

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**Justification and Approval**  
**for**  
**Other Than Full and Open Competition**

**R&D Neuroendocrine Mechanisms & Therapeutics in an Animal Model of PTSD**

**1. Contracting Activity:**

Department of Veteran Affairs, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 08, James A. Haley VA Hospital (JAHVAH). The Network Contracting Office (NCO) 8 is the contracting agency and the Department of Veterans' Affairs VISN 08, JAHVAH. The purchase request number is 673-14-3-5310-0601.

**2. Nature and/or Description of the Action Being Processed:**

This is a request for Other than Full and Open Competition (JOFOC) for the procurement of Research and Development (R&D), "Neuroendocrine Mechanisms & Therapeutics in an Animal Model of PTSD with the Principal Investigator David Diamond, MD. Research Associate services shall be provided thru a one (1) key person known for expertise in the field of Neuroscience. In order to fulfill the need of this effort, the USF shall provide the Research Associate Services.

The resulting action will be a firm fixed price contract with one (1) year base period and one (1) option year to be exercised should the Government deem necessary.

**3. Description of Supplies/Services Required to Meet the Agency's Needs:**

This research supports the overall mission of the VA by providing insight into the onset and development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The purpose of this study is to investigate the mechanisms underlying traumatic stress disorders in people and develop novel therapeutics which may relieve the stress in traumatized people.

Specifically, the Research Associate Services required from USF to meet this R&D's needs include:

1. Conduct neuroscience research experiments designed by the Principal Investigator David Diamond.
2. Record the results of all research experiments in laboratory notebooks and computer databases and discuss these results and analyses with the Principal Investigator David Diamond on a regular basis.
3. Analyze the data from all neuroscience research experiments.
4. Organize and retrieve information utilizing both electronic (automated) and paper record keeping and storage systems.
5. Solicit, negotiate, and evaluate proposals and estimates from vendors related to the design and production of neuroscience research experiments.
6. Gather information, analyze data, and prepare a wide variety of reports.
7. Organize and maintain the neuroscience research laboratory in pristine conditions at all times.

The contractor's employee shall not in any capacity be the Fund Control Point Official for the VA grant funding.

The Research Associate (RA) will not have access to VA patient sensitive records.

**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;
- ( X ) (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;

In addition this requirement is a sole source contracting action in accordance with VAAR 873.104 Competition Requirements:

(a) with regard to FAR Part 6, if the health-care resource required is a commercial service, the use of medical equipment or space, or research, and is to be acquired from an institution affiliated with the Department in accordance with section 7302 of title 38 U.S.C., including medical practice groups and other approved entities associated with affiliated institutions (entities will be approved if determined legally to be associated with affiliated institutions), or from blood banks, or research centers, the resource may be acquired on a sole source basis. (38 U.S. C. 8153)

**5. Demonstration that the Contractor's Unique Qualifications or Nature of the Acquisition Requires the Use of the Authority Cited Above (applicability of authority):** Per FAR 6.302-3(a)(2)

This research associate services is essential to further the development of the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). USF is the sole contractor that is fully qualified to provide the research associate services and guarantee continuous support of vital Government R&D programs. The Research Associate, Collin Park, provided by the USF for this study has a Ph.D. in Behavioral Neuroscience and is uniquely qualified and has the expertise to complete the R&D. Also, he has previously worked as a Research Assistant on other projects by this investigator. At this time, the research department does not know of any other institution capable to provide individuals with the requisite expertise to provide the required services. The James A. Haley Medical Center is connected both physically and functionally to the University. Proximity to the University is essential to ensure effective, complete and timely research services. It is determined that USF is the only affiliate and educational institution with the appropriate resources and expertise to satisfy the Government's requirement.

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

Every research project is reviewed to determine its feasibility for competition. The subject research project was carefully reviewed prior to the decision to establish a service contract with USF. There are other national and regional universities that offer research services. However, USF is affiliated with the James A. Haley VAMC and they are the only non-profit educational institution with the appropriate resources and

personnel who have the experience conducting the required research. Also, this research study is a continuation of similar studies which were supported by the USF, Department of Sponsored Research. USF and its key personnel have the first-hand knowledge of the studies and the required expertise to complete them. The required Research Associate has the necessary expertise on research findings that are subject to patent and licensing agreements and is well trained in proper handling of this data. Full and open competition is not required per FAR 6.302-3.

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

The position of a research scientist was classified by the Department of Veteran Affairs, Human Resources Department as comparable to a General Schedule (GS) employee at the grade of GS09 step 4. A VA merit grant was applied for by the Principle Investigator Dr. David Diamond. The grant was approved by University of Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), Research Safety Subcommittee, and the Research and Development Committee prior to study initiation. According to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), OPM 2014, the annual pay for a GS09, Step 4 is approximately \$55,083. According to Indeed.Com, the annual salary for a research scientist in the city of Tampa, Florida, United States, the National Salary Trend is \$71,000.

