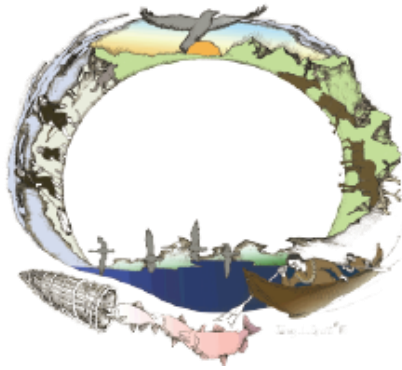




Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

**Unified Communications (Phone System)
Replacement**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Unified Communications (Phone System) Replacement

9/14/2026

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I. Introduction

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), organized as Dena' Nena' Henash or "Our Land Speaks," is a sovereign tribal consortium with a board of directors consisting of 42 Tribal communities across Interior Alaska, representing 37 federally recognized tribes. TCC is an Alaska Native non-profit corporation that provides health and social services for the more than 18,000 Alaska Native people in the Interior Alaska region. TCC was formed in 1962, but its history dates back over 100 years, when tribal chiefs from throughout the region banded together to protect their Native land rights. TCC's main office is in Fairbanks, Alaska. TCC region covers 235,000 square miles of Interior Alaska, which is equal to about 37 percent of the entire state. The region is divided into six sub-regions: Yukon Koyukuk, Yukon Tanana, Lower Yukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Yukon Flats, and Upper Tanana.

II. Solicitation

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Information Technology is seeking proposals from qualified vendors for the replacement of its enterprise Unified Communications (UC) / telephone system. The incumbent ShoreTel/Mitel platform (version 14.2) has reached functional end-of-life, with manufacturer end-of-support announced for December 2029. TCC seeks a modern, reliable UC platform serving approximately 1,200 employees across more than 30 locations, including headquarters facilities in Fairbanks, two subregional clinics, and 22 remote village clinics across Interior Alaska. This RFP does not prescribe a specific manufacturer or deployment model; on-premises, cloud-hosted, and hybrid architectures will all be considered, provided the proposed solution satisfies the requirements in Section III, Scope of Work.

Questions regarding this solicitation and/or proposal submissions shall be emailed to aaron.gibson@tananachiefs.org.

Proposal Submission Deadline:

Proposals are required to be submitted no later than **10/14/2026**.

Proposals received after the time announced will not be considered.

III. Scope of Work

Project: Enterprise Unified Communications / Telephone System Replacement

Each bidder shall thoroughly examine the contract documents. The failure or neglect of a bidder to receive or examine any contract document or any part thereof shall in no way relieve it from any obligations with respect to its quote or

to the service contract. No claim for additional compensation shall be allowed which is based upon a lack of knowledge of any contract document.

A. Background

Over the past decade TCC has grown from approximately 600 to 1,200 employees, and the existing telephone platform has not kept pace. Documented operational failures include dropped and misrouted after-hours crisis calls, unreliable softphone connectivity, emergency paging that does not reach softphone users, and village clinic phones going offline during internet outages. In most villages, the clinic phone is the community's only medical emergency contact. A comprehensive needs assessment covering all 22 TCC departments was completed in June 2026; the requirements below are drawn directly from that assessment.

B. Current Environment

- **Platform:** ShoreTel/Mitel UC system, version 14.2, on-premises, centered on a headquarters (CPJTB) core server with physical and virtual appliances distributed across sites.
- **Scale:** Approximately 1,479 configured extensions (1,183 active in the last 180 days), 1,229 physical phones, 325 softphones, and roughly 279,000 calls per 90 days.
- **Trunking:** A mix of PRI/T1, SIP, and analog trunks across CAIHC, CPJTB, Tok, Galena, Nenana, and Tanacross; several trunk groups run at or near 100% peak utilization.
- **Village clinics:** All 22 village clinics operate two parallel systems (legacy NEC plus ShoreTel remote IP phones) over deteriorating copper, terrestrial microwave, and satellite circuits. Dual Starlink circuits are being deployed by TCC IT.
- **Adjacent systems:** Microsoft 365 E5 with Teams (adopted by all 22 departments), Active Directory / Entra ID, ServiceNow, AlertMedia, TigerConnect, BrightMetrics reporting, Avail Solutions crisis answering service, a third-party pharmacy prescription IVR, and Athena EMR.

