1. The RFP States the scope includes "creating a web application utilizing web services that provides PERA Members with the ability to apply for Full Member Refunds online". Is the scope of this project limited to Member Self-Service Refunds?

   Yes, the scope of the application be developed for this project will be limited to Member Self-Service Refunds.

2. The RFP States the scope includes "creating a web application utilizing web services that provides PERA Members with the ability to apply for Full Member Refunds online". Is this new online capability going to be integrated with the existing legacy system? If not, what system will pay the refund?

   The online application will essentially create a refund application for the existing legacy system which will then process it via the existing functionality.

3. If this initial “Proof of Concept” project is successful, how does MN PERA envision, proceeding with building out the remaining application functionality?

   We are planning on moving on to re-working our Member and Employer web applications with this new platform and architecture. We would be creating new initiatives around that.

4. If this initial “Proof of Concept” project is successful, what role does MN PERA envision for the vendor with future modernization initiatives?

   The vendor would be able to bid on any future modernization initiatives.

5. Would completing this "Web Service Transition Guidance/Training" project preclude the contracted vendor from participating in future pension administration replacement projects?

   No.

6. The RFP States "We envision the vendor would be directly engaged with us for the initial 1-2 months to help with training and initial project direction. Then would transition to follow-up visits occurring at regular intervals throughout the contract period (perhaps each 2-week sprint) to help make sure we are on target and to answer any questions. The training program could be scheduled regularly throughout the contract period". After the initial 1-2 months of training, what is the envisioned duration of recurring follow-up visits (i.e. every 2 weeks for 8 hours)?

   We would like to hear what the vendor might think is a good recommendation. We were thinking that there might be a check-in every Sprint to review what was done and plan the next. We are open to suggestions in this based on what the vendor has experienced previously.
7. Does PERA have an in-house architecture framework or recommended platform that they want to use for building out the refund functionality? If not, does PERA prefer to license a framework/development platform or build one from scratch using current best practices?

We are looking for recommendations from the vendor as to what we should use it could be a framework/development platform that could be licensed or something we build from scratch.

8. If this initial “Proof of Concept” project is successful, would MN PERA purchase and license the development platform for continued modernization?

Yes, if successful PERA would like to continue to utilize platform for continued modernization therefore purchase and license it further.

9. In section “IX. Proposal Evaluation”, subsection “Mandatory Requirements (Scored as Pass/Fail)”, the RFP requires that, “As of December 31, 2019, Responder has a minimum of five (5) years of experience developing Web service applications or helping other organizations transition their systems to applications utilizing web services.” Does the Responder need to meet the experience requirements as a company or can the Responder meet the experience requirements by providing consultants who meet the experience requirements as individuals?

This can be satisfied by the company or the individual experience.

10. Which programming language PERA prefer to develop web services? i.e. Java, .Net, Node.js

We may tend towards .Net however we look for the vendor to make recommendations as to what they believe would be best option and what they are best skilled at to teach/mentor us in.

11. What is PERA’s new Development Environment? Has PERA decided about one and/or does PERA’s need help from a vendor to come up with suitable options to then ultimately make a selection out of those options? Please articulated your thinking around this.

We are looking for recommendations from the vendor in what they are skilled and experienced with and what they feel confident that could train/mentor us in using to bring our project to a successful conclusion.

12. Is the selected vendor expected to train your staff after the refund system is built? Some kind of an End User Training? OR will you have your own modernization development team to develop the refund system?

Our development team will develop the refund system and we will handle any necessary end user training.

13. RFP is asking for 1 to 2 months of work from Vendor and then support for a year. Will the vendor team be expected to build the "Full Member Refunds" portal OR will the vendor team provide a high-level solution with the intent being that the PERA own Development Team to build and develop the portal?

Our development staff will be building the portal with the vendor team providing high technical guidance.

