACKGROUND**

Sensity’s administrative headquarters is located at 50 Main St., Paris, ON, occupying approximately 12,000 square feet of space in a renovated former elementary school. There are administrative and management staff of over 40 people on site. All administrative and management staff have a Sensity-issued workstation comprised of a laptop, VOIP phone access, extension and/or cell phone, headset, docking station and external monitor.

Next door to the administrative headquarters is a unique building Sensity completed as a new build in 2016. The ground floor houses eight apartments for 18 individuals who are deafblind. The second level houses one additional residential apartment, one respite apartment and extra office space with up to 10 workstations. Sensity provides Wi-Fi access for the apartments. The office space is hard-wired to the computer network in the administrative building. Sensity has dedicated fibre internet access (200 mbs).

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Sensity supports individuals in over 27 other communities across Ontario in Family & Community Programs (Baden, Brampton, Brantford, Brighton, Caistorville, Campbellford, Cambridge, Culloden, Denfield, Halton Hills, Hamilton, Jordan Station, Kingston, London, Mississauga, Oakville, Peterborough, Point aux Roche, Sarnia, Scarborough, Simcoe, St. Catharines, Stratford, Sudbury, Timmins, Toronto and Waterdown). Each of these locations have a Sensity issued laptop which is not on Sensity's domain and are not managed by 3<sup>rd</sup> party IT company.

There are Sensity-issued laptops on Sensity's domain which are managed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> party IT company in our Residential Programs in Kingston, Sarnia, Welland, London (2), and Sudbury.

Sensity operates a hybrid IT department, where most of the IT services (such as hosting and other server services) are outsourced with one IT Coordinator on site.

Sensity's IT Coordinator is able to provide first level IT helpdesk support to staff. The IT Coordinator relies on outsourced IT support for higher level IT issues and server functions.

**Sensity's internal IT Coordinator is currently responsible for the following:**

1. Oversees administrative tasks and processes, such as troubleshooting first level IT issues, assigning folder and privacy access for the in-house systems.
2. Sets up new computers and provides orientation/training on internal systems and computer access. Adds/removes employees to Sensity's domain and software as required.
3. Provides technical assistance to users to resolve malfunctions and/or technical problems and help them utilize resources more efficiently.
4. Coordinates the helpdesk ticket requests for all employees. Resolves helpdesk tickets when appropriate.
5. Maintains cell phones and computers.
6. Decommissions and wipes clean computers for future deployment
7. Solicits quotes and make recommendations to improve the communications systems.
8. Assists in developing IT policies and procedures related to IT.
9. Assists in maintaining accurate inventory records which includes tracking of all computers, AV equipment and network hardware/software

to ensure items are properly tagged and inventories and all appropriate equipment is entered or deleted from the system.

10. Ensures access points for Wi-Fi are functioning and troubleshoots issues. Regularly changes passwords and updates agency computers with new passwords when needed. Assists staff with changing passwords.

11. Reviews invoices from 3rd party vendors for accuracy.

12. Oversees the warranty program for all devices.

13. Provides education to employees on best practices on computer use and cyber security.

14. Supports the agency website

Sensity envisions the potential growth of more satellite locations within the next three years to fulfil the strategic direction of the organization. The location(s) would require IT support.

## **COMPUTER INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **Servers**

Sensity has one Physical server onsite (CDBA-EX 201) and three Virtual servers SENS-SVR 202, 203 and SENS-key Scan

### **Work Stations**

Currently Sensity has 64 domain laptops (HP ProBook 640 G5 Notebook) are being used by administrative and management staff, with additional 17 new laptops that are stored in Server room and ready to use. These Workstation are running on windows 10 are configured and managed by the current Sensity IT vendor. The laptops carry a three-year manufacturer's warranty, some of which the warranty has expired.

Sensity has an additional 42 laptops which are not on Sensity's domain and are not managed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> party IT provider. These laptops are managed internally through the Sensity IT Coordinator.

### **Virtual Machines**

Two (2) VMware VSphere Virtual Platforms with Windows Server 2016 OS.



