

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Justification and Approval**

**For Planetree Membership Dues**

**Other Than Full and Open Competition**

1. **Contracting Activity:** Department of Veterans Affairs, VISN 11, Aleda E. Lutz VAMC, Veteran Centered Care Program, Office of the Director. Justification for Other than Full and Open Competition. 655-14-3-5155-0169
2. **Nature and/or Description of the Action Being Processed:** This justification requests sole source authorization for Aleda E. Lutz VAMC (655) to continue a membership affiliation with Planetree, Inc. for one year from August 4, 2014 to August 3, 2015. Planetree is a non-profit organization that provides education, resources, and information to healthcare organizations to facilitate their efforts to create patient- and resident-centered care environments. This request is a continuation of the existing affiliation which will expire August 3, 2014. This contract would be a firm-fixed-price contract for Aleda E Lutz VAMC to continue local membership affiliation for one year. Planetree, Inc., 130 Division Street, Derby, CT 06418
3. **Description of Supplies/Services Required to Meet the Agency's Needs:**
  1. Membership in an alliance of health care facilities and individuals that have incorporated Planetree Principles and Model of Care into their organizations
  2. Use of Planetree logo and branding
  3. Comprehensive network of resources in patient centered principles i.e. newsletters, conferences, training sessions, webinars, etc.

The estimated value of the services for Aleda E. Lutz VAMC is \$13,000 from August 4, 2014 to August 3, 2015 with no options. Note that final costs stated here are \$13,000 (opposed to the \$16,000 originally quoted), as Ann Arbor VA will also be contracting for dues under a separate 2237, and Planetree will offer a group discount as a result.

4. **Statutory Authority Permitting Other than Full and Open Competition:**

- (1) Only One Responsible Source and No Other Supplies or Services Will Satisfy Agency Requirements per FAR 6.302-1;
- (2) Unusual and Compelling Urgency per FAR 6.302-2;
- (3) Industrial Mobilization, Engineering, Developmental or Research Capability or Expert Services per FAR 6.302-3;
- (4) International Agreement per FAR 6.302-4
- (5) Authorized or Required by Statute FAR 6.302-5;
- (6) National Security per FAR 6.302-6;
- (7) Public Interest per FAR 6.302-7;

**5. Demonstration that the Contractor's Unique Qualifications or Nature of the Acquisition Requires the Use of the Authority Cited Above (applicability of authority):**

Secretary Shinseki's mandated T21 Transformation Initiatives identify Patient Centered Care as being at the core of VHA's Culture Transformation. Patient Centered Care performance metrics are included in VHA's Strategic Plan FY13-18. Since 2009, VISN11 has partnered with Planetree to accomplish this transformation. Planetree is renowned for its expertise in patient centered care, and has a proven track record in customer, patient and employee satisfaction. The goal of this partnership was to assist each facility, including Aleda E. Lutz VAMC, in implementing and then maintaining a quality Veteran Centered Care (VCC) program. The ultimate goal was to position VISN sites to qualify for Planetree's full Patient Centered Care Designation, a level of achievement recognized by Joint Commission. For FY13, the goal has been for at least 2 VISN sites to apply for Bronze-level recognition in Planetree's new tiered achievement program. For FY 14, Veteran Centered transformation efforts are mandated to continue.

Aleda E. Lutz VAMC has successfully achieved Bronze-level Patient Centered Care Recognition from Planetree in April 2014. Continuing our affiliation with Planetree, Inc. will support our efforts to qualify for Silver -level Recognition in the future.

Planetree has 30+ years of experience in patient-focused care and is able to share research, policies and procedures, experience and knowledge from internationally renowned experts and proponents of patient-centered care. The Planetree patient-centered care designation and certification offers significant market differentiation and prestige, national and regional recognition, visibility as a role model and worldwide networking opportunities with other health care facilities who have already implemented Planetree's patient-centered philosophy and programs. Planetree's full Patient Centered Care Designation is the only one of its kind recognized by Joint Commission with a Quality Check Award. Only Planetree can offer the unique Planetree accreditation patient care focused program that VISN 11 leadership and management is so strongly committed to.

Saginaw VAMC's program has progressed significantly with the assistance of Planetree, receiving national recognition, and grants for various VCC initiatives and programs. Various grants have been received from VISN 11 and VACO for such programs/initiatives as the Stairwell Murals, Healing Wheels, and the Lactation Room improvements. Various grants have been received from VISN 11 for programs such as Comfort Room project and new campus shuttle vehicles.

A continued membership affiliation with Planetree would continue the existing level of support services that has helped the Saginaw VAMC perform at this level. It would also allow the Saginaw VAMC to continue its pursuit of full Patient Centered Care Designation. Most important, the Saginaw VAMC could be within an elite group of organizations world-wide by achieving Planetree's unique Patient Centered Care Designation.

**6. Description of Efforts Made to ensure that offers are solicited from as many potential sources as deemed practicable:**

Planetree, Inc. is the incumbent and the only practicable, responsible source to provide continuity of services.

**7. Determination by the Contracting Officer that the Anticipated Cost to the Government will be Fair and Reasonable:**

For this purchase, dues are quoted as \$16,000 for Saginaw VAMC alone, with a discounted rate of \$13,000 for Saginaw VAMC if VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System also contracts for membership dues as intended. These costs are unchanged from what was paid in FY13. PO 655-C30151 \$13,000.

**8. Description of the Market Research Conducted and the Results, or a Statement of the Reasons Market Research Was Not Conducted:**

Market research was conducted on May 29-31, 2013 on Google for this request, with email and telephone follow-up as needed to confirm that Planetree remains the sole source capable of meeting these requirements. Companies reviewed include NCQA, Picker Institute, Press Ganey, and Planetree. Besides Planetree, only NCQA offers any form of Patient-Centered Care Recognition or Designation; however, theirs is only applicable to Ambulatory Care setting, and the certification is not recognized by Joint Commission with a Quality Check Award. Market research was updated on April 18, 2014 by confirming that the Planetree Patient-Centered Care Designation Program remains the sole patient-centered care recognition included as one of the Joint Commission Quality Check Awards. In addition, switching to a model of care offered by another organization would require total rework and a huge investment beyond the Planetree dues requested here. As noted earlier, Aleda E. Lutz VAMC has embraced the Planetree model of patient-centered care.

**9. Any Other Facts Supporting the Use of Other than Full and Open Competition:**

None.

**10. Listing of Sources that Expressed, in Writing, an Interest in the Acquisition:** See Section VI above.

**11. A Statement of the Actions, if any, the Agency May Take to Remove or Overcome any Barriers to Competition before Making subsequent acquisitions for the supplies or services required:**

As noted previously, Planetree is the only firm capable of providing the services described in Section III above without the Veteran's Health Administration experiencing substantial duplication of cost that could not be expected to be recovered through competition and unacceptable delays in fulfilling its requirements.

**12. Requirements Certification:** I certify that the requirement outlined in this justification is a Bona Fide Need of the Department of Veterans Affairs and that the supporting data under my cognizance, which are included in the justification, are accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

  
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Kelly Unrein  
Customer Service Manager  
Aleda E. Lutz VAMC

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April 23, 2014  
Date

**13. Approvals in accordance with FAR 6.304**

- a. **Contracting Officer's Certification: (required)** I certify that the foregoing justification is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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Contracting Officer

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

- b. **NCM/PCM (Required \$3K and above):** I certify the justification meets requirements for other than full and open competition.

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Name

NCM/Supervisory Contract Specialist (as appropriate)

Network 11 Contract Office

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Date