



Request for Proposal:

Automatic Meter Reading System (AMR)

April 21st, 2025

The is City of Columbus is seeking proposals for an Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) project. The system must meet provided requirements set forth in the RFP and must provide a cost-effective means to enhance service to the community in which we serve.

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1. CITY OF COLUMBUS BACKGROUND

a. Overview of RFP

The City of Columbus is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit proposals for an Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) project to include the following functional areas:

- Replace existing water meters with new low maintenance, superior flow accuracy meters.
- Replace current meter reading method/system to an AMR, cellular or IIOT system with mapping and GIS capabilities.
- Ability to gather meter information/flow data from meter/transmitter.
- Provide better customer service.
- Increase productivity in time spent reading meters.
- Ability to receive alarms for alerts in the field

Prospective vendors are encouraged to submit proposals for all the functional areas listed above.

It is requested that each Bidder identify the specific functional area(s) for which it is submitting a proposal; provide a technical overview and capability of its product and service offering for each functional area. A description of project management, implementation, system integration services, training, and/or any on-going operation and maintenance service that is part of its proposal; and a pricing structure model to provide its products and services to the City. The City of Columbus will be the purchaser of any equipment or services through this process. All proposals shall become the property of the City. This RFP is solely an invitation to submit proposals, not an offer to establish any contractual rights. Bidders shall be responsible for all cost and associated cost of RFP response and delivery of such response.

The City of Columbus reserves the right to:

- Reject or Accept any or all proposals received in response to this RFP for any reason or no reason
- Reject or Accept any incomplete proposals

- Waive any minor irregularities or minor errors in the proposals received
- Reject the proposal with the lowest price
- Request clarification from Bidders
- Conduct simultaneous negotiations with multiple bidders
- Modify its requirements due to any regulation or legislation

Responses to this RFP are made without recourse to the City for either rejection or failure to enter a binding commitment for any reason whatsoever or no reason.

b. Objectives of RFP

Two ways to describe the AMR solution that the City will select are: robust and proven. The selected solution must be robust, providing the expected level of service, and backed by a stable company that is experienced in delivering services to the municipal utility industry. The selected solution shall also be proven in the industry and known to back their customers with support and proven products.

The City is planning to select a cost-effective solution. However, the City is not only considering cost in its evaluation but also the total value proposition.

The City is aware that project management, implementation services, financial and/or on-going system operation and maintenance may also be a factor in selecting proposed products and services.

c. About the City of Columbus

The City is located in the southeastern region of Montana, at the confluence of the Stillwater and Yellowstone river. Columbus is the county seat of Stillwater County, and was incorporated as a town in 1893. Columbus is home to roughly 2,000 residents.

The City's governmental structure is a Mayor City Council form of government. The City operates under the following department structure: General Administration, Finance, Police, and Public Works.

The City currently has Sensus/Xylem metering system products and Black Mountain billing software. The City provides water and sewer service to roughly 940 connections.

d. Volume

The City realizes that the products and services requested in this RFP may be met by a variety of suppliers but request that all products come from one single point of contact or source. This will provide the City with the greatest ease in a successful complete AMR project.

Once the responses to the RFP have been evaluated, the City reserves the right to clarify its understanding of proposals at a greater level of detail, including specific pricing, performance guarantees, financing alternatives including metering as a service options, service and maintenance agreements, etc.

e. Schedule

The RFP schedule, subject to change at the City's discretion, is as follows:

Issue RFP	May 1st 2025
Intent to Respond	May 16th 2025
Final RFP Questions Received	May 23rd 2025
Proposal Due Date	May 30th 2025
Clarifications & Negotiations with Selected Bidder	TBD

2. SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

Any communications related to this RFP shall be directed to:

City of Columbus Public Works Department

Peyton Brookshire, Public Works Director

All questions and request for clarification should be made in writing, preferably by email to director@townofcolumbus.com and should refer to the "RFP FOR AMR PROJECT". The City of Columbus in its sole discretion, will decide whether and how a response will be made.