The contractor shall work approximately thirty (30) hours per week. The work rate of thirty (30) hours per week is equal to 75% of a full time equivalent work rate. At a 75% work rate, a GS09, Step 4 would make \$41,312.25. For the National Salary Trend, at 75%, the cost would equal to \$53,250.

The salary for the contractor's employee shall be \$40,000 annually and is below average. The contractor will devote approximately thirty (30) hours a week to this project and will be paid \$40,000 in four (4) quarterly installments of \$10,000 each. The procurement is for one (1) base year and one (1), twelve (12) month option year. The total cost of the procurement is \$80,000. The cost is considered to be fair and reasonable and in the best interest of the government.

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

The contractor and the key personnel involved in this project are experts in this field of research and development for behavioral neuroscience and have the skills that are not available here at the JAHVAH. The work which will be accomplished is integral to the success of this VA funded project and has been an approved budget. Part of this project relies on the contractor having a unique expertise in behavioral science. The contractor has a combination of requisite experience and skill to participate in this research program for the neuroscience mechanisms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). As stated above in paragraph number 4, the governing authority for this procurement is Federal Acquisitions Regulation (FAR) 6.302-3, Veteran Affairs Acquisition Regulation (VAAR) 873.104, and 7302 of title 38 U.S.C. Therefore, market research was only conducted to insure that the cost was fair and reasonable and in the best interest of the government.

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

University of South Florida has leading experts in the field of research and development for behavioral neuroscience. The key personnel "Dr. Collin Park" has work with the principle investigator "Dr. David Diamond" over the past two years. Dr. Park has training on the techniques, equipment and supporting computer programs used in this project prior to said requested procurement. This makes Dr. Park invaluable to this research program. The services required of Dr. Park to meet this project's needs include:

1. Conduct neuroscience research experiments designed by the Principal Investigator David Diamond.
2. Record the results of all research experiments in laboratory notebooks and computer databases and discuss these results and analyses with the Principal Investigator David Diamond on a regular basis.
3. Analyze the data from all neuroscience research experiments.
4. Organize and retrieve information utilizing both electronic (automated) and paper record keeping and storage systems.
5. Solicit, negotiate, and evaluate proposals and estimates from vendors related to the design and production of neuroscience research experiments.
6. Gather information, analyze data, and prepare a wide variety of reports.
7. Organize and maintain the neuroscience research laboratory in pristine conditions at all times.

**10. Listing of Sources that Expressed, in Writing, an Interest in the acquisition:**

None

**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:**

This is a research project that is very specialized in nature (see paragraph 9 above). Due the copyrights, licenses, and regulations in place (see paragraph 4 above), this will not ne competed in the near future. The requirement shall be posted in the Government Point of Entry (GPE), after award.

**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.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Marco Starr  
COTR

03/11/14  
Date

**8. 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.

*Cyrouse Himid Houshyani*

DATE 9/23/2014

Cyrouse Himid Houshyani  
Contracting Officer  
Network Contracting Office 8, VISN 8  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Medical Sharing Team, Medical 1663 Contracting

- b. **Product Line Supervisor (PLS):** I certify that the foregoing justification is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Yamil O. Rodriguez  
Supervisor Medical Sharing Team  
Network Contracting Office 8, VISN 8  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Medical Sharing Team, VA Directive 1663 Contracting

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

- c. **DNCM/NCM: (SAT to \$500,000)** I certify the justification meets requirements for other than full and open competition.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Raymond McCain  
Deputy Network Contract Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

- d. **SAO:** I certify the justification meets requirements for other than full and open competition.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director  
Service Area Office, East

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

- e. **VHA HCA Review and Approval:** (over \$500,000) I have reviewed the foregoing justification and find it to be complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and recommend approval (over \$50 million), approve (up to \$ 50 million) for other than full and open competition.

\_\_\_\_\_  
HCA  
Chief Procurement and Logistics Officer  
VHA Head of Contracting Activity (HCA)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

- f. **VA Deputy Senior Procurement Executive Approval (over \$10 not exceeding \$50 million):** I have reviewed the foregoing justification and find it to be complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and approve for other than full and open competition.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Iris B. Cooper  
Deputy Senior Procurement Executive  
(DSPE) Office of Acquisition and Logistics  
Department of Veterans Affairs

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

- e. **VHA Senior Procurement Executive Approval (over \$50 million)**: I have reviewed the foregoing justification and find it to be complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and approve for other than full and open competition.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jan R. Frye  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Acquisition and  
Logistics Senior Procurement Executive (SPE)  
Department of Veterans Affairs

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date