14. What kind of specific support is expected during the year (after the initial 2 months)?

We were thinking that there might be a check-in every Sprint to review what was done and plan the next. We are
15. At present, what kind of workload is on the Cloud today and what cloud environment is used by PERA?
   A) If PERA is not yet in the Cloud, what kind of strategy are you thinking about and the timeline for that plan?
   B) Is the vendor expected to develop PERM’s cloud strategy?

   We are not yet in the Cloud. We are open to a cloud solution if that is what the vendor would like to recommend.

16. Based on the RFP, it appears PERA wants to use it’s own Development Team to build the modern system. Please
    share PERA’s level of exposure and experience of it’s team in each of the following areas.
    A) Building Cloud Infrastructure
    B) Building Applications for Cloud
    C) Building APIs/Webservices
    D) Where is this team physically located
    E) Team experience in building CI/CD

    The team’s experience is mainly with developing Client/Server Windows application and ISAPI web applications using HTML/Javascript. We are all located in our Saint Paul office and develop and release our application nearly every Spring (2 weeks).

17. Is PERA following any DevOps strategy & implementation?
    A) If so, what is the DevOps toolset in use or that is planned to be used in future?
    B) If there is none in place today, is the vendor expected to develop the DevOps strategy?

    There is no formal DevOps strategy in place. We are open to recommendations but it is not necessarily expected that the vendor develop a strategy.

18. How many developers do you have?

    We have a team of 4 developers, 2 QA, 2 business analysts, 1 Software Architect, 2 DBA.

19. Other than Delphi (Object Pascal), which other programming languages are your developers familiar with?

    Java and Javascript

20. Do you have any preference to use open source software to priority vendor specific tools?

    No we don’t have a preference either way.

21. Has your team done scrum or other agile development before?

    We’ve been practicing Scrum for over 9 years.

22. Are you ok to pay for license fee for development tools or do you prefer free tools?
We are OK to license development tools.

23. If paying for development tools is ok, is there a budget limit? In addition, is so what is that?

We do have money allocated for both new development tools and the consulting/training services specified for in this RFP. We anticipate that we will need to purchase new tools and/or license a possible development framework. We don’t have the budget broken down into specified amounts for tools and specified amount for services.

24. Are all your developers restricted to only work on specific hardware provided at work? Alternatively, are they allowed to occasionally work remotely from home?

Our developers are able to remotely work from home.

25. Should the web application be ADA compliance?

Yes

26. Are there any other government standards that should be considered for this project?

None other than the ADA compliance previously asked.

27. What are the security restrictions for this web application?
28. Are any other of your existing applications already running on the cloud or planned to move to the cloud? If yes which cloud?

No

29. Are you restricted to use one of the government clouds?

No

30. Will MYPERA and ERIS also be migrated in this project?

We will be continuing our modernization after the conclusion of this project. The plan is to re-engineer MY PERA and ERIS utilizing the new platform used in this project.

31. Is CAMI database isolated from other applications?

CAMI, ERIS, MY PERA all utilize the same database. That database is isolated from other applications.

32. Other than files send to banks and DocuSign, is there any other interface with applications outside PERA?

We also send files to employers and the state but that interfacing will not be part of this initial project.

33. How is CAMI interfacing with other PERA applications? Examples would be: Sending files, sharing tables, writing to each other’s tables, CORBA, web service.
CAMI, ERIS, MY PERA all utilize the same database.

34. Approximately how many tables are in CAMI? (very rough estimate is ok)

   Around 900

35. Approximately how many pages/forms is in the CAMI application? (very rough estimate is ok)

   Around 400

36. Does application load varies with time and day? (eg more at office hours and workdays)

   Yes CAMI is generally most busy during office hours on weekdays.

37. What sort of down time is acceptable for CAMI? (eg up to 1 hour every week)

   Downtime during office hours on weekday is unacceptable. Generally, downtime is acceptable for maintenance during weekends.

38. Is there any backup, disaster recovery in mind?

   We do have backup schedules in place.