We also ask vendors to submit an **intent to respond** by email to director@townofcolumbus.com by **05/16/2025**. Vendors providing the intent to bid will be included on communications for any addendum and answers to any questions or clarifications to the RFP.

a. Evaluation Process

The evaluation of proposals will be based on the information provided by the bidder. A complete response to the information requested in this RFP is requested so that the City can evaluate all of the options that are available. The City may also require the bidder to include demos of all equipment. The City reserves the right to negotiate with one or more bidders to improve their proposals, although selection for negotiation will not be a commitment by the City to enter into a contract with any bidder.

b. Proposal Format

Appendix A outlines the format bidders are to use in responding to the RFP. Bidders should provide a response to each of the line items, even if the answer is "does not apply".

c. Assessment Criteria

The bidder's response to this RFP is intended to help the City of Columbus select the technology and support services that provide the best solution to its AMR project. Proposals will be evaluated using a number of factors including:

- Compliance with the requirements
- Unique advantages of solution
- Best fit for the City's budgetary and operational needs, both currently and in the future.
- Vendor's experience providing such solutions and customer references
- Total cost to deploy proposed solution
- Total cost to maintain the system over its lifetime
- Availability and delivery schedule, current lead time trends
- Training
- Versatility and projected lifespan of proposed technology
- Time period for which quoted pricing is valid, which should be a minimum of 90 days
- Standard Terms and Conditions of a proposed contract, to include timing of expected payments by the City; for example, upon delivery of materials, progress payments during installation, upon completion.

d. Proposal Content and Submission

Bidders should provide the information requested in appendix A; and include all required supporting documentation for their proposed solution. Three (3) references of similar size shall be given and all warranty information of such proposed products.

Three printed copies must be in Sealed Bid form, with the sealed envelope containing the proposal marked Columbus Meter Project. Such Sealed Bid Proposals must be submitted to and received by the City, at P.O. Box 549 Columbus, MT 59019, on or before Thursday, May 30th, 2025 by 2:00 P.M., at which time all proposals shall be opened. An electronic version of the proposal, matching the hard copy, must thereafter be presented to the City within 24 hours of bid opening. All proposals will become the property of the City. The bidder is solely responsible for any and all costs it may incur in responding to this RFP.

e. Confidentiality

Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which a bidder does not wish to be disclosed other than to representatives of the City involved in the evaluation of its proposal will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by MT law. Each page shall be identified in boldface at the top and bottom as "CONFIDENTIAL". Any section of the proposal that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in boldface on the title page of that section. In spite of what is labeled as confidential, the determination as to whether or not such information may be kept confidential shall be governed by Montana law.

3. AUTOMATIC METER READING PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND REQUIREMENTS

a. Minimum Functional Requirements

The minimum requirements are listed below. The following areas are to be covered. Bidders are requested to respond to each section as:

- Comply
- Not Comply (provide future date or explanation)
- Alternative (provide detailed explanation)

In some sections a detailed explanation may be requested instead. Please respond to these as requested.

b. Software Requirements

The City of Columbus currently uses Sensus Fieldlogic meter reading software. Please describe if such proposed solution will integrate with County's current software platform until conversion is completed to a new system. No additional short term software will be purchased as part of this RFP.

c. Meter Reading Equipment Requirements

The City currently uses a Sensus/Xylem command link module and handheld to read their meters. The command link and handheld utilizes a licensed frequency to read the transmitter that is connected to the meter. The unit does not provide the City with a mapping/GIS feature to easily report success of reads and alerts of alarms. The City will require the inclusion of mapping and GIS availability options with the newly proposed system. Also, an AMI pricing option, as well as a Maas or "metering as a service" option may be included with the proposed AMR system bid, but is not required.

d. Meter Requirements

- Water meters may be of the positive displacement, or ultrasonic meter type for residential applications. Ultrasonic only for commercial meters and meters above 1".
- Water meters may be made of brass, stainless steel or polymer materials on the residential meters. Steel or brass for the commercial meters.
- Water meters may be full 3/4", 3/4" short and 1" size on the residential sizing. All lay length options for residential and commercial meters must be provided.
- Water meters may include meter data storage inside meter registers. Pricing differences must be noted for the additional feature.
- All water meters must have the ability to produce their own alarms such as (continuous flow, high flow, reverse flow, & tamper).
- All water meters registers must read down to the US Gallon.
- All water meters registers must have an LCD screen showing down to the 100th of a gallon. Solar powered registers shall not require the use of a flashlight to read the screen.
- All water meters registers must have a leak detection visible on the screen.
- Water meters may be integral or wired and have an external wire to connect to a transmitter as a separate item.

