**The Quilt**

VMware and Related Offerings Convenience Pricing Program

Request for Proposals - Instructions

January 4, 2019

ALL RFP MATERIALS SUBMITTED BY THE PROVIDER WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL WITHIN THE QUILT.

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January 4, 2019

To The Quilt RFP Respondents:

The Quilt is engaging in a national review of distribution partners for VMware and Related Offerings. This RFP is the formal mechanism for this review. You will find the complete RFP materials available for download at <https://www.thequilt.net/2019-vmware-and-related-offerings-convenience-pricing-program-request-for-proposals/>

The goal of this RFP effort is to identify a distribution partner for VMware and related service offerings that will provide world-class customer support. They should be willing and able to partner in the delivery of 3rd Party solutions for the publicly-missioned institutions that are supported by our community of research and education networks throughout the United States. The intent of this RFP is to identify and contract with a Distribution Partner that recognizes the wealth of opportunities that exist through constructive partnerships with The Quilt and the research and education networking community.

The Quilt, Inc. is a 501c3 organization which is incorporated in Washington DC and is registered to conduct business in the District of Columbia and Washington State. Our funding and organizational supports are derived exclusively from our own members. Once an Authorized Quilt Provider is selected from the RFP process, that organization will contract with The Quilt, Inc. through a Master Service Agreement.

We look to our provider partners to provide pricing discounts appropriate to the type of trusted relationships and scale of institutions our Quilt members serve across the country. We expect sound, reliable, and responsive administrative capabilities.

We look forward to reviewing your response to this RFP and invite you to learn more about The Quilt and our individual participants at [www.thequilt.net](http://www.thequilt.net).

Sincerely,

*Jen Leasure*

President and CEO, The Quilt

**Components of this RFP**

The RFP components are available for downloading from <https://www.thequilt.net/2019-vmware-and-related-offerings-convenience-pricing-program-request-for-proposals/>

The complete RFP package is made up of the following components.

1. VMware and Related Offerings RFP Instructions Document (MS .doc)
2. VMware and Related Offerings RFP Document (MS .doc)
3. Exhibit A – The Quilt VMware AQB List
4. Exhibit B – Sample Master Services Agreement
5. Exhibit C - The Quilt 2019 VMware and Related Product Terms and Conditions Matrix
(MS .xls)

Items 2 and 5 along with any materials requested in these documents must be completed and returned to the Quilt. **This set of materials will comprise the provider’s response to this RFP and it is due back to the Quilt not later than February 18, 2019 by 11:59 pm ET.**

For questions on any of these components, please contact David Dennis at: quiltvmwarerfp@thequilt.net

**Where & When to Submit your Proposals, and Quilt Contact**

There may be multiple persons within each company that will receive notification of this RFP. Each person will be informed who the others are within their company who are receiving the notification. The Quilt asks each company to construct a single, coordinated response that is supported at the company’s highest executive ranks.

All interested providers must submit a non-binding Letter of Intent to respond to the RFP no later than **January 18, 2019.** RFP questions and responses will only be accepted from providers that have submitted a Letter of Intent. The Letter of Intent should be sent electronically and addressed to David Dennis at quiltvmwarerfp@thequilt.net and include the following information:

* A statement that your company is planning to submit a response to the RFP
* The lead person’s name, title and contact information

Upon reviewing the responses, The Quilt may have questions specific to one or more responses for which it may need to seek clarification. The Quilt reserves the right to contact individual providers and seek such clarifications as may be necessary and appropriate.

The Quilt will accept written questions regarding the RFP up until **January 23, 2019** via email. Questions regarding the content of the RFP, the schedule, process, or any other questions pertinent to this RFP effort should be addressed to quiltvmwarerfp@thequilt.net. A summary Q&A of all inquiries received will be posted to The Quilt’s 2019 RFP web page <https://www.thequilt.net/2019-vmware-and-related-offerings-convenience-pricing-program-request-for-proposals/>

**The Quilt’s 2019 VMware and Related Offerings RFP Schedule**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Event** | **Date** |
| RFP Release | January 4, 2019 |
| Non-Binding Letter of Intent to Respond Due | January 18, 2019 |
| Deadline for RFP questions to be submitted via email | January 23, 2019 |
| Answers to RFP questions will be posted online | January 30, 2019 |
| Pre-RFP Q&A Conference Call 3:00 pm EST202-850-0927 \*no pin\* | January 31, 2019 |
| Answers to RFP questions to be posted online | February 1, 2019 |
| Due Date for RFP Submission to The Quilt (11:59 pm EST) | February 18, 2019 |
| Invitations Issued to Semi-Finalist Round Conducted via Videoconference | March 11, 2019 |
| Semi-Finalist Round - By Invitation | March 25 - 27, 2019 |
| Provider Selected to be VMware and Related Offerings Distribution Partner  Authorized Quilt Provider (AQP) | April 12, 2019 |
| VMware and Related Offerings Distribution Partner Master Services Agreement Signed | Week of May 17, 2019 |
| VMware and Related Offering Distribution Partner AQP Now Authorized to Sell Under Quilt Pricing Agreement | Upon MSA execution |

The Letter of Intent and Questions should be sent electronically via e-mail to David Dennis at quiltvmwarerfp@thequilt.net. The documentation is required to be delivered by the date and time listed above.