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## **Switches**

CDBA-SW201(Hewlett Packard Enterprise HP 1910-48G Switch)  
CDBA-SW203(Hewlett Packard Enterprise HP 1910-8G-PoE+ (65W)  
CDBA-SW204(Hewlett Packard Enterprise HPE 1920 8G PoE+ (180W)  
CDBA-SW205(Hewlett Packard Enterprise HPE 1920 48G Switch)  
CDBA-SW206 (Hewlett Packard Enterprise HPE 1920 48G Switch)

## **Firewall**

FortiCare plus NGFW, AV, Web Filtering, Botnet IP/Domain and Antispam Services

## **Wireless Access Points**

One (1) Ubiquiti UAP-nanoHD (January 2020)  
One (1) Ubiquiti 4x4 MU-MIMO 802.11AC Wave 2 (January 2020)  
One (1) Ubiquiti UniFi Access Point, AC Pro (August 2019)  
Six (6) Ubiquiti UAP-AC Pro Gen2 (November 2018, February 2016)

## **Antivirus Software**

ESET Endpointx (current)

## **Email**

Sensity has a hybrid exchange set up both on-premises and cloud which is hosted by the current Sensity IT Provider. Currently Sensity is using Barracuda Advance threat protection for Email Security.

Currently, Sensity has 64 Microsoft 365 business standard licenses for staff emails. All administrative and management staff have email addresses. Sensity is currently adding additional email address licenses so that all intervenors would also have email addresses.

## **Videoconferencing**

Sensity is currently using both Zoom and Microsoft Teams as a video conferencing tool.



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## **Website**

Sensity's current website was designed by Muse Marketing Group and Sensity has an annual contract for Muse's website maintenance care program.

Sensity is building a new WordPress website which will be hosted by GoDaddy. The website is being designed by Sandbox Software Solutions. The agreement for the annual maintenance of the website will be made with Sandbox as the project reaches its final stage

## **Software**

- ShareVision (case management)
- BrightSpace
- Aurora Key ScanInclusion (scheduling)
- PreVue
- ShiftShark (scheduling app)
- SAGE 300 (not hosted by 3<sup>rd</sup> party IT company. Accessed through a remote desk top server.)
- InDesign (desktop publishing)
- Adobe Acrobat Pro 9 (pdf editor)
- Adobe Creative Cloud (desktop publishing)

## **Printer**

Ricoh MPC3003 is serviced by Ricoh. IT provider responsible for printer connectivity.

## **Not Included**

Cell phones (Bell) and office phones (SelecTele Communications) is providing the VOIP service to Sensity. Sensity is using Reach UC app for voice calls.

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES REQUIRED**

This section summarizes the services to be provided to Sensity. Sensity is looking for a firm that will provide long-term strategic planning as well as a consistently high level of IT customer service, maintenance, and support. Sensity expects the vendor proposal to define, in detail, the approach to be

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used to service and improve its existing computer system infrastructure and meet future requirements in a cost-effective manner. Each proposal should take into consideration the following key requirement areas (See A thru G of this section); and each firm must be equipped to meet each requirement area.

### **A. Initial Assessment**

Review inventory of all information technology related assets, assess system architecture and current processes, and make recommendations for improved organization-wide IT system performance. Recommendations are to be submitted in writing by February 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. This is to allow for necessary budgeting purposes.

### **B. Laptop Application Support**

Together with designated Sensity staff, perform basic support functions including installing laptops, peripherals and office automation software; diagnose and correct laptop application problems, configure laptops for standard applications and identify and correct end user hardware problems; identify and correct user hardware problems; perform advanced troubleshooting as needed; maintain an up-to-date inventory of all computer related hardware to make available to Sensity upon request; and implementation of 24 hour/7 day per week Help Desk support to be utilized on an as needed basis. Assist designated Sensity staff with software and hardware purchases. Assist in development of IT and software/hardware policies and procedures as needed.

### **C. Server and Workstation Administrative Services**

Manage computer systems and networks to include complex applications, messaging, web and other servers and associated hardware, software, communications, operating systems necessary to maintain the quality, security, performance, availability, recoverability, and reliability of the system.

Ensure that scheduled preventive maintenance for equipment is properly and promptly performed; and ensure maintenance of records for all Help Desk tickets for both onsite visits and telephone/remote support. Keep maintenance records on all computer equipment; and ensure quality assurance and backup plans and procedures are being followed. Provide configuration management, including changes, upgrades, patches, etc.