C. Required Features

The proposed solution must deliver each of the following requirements. Items marked "Enterprise-Wide" were required by three or more TCC departments. For every item, the proposal must state whether the capability is native to the base platform, available as an add-on module or license, or achieved through a third-party integration.

Voice & Calling

- **REQ-001 – Carrier-Grade Voice Call Reliability (Enterprise-Wide).** The platform must sustain carrier-grade call quality and availability under TCC’s bandwidth-constrained, geographically distributed network, including sites served by terrestrial microwave and LEO satellite, with no unacceptable degradation during scheduled or unscheduled network events.
- **REQ-002 – Program-Level, Position-Based Hunt/Ring Groups (Enterprise-Wide).** Calls must route to programs or teams rather than individuals, with extensions assignable to positions so staff turnover does not break routing. Ring groups must honor an individual member’s active call-forward setting rather than ringing an unmanned desk phone.
- **REQ-003 – After-Hours Emergency Routing with Schedule Automation.** After-hours routing must be schedulable in advance (by date, time, and recurrence) without IT intervention, and must fail safely to a defined after-hours state if no manual change is made. At clinical sites an after-hours routing failure is a direct patient safety risk.
- **REQ-004 – Reliable On-Call Escalation Chains.** Configurable multi-step escalation trees (primary on-call → office backup → supervisor/next tier) with self-service rotation management so departments can update the on-call destination on a weekly or monthly basis.
- **REQ-005 – Director / Executive Assistant Intercept Model.** Inbound calls to director-level staff must be configurable to ring the executive assistant first and roll to the director only on no-answer, manageable by department administrators (including remotely) without IT involvement.
- **REQ-006 – Physical Desk Phones for High-Volume Fixed-Desk Roles.** A broad catalog of enterprise-grade IP desk phones with validated headset compatibility for schedulers, travel coordinators, front desk, pharmacy, and similar all-day call-handling roles.
- **REQ-007 – Site Survivability During Internet Outage (Critical at village sites).** Village clinic phone service must remain operational during WAN/internet outages via local survivability appliances, backup PSTN/SIP paths, or equivalent fallback engineered into every clinic site, interoperating with the dual-circuit Starlink architecture being deployed by TCC IT.
- **REQ-008 – Unified Phone System / NEC Decommission at Village Clinics (Enterprise-Wide).** Elimination of the legacy NEC systems at all 22 village clinics is a required outcome, with transition planning that guarantees no clinic experiences a service gap during cutover.
- **REQ-009 – DID Block Retention with Existing Carrier (Critical).** TCC’s DID blocks cannot be ported away from the current carrier. The platform must support SIP trunking or Direct Routing that keeps the existing carrier as PSTN provider,

connected through a certified session border controller or equivalent. Any architecture requiring number porting to a new carrier is disqualifying.

Messaging & Collaboration

- **REQ-010 – Voicemail-to-Email, Universally Provisioned with Bidirectional Sync (Enterprise-Wide).** Voicemail-to-email must be the default provisioned configuration for every user, with immediate, bidirectional deletion sync across desk phone, PC/web client, and email.
- **REQ-011 – Shared Program/Position-Level Voicemail Boxes.** Program-level voicemail accessible by all designated team members, with access management self-serviceable by department administrators.

Meetings & Video

- **REQ-012 – Native, Bidirectional Microsoft Teams Integration (Enterprise-Wide).** Staff must be able to make and receive PSTN calls from within the Teams client using their TCC number; presence must sync bidirectionally with call state; call notifications and queue alerts must be routable to Teams channels. Proposals must document the integration method (Direct Routing, Teams Phone, or certified side-by-side client/plugin).