Once The Quilt receives a Letter of Intent, the distribution partner will be provided with access and instructions to a secure page on The Quilt’s Basecamp Hub. Basecamp is web-based project management software to which The Quilt subscribes.

Each responding provider will then submit proposal documents to the Provider Basecamp page per the schedule listed above. Successful upload and receipt of these documents will be confirmed by a member of The Quilt staff. Once the RFP deadline has passed, providers will no longer have access to the site to upload documents.

For any questions on access to or use of the Basecamp tool, please contact Jennifer Griffin at griffin@thequilt.net. Please ensure that your documents are submitted in PDF format or using Microsoft standard office software format. This is the only format in which RFP documents will be accepted.

**Proprietary Information**

ALL RFP MATERIALS SUBMITTED BY THE PROVIDER WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL WITHIN THE QUILT.

**Introduction: What is The Quilt?**

The Quilt, Inc. (The Quilt) is a collaboration of advanced regional network organizations. It is a dynamic forum where leaders from throughout the advanced research and education network community build on the intellectual capital and best practices of network service providers worldwide. Based on the participants’ combined experiences in operations and development of leading edge technologies, The Quilt aims to influence the national agenda on information technology infrastructure, with particular emphasis on networking. Through this coalition, The Quilt promotes delivery of networking services at lower cost, higher performance, greater reliability, and heightened security. The Quilt derives support and funding solely from its participants. It also relies on significant volunteer contributions from its participants to support its working groups.

The Quilt plays a respected and trusted role within the research and education networking and broader information technology communities. It maintains this role by engaging providers, federal agencies, and its participants in diverse projects and interest groups.

As of December 2018, The Quilt participant base includes 38 regional non-profit network aggregators within the United States. For a full listing and description of each of the current Quilt participants, please see <https://www.thequilt.net/about-us/the-quilt-participants/> Each of these network aggregators serves numerous research and education institutions and in some instances other organizations.

**Why Do You Want to Do Business With the Quilt?**

The Quilt represents a well-defined group of organizations that serve leading U.S. research and education entities. These institutions both create and utilize cutting-edge technology and applications, which increase the need for additional services such as those within a distribution partner solutions portfolio.

There is a well-defined track record of success for companies who have created meaningful partnerships with this leading-edge Internet community. Quilt organizations are consistently early adopters of new technologies, including but not limited to network technologies and ways of implementing them. The Quilt also leads the curve in finding new ways to organize networks to multi-organizational benefit. Our unsurpassed level of expertise in the customer community has been a resource to provider partners.

The Quilt’s membership connects thousands of research and education institutions including universities, colleges, K-12 schools, libraries, healthcare sites, local and state governments and public safety. Quilt members provide leading-edge networking infrastructure and services specially designed to meet the needs of these institutions. Quilt member organizations serve as trusted technical advisors to these institutions which is a key value provided to their member institutions.

Authorized Quilt Providers (AQPs) who have participated in other Quilt purchasing programs have seen their Quilt member and Authorized Quilt Buyer purchases significantly increase since joining a Quilt aggregate purchase program.

Many Authorized Quilt Buyers (“AQB”) are required to purchase their services through a competitive RFP process. By leveraging The Quilt’s RFP process, many AQBs are able to omit their own RFP processes, which can relieve service providers from generating individual RFP responses for each of our members. Conversely, for organizations that omit their RFP processes in lieu of The Quilt’s, there may be no other opportunity for service providers to compete for their business.

**Goal of the 2019 VMware and Distribution Partner RFP:**

By the middle of May 2019, The Quilt intends to contract with a distribution partner offering a highly competitive solutions portfolio pricing for VMware and related offerings and who has demonstrated willingness and ability to work with AQBs to provide the highest levels of:

* World-Class Customer Support
* Technical Competence
* Administrative Competence

A distribution partner selected by the Quilt will be designated as the Authorized Quilt Provider (“AQP”) for VMware and Related Offerings.

**Some Common Questions about Being an Authorized Quilt Provider**

Q: How many authorized Distribution Partners will there be?

A: The Quilt reserves the right to select multiple distribution partners to support its members nationwide.

Q: Are Quilt participants required to purchase from the authorized Distribution Partners?

A: No. While we expect that there will be significant advantages to The Quilt participants to purchase from an Authorized Quilt Provider for services, participants are free to choose their own solutions based on their individual needs.

Q: Who are the Authorized Quilt Buyers?

A: The administrative structure of The Quilt participants varies from one regional network aggregator to another. In some cases, the aggregator will be the only purchaser of solutions; in other cases, the individual member entities of the aggregator may be the purchasers. Since this varies from region to region, The Quilt maintains a list of organizations and their contacts who are allowed to purchase services under the auspices of The Quilt AQP agreements. These authorized purchasing entities are called Authorized Quilt Buyers (“AQB”). See “Exhibit A” of the “RFP Response Form”, attached, for the most current list of AQBs. Note, this list can and does change over time and for the purposes of the RFP, the contacts are not provided.