are maintained. Provide support for software products relating to servers and workstations. Provide a timely response to the user(s) for repair and maintenance. Develop operations, administrative, and quality assurance back-up plans and procedural documentation. Together with designated Sensity staff, ensure management of user logins and security and ensure said information is properly documented. With designated Sensity staff, set up new users and edit or remove existing users on server. The vendor will provide server performance and capacity management services with reporting when specified thresholds are reached in addition to configuration management, including changes, upgrades, patches, etc. Provide implementation, training, and support of a shared document platform to Sensity staff. ~~Provide recommendations and implementation support for videoconferencing.~~ **For clarification at this time we do not require recommendations and implementation support for videoconferencing as we are utilizing O365 which includes TEAMS. Inclusion of this statement was a carryover from a previous RFP.** Provide support to specialized software products used by Sensity as it relates to the server and associated hardware. Coordinate related repair and maintenance work and ensure repairs are conducted in a timely fashion. ~~Develop and execute a plan for server and desktop virtualization.~~ **Please note that the plan and implementation of server and desktop virtualization has already been completed. Inclusion of this statement was a carryover from a previous RFP.**

#### **D. Network Administration Services**

Scope of activity includes all Sensity network equipment including switches, firewalls, routers, and other security devices. Primary installation and maintenance of network devices et al; analysis, routine configuration changes, and installation of patches and upgrades; minor cabling if needed. Alert notifications in case of failure of equipment. Proactive monitoring of network equipment, including performance indicators to report on threshold limitations; network performance and capacity management services; continuous troubleshooting required. Maintenance of network documentation for daily, weekly, and monthly services is required. Primary maintenance including regular analysis, routine configuration changes, and installation of patches and upgrades. Network performance and capacity management services, and network troubleshooting. Maintain network documentation and procedures. Support all Sensity wireless networks.

#### **E. Email, Security and Backup Efforts**

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Maintenance of Sensity email accounts using the Sensity domain, adding, changing, and/or deleting employee accounts as requested. List Serve management and support. Requirements for a data backup policy, with procedures in place to handle daily, weekly, and monthly backup of the computer data and information, email, etc.; ability to restore systems and data if servers and/or computers go down is required. Maintenance of virus detection programs on Sensity server, email and all Sensity computers and laptops. Perform security audits as requested including notification of suspected breaches of security to Sensity's designated staff as required. Configure Sensity system to enable remote access in a secure environment and provide remote access administration as requested by designated Sensity personnel.

## **F. Strategic Planning**

Engineering, planning, and design services for system enhancements, including installations and upgrades of new or existing systems. Examples include server upgrades, storage system upgrades, redesign of backup systems, etc. Provide technical leadership for server technology issues. Make recommendations for future purchasing and technology needs. Install new servers, software and hardware and transfer data when acquired. Strategic planning, design, and installation/upgrade of core network systems. Examples include major network upgrades, provider changes, IP schema redesign, installation of "core" network devices, etc.

## **G. Other General Requirements**

In addition to the requirements outlined in sections A-F of this RFP, the successful firm will reflect a demonstrated ability to respond to staff requirements in the following areas:

1. Strong understanding of the equipment and software needs of a charity with programs throughout Southern and Northern Ontario and whose staff travel frequently in-province and occasionally to international destinations for deafblind conferences.
2. Provide recommendations on future software solutions to ensure Sensity IT systems stay current.
3. Ability to research and identify software solutions that meet the needs of Sensity staff (e.g., online/cloud sharing, webinar system, etc.).

4. Provide recommendations to address cybersecurity risks, including related training for all Sensity users.
5. Provide technical guidance and support for videoconferencing platforms (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams).
6. Identification and resolution of redundancies in Sensity's current computer system environment.
7. Effective communication with staff to keep them updated on the progress of troubleshooting issues.

## **H. Not Included**

The contract to be awarded does not obligate Sensity to purchase computer equipment, hardware devices, cabling, licenses, software, etc. from the successful vendor. Replacement parts are not part of this contract. The scope also does not include computer equipment and networks not owned by Sensity.

## **Submission Requirements**

### **Cover Letter – to contain the following:**

- Company/Individual name, address, and telephone number.
- Briefly state your understanding of the services to be performed and make a positive commitment to provide the services as specified. Summarize your proposal and your firm's qualifications.
- Statement indicating the proposal and cost schedule will be valid and binding for ninety (90) days following the proposal due date and will become part of the contract that is negotiated with Sensity.

### **Background Information – to contain the following:**

- Length of time in business providing similar services
- Total number of clients
- Experience with non-profit clients

### **Staff Resources**

Identify names of principals and key personnel who will actually provide the information technology services. Summarize the experience and technological expertise of these staff. Describe the role and responsibilities that each of these individuals will have. The local availability of staff that will be providing these services will be an important consideration.

