

JUSTIFICATION FOR OTHER THAN FULL AND OPEN COMPETITION

1. Contracting Activity: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Office of Acquisition Operations
Technology Acquisition Center
23 Christopher Way
Eatontown, New Jersey 07724
2. Description of Action: The proposed sole source action is a firm-fixed price contract for external paging services for all of VA Maine Healthcare System and internal paging services for various locations in Maine (ME) with Critical Alert Systems, LLC, 100 Larrabee Road, Suite 150, Westbrook, ME 04092-4796.
3. Description of Supplies or Services: The proposed action is to provide external paging services for all of VA Maine Healthcare System which encompasses the Togus VA Medical Center main campus located in Augusta ME; ten Community Based Outpatient Clinics located in Bangor, Calais, Caribou, Fort Kent, Holton, Lewiston, Lincoln, Portland, Rumford, and Saco, ME; five Veteran's Outreach Centers located Bangor, Caribou, Lewiston, Portland and Sanford, ME, and a mobile medical unit based out of Bingham, ME. In addition, VA requires internal paging services (e.g. signal coverage penetrates walls of campus buildings), for the Togus VA main campus located in Augusta, ME. The Contractor shall provide pager display signs that display urgent alert pages received to VA dispatch and VA police locations at the Togus VA main campus, replacement and spare pagers, maintenance services, transmitters, online account management and messaging services, as well as training on the online account management system. The period of performance is October 01, 2014 through September 30, 2015 with three, 12-month option periods to be exercised at the Government's discretion.
4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting other than full and open competition is 41 U.S.C.3304(a)(1) as implemented by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 6.302-1 entitled, "Only One Responsible Source and No Other Supplies or Services Will Satisfy Agency Requirements."
5. Rationale Supporting Use of Authority Cited Above: VA Maine Healthcare System is located in an extremely rural areas of Maine, and the VA medical facilities are geographically widely dispersed. For that reason, most providers of paging services do not offer services in the region. A reliable paging system is often the only way for a medical facility to swiftly reach medical personnel during a crisis. Paging is critical to distributing urgent alerts for emergency services, i.e. code blue or panic situations, to medical personnel at and around the vicinity throughout all locations of the ME facilities. VA Maine main campus, in Augusta, ME, utilizes the emergency pages to notify VA dispatchers and VA police located at the hospital when there are issues in the hospital. Due to the rural nature of the area, only Critical Alert Systems, LLC, 100 Larrabee Road, Suite 150, Westbrook, ME 04092-4796, offers pager services and support for the required coverage area.

Paging Services for Maine Healthcare System

6. Efforts to Obtain Competition: Market research was conducted, details of which are in the market research section of this document. This effort did not yield any additional sources that can meet the Government's requirements. There is no competition anticipated for this acquisition. Additionally, the proposed action will be synopsisized on the Federal Business Opportunities Page in accordance with FAR 5.201. Any proposals that are received shall be evaluated.

7. Actions to Increase Competition: The Government will continue to conduct market research to ascertain if there are changes in the market place that would enable future actions to be competed.

8. Market Research: The Technology Acquisition Center issued a Request for Information on August 8, 2014 to ascertain if there were any other sources that could meet the Government's requirements. On August 15, 2014, two responses were received: Spok (formerly USA Mobility Wireless, Inc.) and Zipit Wireless. The technical review concluded that Spok was capable of meeting all the requirements. Spok lists all types of pages and coverage requested (one and two-way, numeric and alpha-numeric; local, regional, national), the need for internal coverage; groups, toll free numbers, their network redundancy and outage notification, messaging service, account management and support. The technical review of Zipit concluded that they did not meet the requirements. Zipit proposed a pager replacement system. Though this is something that may be looked at in the future, at this time it does not meet the needs of the Government. The time frame to implement it would be extensive, and it relied on using the VA wireless infrastructure for internal "paging". The VA wireless infrastructure is presently not set up to accommodate a replacement system. It was unclear if they have the capability to perform the other supporting tasks as identified in the Performance Work Statement. Further market research was conducted by the Contract Specialist in August 2014 by utilizing the VetBiz Registry to identify prospective Service Disabled Veteran-owned and Veteran-owned small business sources. The Contract Specialist searched for relevant businesses with paging services capabilities using keywords "pagers" and filtering by the North American Industry Classification System code "517210" for Wireless Telecommunications Carriers (except Satellite). The search yielded zero results. Additional market research was conducted by posting a Request for Information (RFI) on the Federal Business Opportunities website on August 08, 2014. Based on this market research, VA's subject matter experts determination that only Critical Paging can meet the Government's requirement has been confirmed. Based on the RFI responses and the technical review, this acquisition will be a sole source award to Critical Alert.

9. Other Facts: None.