

## LIMITED-SOURCES JUSTIFICATION

### 1. Agency and Contracting Activity:

This justification is executed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Office of Acquisition Operations, Strategic Acquisition Center – Frederick (SAC-F) on behalf of the VA, Office of Human Resources and Administration (OHR&A), Veterans Affairs Learning University (VALU).

### 2. Description of Action:

The proposed acquisition is for a 12-month firm-fixed price task order with 4 additional 12-month option periods for online educational content that will be made available through VA Talent Management System (TMS) and will provide related support services for those products. Many of these courses are developed by Skillsoft and are required to comply with agency specific curriculum and competency requirements set forth in Individual Development Plans (IDPs). The courseware must be licensed by Skillsoft and compatible with Skillsoft Player to launch the course; many VA curricula are established utilizing Skillsoft courses and digital books.

The proposed effort will be awarded under General Services Administration (GSA) Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) Contract GS-02F-0040L to Skillsoft Corporation, 107 Northeastern Blvd., Nashua, New Hampshire, 03062.

### 3. Description of the Supplies or Services:

The proposed action is for 250,000 courseware licenses, as well as digital online books, as detailed below. The proposed action is also for support services, which include marketing and awareness of Skillsoft products, importing educational content into VA TMS, assigning competencies to courses, performing full process to retire and replace Skillsoft courseware, creating and revising course catalog documents that serve as aids to TMS users in identifying and selecting courses, consulting with VA employee groups regarding using catalog aids and other reference documents for accessing the online courses and digital books, and assisting in developing communications targeted to VA employees about these products and to facilitate their use.

Content shall include online courses and digital online books that include the following topics:

- a) Business Skills;
- b) Office Administrations skills;
- c) Information Technology skills;
- d) Professional Development;
- e) Information Technology Operations;
- f) Information Technology System Development;
- g) Finance;

- h) Safety;
- i) Health;
- j) Leadership and Supervisory skills;
- k) Interpersonal skills; and
- l) Communication skills.

Mandatory courses that shall be addressed are:

- a) U.S. Constitution;
- b) Information Technology Security Awareness;
- c) No Fear Act;
- d) Civil Rights;
- e) Diversity Awareness; and
- f) Ethics.

Online books shall cover the following topics:

- a) Soft Skills, such as leadership, communications and effective writing;
- b) Project Management;
- c) General Business;
- d) Leadership and Supervisory skills;
- e) Information Technology;
- f) Office Software Tools such as Microsoft (MS) Access, MS Word, MS Office, and MS Excel;
- g) Finance and Accounting;
- h) Legal; and
- i) Personal Self-Help and Support.

The licensing shall be calculated according to the number of unique persons that enroll in a course or register for access to the online reference books (i.e., one person launching any number of courses and/or accessing any number of online books will be counted as using one license during the contract period). The contract will include two additional optional Contract Line Item Numbers (CLINs) for each period of performance; each optional CLIN will include an additional 5,000 licenses, which can be exercised at the Government's discretion. Per Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 17.203(g)(2), the optional quantities do not exceed 50% of the initial quantity of licenses purchased.

Computer-based training, including mandatory training, must be available to VA's workforce on a 24hour per day, 365 days per year basis. The scope of the training needs includes Information Technology, Desktop, Compliance, and Business Skills courses. The required services are to be accessible through courseware, on-line books, and video-based content. Skillsoft's e-Learning service will achieve a well-trained workforce to be professionally, functionally, and technically sound in all skill areas through computer based learning.

Books 24x7 is a trademark of Skillsoft and is currently used VA wide. Presently, there are many mandatory customized courses, developed specifically for VA

employees, which require the Skillsoft player to launch the courseware. Additionally, there are core competencies associated with Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and agency specific curriculums established using Skillsoft courseware and books.

The total estimated value of the proposed action, including all option periods and optional CLINs, is \$12,508,527.12.

4. Authority:

FAR 8.405-6(a)(1)(i)(B), Only one source is capable of providing the supplies or services required at the level of quality required because the supply or services are unique or highly specialized.

5. Rationale Supporting Use of Authority Cited Above:

VA has diverse end user training needs which are deliverable through e-Learning training. In addition to providing courseware and online books on a 24 hour per day, 365 days per year basis, the training products must meet specific TMS operating requirements. Additionally, VA's existing training is established with digital online training and books provided by Skillsoft Corporation, LLC. Market research indicated that the training to cover the required topics are available under GSA IT Schedule Schedule 70 General Purpose Commercial Information Technology Equipment, Software, and Services, SIN 132-32 Term Software Licence-Subject to Cooperative Purchasing. A thorough review of 22 vendors indicated that each vendor could provide some of the required training topics, but not the full spectrum. Specifically, only Skillsoft Corporation, LLC provides the required digital online books. Additionally, several of the required courses are custom Skillsoft trainings, such as Books 24x7, and others require use of the Skillsoft player to launch the courseware, which only Skillsoft Corporation can provide. Skillsoft Corporation, LLC is the developer of the products and does not provide licenses for entire solutions/suites of courseware to any of their partners for the approximate 250,000 licenses that are required by VA for e-content and digital online books. As such, market research indicates that Skillsoft Corporation, LLC is the only vendor that can meet VA's e-Learning requirements. Skillsoft Corporation, LLC possesses the specific course material and digital online books to meet VA's training needs. By continuing to provide Skillsoft training, VA will eliminate the need for a major change to existing courseware, curriculums, and IDPs, thereby saving the Government a substantial amount of time and money.

6. Efforts to Obtain Competition:

Market research was conducted, as detailed in Section 8 below. The effort did not yield any additional sources that can meet all of the Government's material requirements. There is no fully responsive competition for this acquisition. In

accordance with FAR 5.301 the justification will be published within 14 days after task order award pursuant to FAR 8.405-6(a)(2)(i).

7. Actions to Increase Competition:

As stated in Section 8 below, Market Research indicates that Skillsoft is the sole vendor available to meet all material requirements the Government. The Government anticipates a continual need for the training for the next five years. However, the Government will make efforts to continually survey the market and make all feasible attempts to remove any and all subsequent barriers to competition for these services in the future.

8. Market Research:

Market research was conducted by the VALU program office, including contractor support provided by Premier, ADDX Corporation, and Cline-Morin Associates, on January 21, 2014, via review of FSS to determine if competition was viable for this action. While there are numerous vendors listed under Schedule 70, SIN 132-32, no vendors other than Skillsoft can provide the specific content needed to fulfill the Government's material requirements as described above. A thorough review of 22 vendors indicated that each vendor could provide some of the required training topics, but not the full spectrum. Specifically, only Skillsoft Corporation, LLC provides the required digital online books. Additionally, several of the required courses are custom Skillsoft trainings, such as Books 24x7, and others require use of the Skillsoft player to launch the courseware, which only Skillsoft Corporation can provide. Contracting confirmed via a phone call to Skillsoft Corporation on February 3, 2014 that the vendor does not provide licenses for entire solutions/suites of courseware to any of their partners for the approximate 250,000 licenses that are required by VA for e-content and digital online books. As such, market research indicates that Skillsoft Corporation, LLC is the only vendor that can meet VA's e-Learning requirements.

9. Other Facts:

None.