e. Transmitter Requirements

- All transmitters must function accurately and not be damaged over an operating temperature range of -40-degree C to +70-degree C.
- All transmitter modules shall be housed in a single package designed for rugged, harsh environments and capable of complete submersion in water without damage.
- Transmitter modules preferably integral with no separate wiring connection in non pit applications.
- All modules shall be designed to operate in the above conditions and have an expected battery life of twenty (20) years.
- All modules should have a minimum full warranty of fifteen (15) years with a total warranty of twenty (20).
- All modules should have the ability to be reverse migrate-ability to work with a handheld and if such desired in the future a fixed based (AMI) meter reading system without any programming or field visit.
- All modules shall employ actionable alerts as such below
 - Tamper Alarm
 - Leak Detected
 - Reverse Flow
 - High Flow
 - Battery Health
- All modules must be able to communicate using two-way functionality.
- All Pit read modules must be mounted through the lid in a recessed meter box lid. No module is allowed to be installed underneath meter box lid.

f. Deployment Process

Please provide a time-line for bidder's proposed solution. Time-line will be used as a reference as the City understands that such time-line cannot be given in full detail until further information is given.

g. Training

Training is an important part of fully realizing the potential of any AMR solution. Training must be included in the proposal. It shall include training for the City staff on central services and products, utility personnel and/or subcontractors responsible for the installation and maintenance of the hardware installed in the field. Training for the City's software system administrator(s), operators and customer service representatives will be required.

h. Project Management

Project Management is essential to the success of the project. Bidders will be evaluated, in part, on the strength and experience of their Project Managements capabilities. The successful bidder shall have multiple installations of systems of like-sized utilities with good references.

i. Quality and Industry Experience

The City is committed to providing quality products and services to our customers. As such, we insist on quality products and services from our vendors. Bidders will be evaluated, in part, on the quality of their products and services.

The City is seeking a proposal which meets its requirements from a vendor experienced in similar or larger projects. The preferred vendor will have multiple projects with water meters. Please provide references and/or case study examples of similar projects completed.

APPENDIX A
Proposal Submission Format

Section 1 – Executive Summary

- The scope of the Bidder's proposed solution, identifying the functional areas included.
- Provide information on any sub-contractors included in your proposal including meter installation, communications provider, etc.

Section 2 – Company Overview

- Description of qualifications, including industry experience, organizational structure, and a statement regarding financial soundness.

Section 3 – Technical Proposal

- Refer to Section 3 of this RFP. Please describe the technical aspects of your product and/or service offering. Bidders should pay particular attention to describing clearly and concisely the functional and performance benefits of their offering.
- Proposals submitted should include a discussion of the capabilities of the proposed technology, recommendations on installation and deployment of the technology.

Section 4 – Price Proposal

- Please provide pricing information based on full deployment.
- Pricing should include all costs of all hardware, software, service, and service maintenance and licensing.

Quantity	Size	Item	Price	Total Price
890	3/4", 3/4" short	Residential Water Meter		
32	1"	Residential Water Meter		
11	1-1/2"	Commercial Water Meter		
13	2"	Commercial Water Meter		
2	3" or 4"	Commercial Water Meter		
940		Transmitter		
25		Pit Meter Box Lid		
1		Training		

1		Project Management		
1		Handheld/CPU		
1		Software		
890	3/4" short or 3/4"	Install Labor		
32	1"	Install Labor		
11	1-1/2"	Install Labor		
13	2"	Install Labor		
2	3"/ 4"	Install Labor		
940	Transmitters	Install Labor		
25		Meter Pit hardware Install if not included in install labor price		
1		Mass Meter File		

* Please include any additional items not listed above if required for your proposed solution.

*** Disclaimer Regarding Errors, Omissions, or Clarifications**

The City has made every effort to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information contained in this Request for Proposals (RFP) for updating the AMR water meter reading system. However, the City is not responsible for any errors, omissions, or misinterpretations that may exist in the RFP documents.

It is the responsibility of each proposer to thoroughly examine all parts of this RFP and to request clarification of any apparent inconsistencies, ambiguities, or errors. Any requests for clarification or correction must be submitted in writing by the deadline specified in this RFP. The City reserves the right to issue addenda to correct, clarify, or supplement the RFP as necessary. Proposers shall acknowledge receipt of all issued addenda in their submission.

Failure to request clarification or to report errors by the stated deadline shall be deemed a waiver of any claim by the proposer regarding the content of the RFP, including any ambiguity, inconsistency, or error.

Addendum 1-Responses to Bidders' Questions

Introduction

This addendum provides answers to questions submitted by potential bidders as of May 23rd 2025 . All questions can be emailed to director@townofcolumbus.com

Any questions received by any bidders will be reviewed, researched and responses will be provided to all bidders, whether they asked the question(s) or not.

To expedite the response time, please provide an email address for responses to your questions.