Contact Center

- **REQ-013 – ACD / Contact Center with Real-Time Queue Reporting.** Full ACD capability including agent log-in/log-out, real-time queue dashboards (calls waiting, current wait time, agents available), and historical per-agent reporting (calls handled, average talk time, abandonment rate). Must fully replace the existing BrightMetrics analytics add-on or support its continued use.
- **REQ-014 – Call Recording with RBAC and Defined Retention Policy.** Role-based access control preventing inappropriate access to clinical or sensitive recordings, configurable retention periods, and a full audit trail. Recording will not be activated in production until TCC Compliance and Legal Counsel approve access policy, retention schedule, and use guidelines.

Administration & Management

- **REQ-015 – Self-Service / Remote Call Flow Management (Enterprise-Wide).** Department managers must be able to create, modify, and schedule call flow modes, ring group membership, and after-hours routing without IT tickets, including advance scheduling for holidays, all-staff days, and early-out days via an intuitive

self-service portal.

- **REQ-016 – Active Directory / Entra ID Integration with SSO and Preferred-Name Support (Enterprise-Wide).** Single sign-on using existing TCC corporate credentials, directory synchronization from AD/Entra ID, support for preferred/display names distinct from legal names, and support for auto-provisioning of new-hire extensions via ServiceNow or HR workflow.
- **REQ-017 – Reliable, Network-Resilient Softphone Client (Enterprise-Wide).** The softphone must maintain connection when switching between Ethernet and Wi-Fi, auto-launch on startup, and coexist without conflict alongside remote desktop tools such as TeamViewer.

Security & Compliance

- **REQ-018 – Overhead Paging Integration with All-Device Reach.** Emergency paging (fire codes, lockdowns, code blue) must reach every staff member on physical desk phones, softphone clients, and mobile apps, with integration to site-specific paging infrastructure validated per site during deployment.

Mobility

- **REQ-019 – BYOD Mobile App with Corporate Caller ID and Simultaneous Ring (Enterprise-Wide).** A mobile application allowing staff to make and receive calls using their TCC extension (not their personal cell number), supporting simultaneous ring with the desk phone, compatible with BYOD personal devices, and optional for staff who decline BYOD participation. A clear, organization-published privacy statement describing what the app can and cannot access must be supportable before rollout.

Integrations

- **REQ-020 – ServiceNow Integration.** Screen pops for ServiceNow-registered callers, call recordings linked to tickets, Teams notification triggers on queue metrics, and new-hire auto-provisioning initiated via ServiceNow workflow. Detailed scoping will occur with the IT Service Desk team.
- **REQ-021 – AlertMedia Compatibility.** TCC's AlertMedia mass-notification platform must continue to function in parallel with the new UC platform without interference; vendor confirmation of compatibility is a documented evaluation criterion.
- **REQ-022 – Automatic After-Hours Crisis Routing to Avail Solutions (Critical).** After-hours crisis calls to Behavioral Health must be automatically and forcibly routed to the Avail Solutions answering service with no mechanism for a caller to inadvertently

reach administrative voicemail. This is a non-negotiable patient safety requirement.

- **REQ-023 – Pharmacy After-Hours Prescription IVR Forwarding.** The existing after-hours forwarding path to a third-party prescription IVR must be preserved, with vendor identity confirmed and compatibility validated before go-live.
- **REQ-024 – TigerConnect Coexistence.** The UC platform must coexist with TCC's TigerConnect secure clinical messaging platform without workflow friction; no integration is required at initial deployment.
- **REQ-025 – Carrier Coordination and Local Number Retention at Village Clinics.** Local published clinic numbers must be retained or consolidated to toll-free equivalents where copper infrastructure is deteriorating, with a comprehensive carrier coordination and number documentation plan completed before any clinic cutover.
- **REQ-026 – Salesforce Integration – Patient Travel Program.** The platform must integrate with TCC's Salesforce environment used by the Patient Travel program, including screen pops that display the caller's Salesforce record when a recognized phone number reaches the Patient Travel queue, click-to-dial from Salesforce, and logging of call activity to the associated Salesforce record. Proposals must identify the integration method (native connector, certified CTI adapter, or API-based integration), any additional licensing required, and any Salesforce edition or API prerequisites. Detailed scoping will occur with the Patient Travel team during the design phase.