## **Statement of Work**

Describe how your firm proposes to provide the services listed in the scope of services by addressing each section A-G above including your scope of services, the transition plan, along with proposal for providing on-going support.

## **Pricing**

The proposal must contain a fee schedule that includes the total fees on an annual basis, and hourly rates for the proposed services. Describe how your services are priced and any specific pricing you are able to provide. Define any additional charges (e.g., travel expenses). Describe the extent, limits, and deductibles of your business insurance; and any additional warranties that you will provide.

## **Conflict of Interest**

State whether you or your firm or any individual within your firm represents any clients or interests that may create an actual or potential conflict in the performance of services for Sensity. Please include any additional information as an attachment.

Please include a statement to the effect that, at the time your firm is selected by Sensity, if any facts are known or come to light which create an actual or potential conflict that information will be fully disclosed in writing to Sensity. Also, please describe your firm's policies or procedures for avoiding ethical or conflicts of interest violations.

## **References**

Please provide a minimum of three references, preferably other non-profit organizations of like size and scope to Sensity. Provide the name, title, address, and telephone number for each reference. Please provide information referencing the actual services provided, customer size (number of users), and the length of tenure providing services to this client.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

Sensity will review each proposal to determine which best fits our current and future IT support needs. Submissions that do not meet the mandatory criteria will be disqualified. Firms will be evaluated on their responses with particular focus on:

- Demonstrated ability to provide high quality help desk support
- Demonstrated ability to plan and implement an IT support program sized and scoped to Sensity.
- Competitive pricing.
- Assisting Sensity in achieving cost-efficiencies for its IT needs.
- Ability to pro-actively anticipate IT needs for the organization.

Any tied scores will be resolved by re-examining the technical ability scoring ratings.

## **ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS**

Sensity reserves the right to:

- Amend, modify, withdraw, or cancel this RFP, in whole or in part, if deemed it is in its best interest to do so
- Revise or waive any requirements of this RFP
- Investigate the qualifications and experience of any responding party
- Require supplemental statements or information from any responding party
- Accept or reject any or all responses
- Extend the deadline for submission of a response or responses
- Hold discussions with a respondent or respondents to correct deficient responses which do not completely conform to the instructions contained herein.

Responses will be prepared at the sole cost and expense of the respondent.

The RFP does not commit Sensity to select a firm, to pay the costs or expenses incurred in preparation of or with respect to any response, or to procure or contract for the services described herein. This RFP does not promise to accept the lowest bid.

Firms responding must agree to keep confidential their responses and any information received from Sensity other than this RFP.



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## RFP TIMELINE

The timeline for proposal submission and selection is as follows:

**October 23, 2023:** RFP release date

**November 10, 2023:** Clarifying questions in writing due by this date  
(Sensity will respond as questions arrive)

**November 23, 2023:** Proposals due to Sensity

**January 2024:** Videoconference interviews with finalists

**February 15, 2024:** Selection will be announced.

**April 1, 2024:** Anticipated contract start date

## PROPOSAL SUBMISSION SPECIFICATIONS

Please submit your proposal to Sensity CHRO Linda Grgurich  
[lgrgurich@sensity.ca](mailto:lgrgurich@sensity.ca). The subject of the email should state, "Response to  
Sensity IT RFP."

Sensity will not respond to inquiries received after 5 p.m. on November 23,  
2023.

Questions regarding this RFP may be addressed in writing to Linda  
Grgurich, Chief Human Resources Officer by email at [lgrgurich@sensity.ca](mailto:lgrgurich@sensity.ca)

## RFP Evaluation Scoring Sheet

Evaluation Factor	Points	Proposer Company			
<b>Technical Ability (40%)</b>					
Qualifications (20%)	8				
Proposed Personnel (20%)	8				
Transition Plan (10%)	4				
Proposed Management and Operations Plan (20%)	8				
Risks and Added Value (10%)	4				
Proposed Maintenance and Equipment Plan (20%)	8				
<b>Subtotal - Technical</b>	<b>40</b>				
<b>References (10%)</b>					
Reference Checks	10				
<b>Subtotal - Past Performance</b>	<b>10</b>				
<b>Financial Ability (50%)</b>					
Financial	50				
<b>Subtotal Financial Ability</b>	<b>50</b>				
<b>Total - All Evaluation Points</b>	<b>100</b>				





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**Reviewer Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Title:** \_\_\_\_\_