South Carolina Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity

PROJECT LIFELINE 250

Response Period	Initial deadline: December 31, 2026; rolling thereafter until capacity is filled or the response closes.
Program Period	Six months
Expected Volume	Capacity to support at least one assessment during the program period.
SC CIC Contact & Submission Email	Lifeline250@sled.sc.gov

A. Purpose

South Carolina Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity (SC CIC) invites qualified vendors to express interest in serving as voluntary cybersecurity Assessors for Project Lifeline 250. This pilot connects Participants with Assessors for cybersecurity assessments, remediation support, and defensive expertise to reduce risk and strengthen operational resilience.

Assessors will provide proposed services at no cost to SC CIC or Participants. SC CIC will select Participants, identify eligible Assessors, and facilitate introductions based on Participant needs and Assessor capabilities. Each Participant will independently select its Assessor.

NO PURCHASE OR AWARD: This Request for Applications (RFA) is not a solicitation for paid services, an offer, an award, a purchase order, a grant, or a promise of future business. An application creates no entitlement to selection, assignment, payment, reimbursement, endorsement, or future procurement consideration.

B. Definitions

Assessor. A vendor determined eligible by SC CIC to participate in the pilot to provide cybersecurity services and is available for selection by Participants.
Participant. A South Carolina Rural Hospital selected by SC CIC to participate in the pilot and receive cybersecurity services.

C. Services of Interest

- Cybersecurity posture, architecture, configuration, vulnerability, or risk assessments for information technology (IT) and operational technology (OT) environments.
- Prioritized findings, practical remediation recommendations, and executive and technical readouts.
- Hands-on remediation support, validation, or retesting when included in the approved scope.
- Defensive tools, software, hardware, services, training, or expertise that directly support the pilot objective and can be safely deployed within the approved scope.

D. Value-Added Services

Assessors may propose additional services or resources at no cost to SC CIC or Participants. SC CIC is particularly interested in project-management support, including schedule coordination, meeting and action-item tracking, risk and issue management, progress reporting, performance metrics, and closeout documentation. Applications should describe the support offered, available resources, duration, and any limitations.

E. Assessor Participation Requirements

- Be a legally organized entity authorized to do business in South Carolina with authority to offer the proposed services to Participants.
- Provide qualified personnel and identify all subcontractors or other third parties.
- State the number, location, timing, and approximate duration of assessments the Assessor can support during the pilot period.
- All proposed pilot services must be provided at no cost to SC CIC or Participants. Assessors must disclose any limitations, expiration dates, removal or return requirements, equipment ownership terms, or potential post-pilot costs. Assessor participation may not automatically convert to a paid service or be conditioned on a purchase or future commitment.
- Accept SC CIC coordination, communication, terms, and data sharing requirements.

F. Activities Not Authorized by This RFA

Participation in this RFA does not authorize an Assessor to:

- Speak for, make commitments on behalf of, or represent the views of SC CIC without express authorization from SC CIC.
- Access a facility, network, system, account, device, document, or data set without the Participant's prior written authorization.
- Conduct scanning, testing, exploitation, monitoring, data collection, tool deployment, or production changes outside the scope authorized by the Participant.
- Represent that SC CIC selected, endorsed, contracted with, certified, or recommended the Assessor.
- Use the names, marks, results, or relationships of SC CIC, Project Lifeline 250, a Participant, or another Assessor in marketing, media, case studies, or public statements without the applicable party's prior written approval.
- Condition no-cost services on a purchase, subscription, sales meeting, publicity right, future procurement, or other commercial commitment.

G. Application Submission

Assessor must submit the completed Attachment A and only the following supporting items to be eligible for consideration.

- A one-page marketing document that can be used to describe services to Participants.
- A capability statement and brief description of the proposed no-cost services.
- Names, contact information, and roles and functions for proposed key personnel.
- A sample or outline of the proposed no-cost services, with sensitive information removed.
- A brief description of any value-added no-cost services or resources offered, including project-management support.