Q: What are the negotiating requirements for an AQP?

A: The pricing quoted in the RFP response is the only pricing that an Authorized Quilt Provider (“AQP”) may offer to an AQB. AQPs may of course offer pricing outside of the RFP response to customers not on the AQB list. If an AQP wishes to offer lower pricing to an AQB than that which was quoted in their Master Service Agreement (MSA) with The Quilt, then the AQP must amend The Quilt MSA to make the lowest pricing available to all the AQBs willing to purchase under like scenarios. Amendments will be considered at any time.

**Administrative Requirements of an Authorized Quilt Provider**

**Contracts**

An AQP is required to sign an MSA with The Quilt. The primary function of this agreement is to codify the pricing and terms the provider will extend to the AQBs. See attached “Exhibit B” of the “Essay Response Form” for a sample of this contract.

The services delivered from an AQP to an AQB will be established by a service agreement **directly between the AQP and/or a named reseller and each AQB**. The Quilt is neither involved in this process nor is it a signatory to the service agreement.

**Pre-Existing Services and Contracts with AQP**

Whatever pricing model is offered, and upon the request of the AQB, The Quilt will expect the AQP to allow EXISTING contracts for services with AQBs to be transferred without penalty to The Quilt pricing model once the contractual arrangement with The Quilt has been completed. For example, an AQB must be allowed to renew support on 3rd Party Solutions licenses purchased outside of this agreement under the terms of the new agreement as requested.

**Service Reviews**

The AQP is expected to have at least two specifically-assigned, national-level administrative contacts to participate in regular service review processes. These reviews will happen on a quarterly basis.

The Quilt will provide a dedicated liaison to the AQP. The Quilt Liaison has four duties:

1. Point of contact for AQBs on any issues with service or responsiveness from the AQP when AQB’s escalation within the AQP structure did not bring resolution or they are unable to find an escalation route;
2. Point of contact if the AQP has questions or issues related to Quilt processes, requirements, or AQBs; and
3. Maintain Quilt records on services delivered from AQP to AQBs;
4. Perform regular surveys on AQP performance and collate those responses; where problem areas are identified, the Quilt liaison will raise these as issues with the AQP for remedy.

The Service Reviews will focus on the following: 1) existing service contracts with AQBs; 2) AQB services in the AQP sales ‘pipeline’; 3) issues escalated by AQBs; 4) report on overall AQP performance and where necessary action plans associated with remedy of poor performance areas; 5) organizational updates from The Quilt; and 6) organization updates from the AQP.

In addition to the quarterly review, the AQP will supply the Quilt with: (a) a monthly sales report, and (b) a monthly pipeline report.

**AQP Support Teams**

The AQP is expected to have specific national-level individual(s) assigned and available to The Quilt for the following areas: administrative, technical, and executive.

* Administrative Team: this group will participate in the Service Reviews and should be the final escalation point for any Quilt related service issues.
* Technical Team: individuals dedicated to providing technical product information to the Quilt members (Regional Networks) participating in this program.
* Executive Contact (VP Level): This resource will be available to Quilt leadership to support the overall customer relationship with The Quilt. The Quilt expects to utilize appropriate operational staff for day-to-day questions and issues.

There must also be a clearly defined organizational escalation chart. While we expect to be able to work through standard channels the majority of the time, there are times when issues need to be brought to the attention of a senior/executive level company contact. The Quilt expects nothing less than best effort across the board. We also expect that The Quilt’s business will be held in the highest esteem and that any reasonable displeasure would be important to a VP advocate.

**Technical Support for Authorized Quilt Buyers**

As with the service contract, the fundamental service relationship is between the AQP and the AQB. Each AQP is expected to provide full-technical support directly to the contracting AQB. It is important to The Quilt that our members receive only the highest quality support during and after installation. The Quilt members and their member institutions employ some of the most highly experienced and technical network engineers working today. They expect to collaborate with resources of equal knowledge and experience within our AQPs.

**Advice on Responding to this RFP**

* Do not send your marketing materials or any materials that do not provide salient information.
* Do not provide information about services that we have not asked for.
* Respond to this RFP using the provided documents. If you do not respond to this RFP in the format provided, we reserve the right not to review your response.
* Pricing models should attempt to be simple, unambiguous, and easy-to-understand.

**RFP Evaluation Review Criteria**

The VMware and Related Offerings Convenience Pricing Program Request for Proposals document contains the details of the RFP.  There are five sections of the RFP. These sections and response evaluation weightings are indicated below. These weightings are also indicated in parentheses next to each section of the RFP.

* VMware Program Proposal Terms (60%)
* Related VMware Service Offerings Program (20%)
* Technical Support, Operations and Billing Practices (10%)
* Review of Sample MSA (8%)
* References (2%)

Good luck! If you have questions about this RFP, please direct them to David Dennis at quiltvmwarerfp@thequilt.net