D. Minimum Viable System

On day one of production operation the proposed system must deliver: carrier-grade call reliability under distributed and bandwidth-constrained conditions; program-level hunt groups with position-based routing; a BYOD mobile application with corporate caller ID masking and simultaneous ring; a network-resilient softphone client; self-service call flow management for department administrators; scheduled and automated after-hours routing that fails safely; full ACD capability with real-time queue dashboards for clinical contact center departments; voicemail-to-email provisioned universally with bidirectional deletion sync; native Microsoft Teams integration with bidirectional presence; local survivability at all village clinic sites; decommission of all legacy PBX systems; DID retention with the existing carrier; and emergency paging reach to all device types. Platforms that cannot deliver the above without complex third-party workarounds for multiple items will not be considered.

E. Additional Required Design Outcomes

Based on documented patient safety incidents and compliance obligations, the following are also treated as required design outcomes:

- **Dedicated Behavioral Health crisis queue:** a crisis-call queue separate from the general Behavioral Health administrative queue, with direct routing to the on-call crisis counselor and a failsafe to Avail Solutions.
- **Scheduled call flow changes:** advance scheduling of routing modes for holidays, all-staff days, and weather closures (inseparable from REQ-003 and REQ-015).
- **Anonymous compliance hotline:** a dedicated inbound number that accepts calls without logging caller ID, supporting anonymous internal compliance reporting, with implementation model confirmed by TCC Compliance and Legal Counsel.

F. Desired Features

Proposals should identify which of the following can be supported and whether each is native, an add-on, or an integration: simultaneous (all-ring-at-once) ring group option; return-to-operator option from voicemail; location-based security routing to a single universal security extension; shared/exportable team contact directories; voicemail transcription; ad-hoc conference calling with in-call add-participant; Teams-calendar-based presence sync (auto meeting mode, scoped to meeting-type events only); basic call volume reporting for non-contact-center departments; supervisor monitor/listen-in for quality coaching; queue-scoped call recording access for QA coaching; callback / hold-my-place queue option; hot desk / extension login to any workstation phone; operator/receptionist switchboard interface with busy-lamp-field console; simplified call handling profiles/templates; proactive outbound notification for weather or clinic closures; duress alarm integration with the phone/paging system; DECT/wireless handsets for mobile-within-space staff; provider/vendor caller ID screen pop for Pharmacy and Scheduling; intercom/PA capability within the Laboratory; EMR (Athena) integration for outbound scheduling notifications and call transcription (future phase; must not be foreclosed by platform selection); and AI-assisted routing / auto-provisioning roadmap capability.

G. Implementation, Training, and Transition Requirements

- **Phased deployment:** Proposals must include a phased implementation plan that establishes platform stability at the Fairbanks headquarters sites first, then subregional clinics (Galena and Tok) with survivability validation, then village clinics with individual site surveys and zero-service-gap cutover management. Village clinic sequencing must be driven by per-site connectivity readiness, not a calendar target.