H. Review, Qualification, and Facilitated Introductions

SC CIC will review and consider:

- Completeness and acceptance of the no-cost participation conditions.
- Relevant capability, qualifications, experience, methods, tools, and deliverable quality.
- Capacity, availability, geographic fit, and alignment with Participant needs and constraints.
- The best interests of the State, the Participant, and the pilot.

SC CIC may request clarification, decline an application, qualify fewer or more Assessors than anticipated, facilitate no introduction, or discontinue an Assessor's participation in the pilot. Qualification does not guarantee an introduction or selection by a Participant.

I. Engagement and Readiness Gate

SC CIC will facilitate introductions based on Participant needs and Assessor capabilities. Each Participant can independently select an Assessor and work directly with that Assessor to complete any necessary agreements, authorizations, scope, rules of engagement, and data-handling requirements before work begins.

SC CIC may require standard participation acknowledgment and confirmation that the Participant and Assessor are ready to proceed, as well as progress updates. SC CIC will not negotiate or approve the agreements between the Assessor and Participant.

J. Project Coordination and External Communications

SC CIC will designate a point of contact to coordinate the pilot and facilitate initial connections among Participants, Assessors, and other relevant stakeholders. Stakeholders may communicate with one another for project planning, coordination, and assessment support. Once a Participant selects an Assessor, they may coordinate directly under their applicable agreements and authorizations.

Participation does not authorize any person to speak for SC CIC, commit SC CIC resources, communicate an official SC CIC position, or represent that SC CIC endorses an organization, product, or service. Assessors must direct questions requiring SC CIC comment or media or public-information requests concerning SC CIC or the Project to **Lifeline250@sled.sc.gov.**

K. Data Sharing

As a condition of participation, each Participant will authorize its selected Assessor to provide SC CIC with agreed-upon telemetry and outcome data, including assessment results, public IPs/domains, network maps/architecture, site locations, stakeholder information (names, numbers, email addresses, physical addresses), as available. The Assessor will provide that information, as authorized, to SC CIC, the White House Office of the National Cyber Director, and the Office of the Governor of South Carolina, as instructed after the Notice to Proceed is sent. SC CIC may use the information to understand cybersecurity challenges affecting South Carolina Rural Hospitals and evaluate the pilot's effectiveness, value, and scalability.

During initial planning and coordination, SC CIC will work with Participants and Assessors to identify available information related to the pilot, telemetry, and meaningful outcome measures. Based on

that input, SC CIC will define the information that it requests.

L. General Terms and Conditions

The Project period will begin on the Effective Date stated in the Notice to Proceed.
The eligible activities are those contained in the RFA and as agreed upon by both SC CIC and Assessor in any subsequent documents.

This Project and all documents will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of South Carolina, without regard to conflicts of law provisions.

Assessor attests to all representations and certifications in the Application and agrees to give written notice to SC CIC within three business days if there is any material change in these representations or certifications.

No assignment or delegation of the obligations, rights, or interests will be binding on SC CIC without its written consent, except as required by law.

The entire agreement between SC CIC and Assessor consists of this RFA and the Assessor's application submission, with the RFA controlling in the event of any conflicting language between the two. There are no other documents incorporated by reference, unless explicitly stated in writing by SC CIC through an amendment.

By submitting an application, Assessor agrees that SC CIC has no liability related to Assessor's provision of services to Participant or for any executed contracts or obligations between the Assessor and Participant. Assessor may not incur any debt, obligation, expense, or liability on behalf of SC CIC or the State of South Carolina.

Assessor is solely responsible for the professional quality, technical accuracy, and timely completion of any services proffered to a Participant.

Assessor is solely responsible for the supervision, inspection, and direction of activities competently and efficiently, using such skills and expertise as may be necessary to perform the activities in accordance with the RFA. Assessor is solely responsible for the means, methods, techniques, sequences, and procedures of any Assessor activities. Assessor is responsible for ensuring that the implementation of Assessor activities comply with the terms and conditions of this RFA, including requiring that applicable terms and conditions be incorporated into subcontracts and industry-standard practices.

Assessor agrees to pass through the data-sharing requirements in any executed contracts between the Assessor and Participant.