- **Training as a funded deliverable:** Role-specific, department-tailored training for system administrators and end users must be included as a scoped, budgeted line item of the implementation not a post-go-live activity. A post-deployment training reinforcement pass for rural clinic teams is expected.
- **Reporting continuity:** For departments that depend on real-time queue dashboards (Central Scheduling, IT Service Desk), the proposal must describe how reporting continuity will be preserved during migration, including any parallel-run validation period before legacy reporting is decommissioned.
- **Call recording gating:** Recording must not be activated in any production queue before TCC Compliance and Legal sign off on access policy, retention schedule, and use guidelines.
- **BYOD communication:** A plain-language communication explaining exactly what the mobile app can and cannot access on a personal device must be available before mobile app rollout.
- **Number inventory:** The implementation plan must include an audit and documentation of all active toll-free (800) numbers, with assigned ownership, before migration begins.
- **Extension design:** The vendor will support a department/position-based extension numbering standard developed with TCC before system build begins.

H. Proposal Content Requirements

At minimum, each proposal must include:

- **A requirements fulfillment matrix** responding to every item in Sections C, D, and E above, designating each as Native, Add-On (with required license/module identified), Integration (with third-party components identified), or Not Supported.
- **A proposed architecture description**, including deployment model (on-premises, cloud, or hybrid), survivability design for subregional and village clinic sites, trunking/SBC design preserving the existing carrier relationship, and contact center components.
- **Licensing and cost detail**, including a five-year total cost of ownership covering licensing (perpetual and/or subscription options), hardware, implementation services, training, and ongoing support/maintenance. TCC's existing Microsoft 365 E5 licensing should be leveraged where applicable to avoid duplicate telephony licensing.
- **An implementation plan and timeline** consistent with Section G, including migration methodology from the existing ShoreTel environment and NEC decommission approach.
- **A training plan** scoped by role and department.

- **A support model description**, including support hours, escalation paths, and experience supporting geographically remote sites.
- **References** from organizations of comparable scale and complexity; experience with rural, healthcare, tribal, or Alaska deployments is preferred.

IV. Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using the following 100-point weighted selection matrix:

Overall Proposal Suitability & Quality – 5 points

Bidders must meet the needs included herein, presented in a clear and organized fashion. Clarity, completeness, compliance with instructions, organization, and responsiveness to TCC requirements.

Value, Cost & Native Preference – 15 points

Bidders will be evaluated on the cost of their solution(s) based on the work to be performed in accordance with the scope of this project: total cost of ownership (licensing, hardware, implementation, training, and ongoing support), price transparency, and itemization.

Native preference will be applied to a vendor's total bid price for evaluation purposes only, in accordance with TCC policy and TCC Resolution 2026-25, as amended, as follows:

(a) In-Region Native Preference. A vendor qualifying for the in-region Native preference will receive a ten percent (10%) reduction in its total bid price for evaluation purposes only. To qualify for this preference, the vendor must be majority-owned (more than 50% ownership interest) by one or more TCC-region tribal members or by a TCC-region village corporation. The qualifying ownership interest must exceed 50% at the time the bid is submitted.

(b) Alaska Native Preference. A vendor qualifying for the Alaska Native preference but not qualifying for the in-region preference described in subsection (a), will receive a five percent (5%) reduction in its total bid price for evaluation purposes only. To qualify for this preference, the vendor must be majority-owned (more than 50% ownership interest) by one or more Alaska Native tribal members or by an Alaska Native village corporation. The qualifying ownership interest must exceed 50% at the time the bid is submitted.

Vendors claiming Native Preference must submit documentation verifying that they meet the ownership requirements described at the time of bid submission. Failure to provide the required verification may result in the vendor being deemed ineligible for the preference.

Vendor Company Health & Financial Stability – 10 points

Company background, years in business, and financial stability. Relevant enterprise unified communications / telephony integration experience (minimum 3 years preferred). References for similar enterprise voice or contact center projects. Capacity to support multi-year maintenance and lifecycle management.

Technical Expertise & Implementation Approach – 35 points

Bidders must provide descriptions and documentation of technical expertise with the proposed UC platform and a detailed implementation plan, including the proposed architecture and equipment selection (call control, session border controller, IP phones, softphone and mobile clients, contact center/ACD, survivability appliances for subregional and village clinic sites), integration with Microsoft Teams, migration methodology from the existing ShoreTel environment, NEC decommission approach, and the training plan required by Section III.G.

Organizational Experience & Functional Fit – 35 points

Bidders will be evaluated on the details of features as they pertain to the Scope of Work: depth and relevance of experience with enterprise voice deployments of comparable scale and geography; fit of the proposed solution to TCC use cases (clinical contact center, village clinic survivability, after-hours crisis routing, mobility); configuration vs. customization; and demonstrated outcomes in similar environments, including rural, healthcare, tribal, or Alaska deployments.

Total Points: 100

V. Selection Process

Selection will be made through a competitive “weight of award bid process” based on the bid with the highest points awarded under the selection matrix above.

TCC may make such reasonable investigations as deemed proper and necessary to determine the ability of the candidate to perform the work, and the candidate shall furnish to TCC all such information and data for this purpose as may be requested. TCC

reserves the right to inspect the candidate's physical facilities regarding the candidate's capabilities. TCC further reserves the right to reject any proposal if the evidence submitted by, or investigations of, such candidate fails to satisfy TCC that such candidate is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract and to complete the work contemplated herein.

By submitting their proposals, all candidates certify that: (1) their proposals are made without collusion or fraud; (2) they have not offered or received any kickbacks or inducements from any other candidate, supplier, manufacturer, or subcontractor in connection with their proposal; and (3) they have not conferred on any TCC employee having official responsibility for this procurement transaction any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit of money, services, or anything of more than nominal value, present, or promised, unless consideration of substantially equal or greater value was exchanged.

Notification of Selection will be issued and sent by [time, date].

The contract that will be used for this project is Attachment A to this Request for Proposal. By submitting a bid, the vendor acknowledges and agrees to the contract terms provided therein.

VI. Management

Aaron Gibson Infrastructure and Operations Manager, or designee, will manage this contract for TCC. If a party changes its contract manager, then the party will notify the other in writing of this change. Should there be any questions you can reach out directly to aaron.gibson@tananachiefs.org, all questions and responses will be posted on the same page as the RFP.

VII. Term of Contract

Subject to Section IX.6. Termination in the Terms and Conditions, the Services shall start upon receiving a fully signed agreement.

VIII. Payment

Payment shall be made no later than thirty (30) days for undisputed services after TCC receives properly prepared invoice. A valid Tax Identification Number must be provided to TCC prior to any payment being made.

IX. Terms and Conditions

1. Waiver of Minor Informalities

TCC expressly reserves the right to waive minor informalities, negotiate changes or reject any and all quotes and to not award the proposed contract, if in its best interest. "Minor informalities" means matters of form rather than substance which are evident from the submittal or are insignificant matters that have negligible effect on price, quantity, quality, delivery or contractual conditions and can be waived or corrected without prejudice to the other Proposers.

2. Proposals

TCC retains the right to cancel this RFP at any time, or postpone the date and time for submitting proposals at any time prior to the proposal due date, if it is in TCC's best interest.

TCC reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals. Proposals must be signed (electronic signatures are acceptable) and dated in order to be valid. Proposals are to be valid for Ninety (90) days from proposal due date.

TCC will not pay any cost associated with the preparation, submittal, or presentation of any proposal.

3. TCC Services' Contract

By submitting a bid, the vendor agrees to be bound by the terms and conditions of TCC's Service Contract- Attachment A to this RFP.

Attachments

- A – TCC's Service Contract
- B – TCC Resolution 2026-05

X. Required Documents

The following documents are required to be considered responsive.

- Signed proposal
- Cost Proposal
- If claiming Native preference, verification that one or more TCC-region tribal members or a TCC-region village corporation holds a greater than 50% ownership interest in the company

Upon selection, the following documents will be required.

- W-9
- Current Business License
- Current Certificate of Insurance meeting or exceeding requirements