M. Submission

Applications received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on December 31, 2026, will be considered during the initial review. SC CIC may continue accepting applications on a rolling basis until pilot capacity is filled or the application period is closed. Use the subject line: "Lifeline 250 Vendor Application - [BUSINESS ENTITY NAME]"

Information submitted to SC CIC may be subject to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act, S.C. Code Ann. Title 30, Chapter 4

Though we do not want Assessors to submit confidential or proprietary information, if an Assessor wants to do so, the Assessor must clearly identify the exact pages and information it considers confidential or proprietary. SC CIC cannot guarantee that marked information will be withheld and will process requests as required by law.

SC CIC may amend, suspend, or cancel this RFA; request additional information; establish or modify program-participation and coordination requirements; or reject any applications or future opportunities. Each Assessor bears its own application and participation costs. This RFA does not obligate SC CIC or a Participant to accept services, provide access or data, reimburse expenses, or make a purchase.

Participation does not create an agency relationship, partnership, joint venture, endorsement, or contract for paid services between SC CIC and an Assessor. SC CIC is not responsible for a Participant's selection of an Assessor or for the services, tools, or actions of an Assessor.

ATTACHMENT A

A. Assessor Expression of Interest

Complete concisely. Attach no more than the items listed in the Application Submission Section unless SC CIC requests additional material.

Assessor legal name	
Assessor type/state of formation	
Mailing Address	
Website	
Authorized representative/title	
Primary project contact/title	
Primary Email/phone	
Secondary project contact (if applicable)	
Secondary Email/phone (If applicable)	
Service area (Statewide, Regions, Counties)	
Delivery (On-site, Remote, both, etc.)	

If additional space is required, please attach a separate sheet and clearly indicate the corresponding question.

B. Proposed No-Cost Service

Describe what you can commit to related to the assessment or support offered, methodology, approximate duration, prerequisites, services, and any remediation or retesting included.

RESPONSE

C. Capacity and Availability

State the number of assessments available, earliest start date, blackout dates, geographic limits, onsite or remote model, and anticipated staffing.

RESPONSE

D. Tools, Access, and Data

Identify tools or agents proposed; data collected; storage and hosting locations; retention period; use of cloud services or artificial intelligence; remote-access needs; subprocessors; and proposed data deletion method.

RESPONSE

E. Personnel and Third Parties

Identify proposed lead personnel by name and role. Also identify subcontractors, affiliates, and other third parties that may access a Participant's environment or data.

RESPONSE

F. No-Cost Boundaries

List everything included at no cost and every exclusion, pass-through expense, prerequisite purchase, future license, renewal, or other potential cost to Participant. State "None" if there are no exclusions or future costs.

RESPONSE

G. Conflicts and Conditions

Disclose actual, potential, or apparent conflicts; pending sales activity with likely Participants; requested publicity rights; or terms that could affect participation. State "None" if not applicable.

RESPONSE

H. Participant Resource Requirements and Support

Describe the estimated Participant roles, technical skills, access, and other resources required to participate in the pilot program before, during, and after the assessment or deployment. Identify any training, post-deployment support, ongoing maintenance, or other Participant responsibilities.

RESPONSE

I. Assessor Acknowledgment

Assessor, by its submission of a signed application, certifies that it has read and understood all RFA requirements and also acknowledges the following.

- Assessor represents and warrants that all information submitted is true, current, complete, and accurate. Assessor warrants that Assessor's authorized representative is authorized to submit and execute an application on its behalf.
- The offered services and disclosed supporting resources will be provided at no cost to SC CIC or Participant.
- Submission does not create a contract, payment obligation, endorsement, selection right, or authorization to begin work.
- No Participant contact, access, testing, data exchange, installation, or public communication may occur without required written direction and assessment-specific approvals from SC CIC.
- Assessor agrees to comply with the data-sharing requirements described in the Data Sharing section, including providing authorized Participant data to SC CIC and its designated recipients as instructed after Notice to Proceed.
- The Assessor must disclose material changes, conflicts, subcontractors, data practices, artificial-intelligence use, or potential costs before matching or performance.

Authorized representative (Print Name)	
Signature	
Date	