

JUSTIFICATION  
FOR AN EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY

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 action is for a modification to firm-fixed-price Task Order (TO) VA118-1006-0011 issued under the Transformation Twenty-One Total Technology (T4) Contract VA118-11-D-1006. The purpose of this modification is to incorporate additional training and knowledge management (KM) support for the Office of Information and Technology (OI&T) under the National Service Desk (NSD). The period of performance for these tasks shall be six months with three one-month option periods.
  
3. Description of the Supplies or Services: The original services acquired under this TO were for providing training services for the NSD staff, technologists utilizing the NSD toolsets/processes, and customer base utilizing Tier 1 tools. Currently the NSD uses Microsoft Products, CA Technologies Productivity Accelerator, Talent Management System, Live Meeting, SharePoint, and a Knowledge Base to provide a majority of the training needs. The training required for National Service Desk includes the development, delivery and continuous update of the following areas: Service Desk Technician Initial and Refresher training, Application Support Processes, Incident Management, Problem Management, Multiple Information Technology (IT) Service Management Suites, Commercial-off-the-Shelf Support, and Customer Service and Supervisor training. Subsequently, the Government has identified a need to expound upon these services. VA requires additional training and KM support for OI&T staff to be incorporated into the NSD TO.

This request is for a one-time NSD Operations TO modification for additional training and KM support. By increasing the scope of the current TO, VA will be able to support VA's immediate need for training required by the end of January and continuing through June in support of emergent patient safety tracking requirements and personal identification and verification only access requirements. The contractor shall provide training support for all levels of NSD and OI&T staff (Service Desk Technicians, IT Specialists, Resource Management, Functional Line Managers, Service Line Managers and Directors) and technologists utilizing the NSD toolsets and processes, and the customer base that is utilizing Tier One tools to include: Health, Benefits, Incident Management, Specialized Applications, Business Applications Configuration Management, and Technology Management. Due to the additional training needs resulting from consolidation efforts, NSD staffing has increased, as well as the customer base; thus requiring additional training and KM support for approximately 10,000 more customers.

The training required for NSD and OI&T includes the development, delivery and continuous update of technical training in the areas detailed above. Similarly, due to the increase in NSD staffing and the customer base, more KM support for managing and maintaining knowledge documents from disparate ticketing systems is also required. The contractor will be responsible for the review and publication of customer knowledge documents. The project documents include project installation, modification, administration support guide, version description, interface requirements/guide, administrative support guide, troubleshooting guide, user/analyst guide, physical and logical layer diagrams, and other necessary project documentation deliverables. The total estimated value of the proposed action is approximately \_\_\_\_\_, inclusive of all options.

4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting an exception to fair opportunity is Section 41 U.S.C. 4106(c) as implemented by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 16.505(b)(2)(i)(C), entitled "The order must be issued on a sole-source basis in the interest of economy and efficiency because it is a logical follow-on to an order already issued under the contract, provided that all awardees were given a fair opportunity to be considered for the original order."

5. Rationale Supporting Use of Authority Cited Above: The proposed source for this action is Adams Communication and Engineering Technology, Inc. (ACET), 11637 TER Drive, Waldorf, Maryland 20602. ACET was awarded the original TO on September 28, 2012, on a competitive basis. Awarding the proposed action as a logical follow-on provides significant economic and efficient value to the Government. Based on contracts for similar NSD services, any other source other than ACET would require a minimum of three months at approximately \$270,000 to \$300,000 in duplicative costs to create a process that would allow them to meet VA's requirements.

Specifically, this process would require another source to obtain current NSD applications functions and create extensive training plans and knowledge documents for NSD's growing customer base. Currently, no other source has a process that can create these plans in VA's timeframe. Furthermore, these efforts would be duplicative of what ACET has already completed, resulting in duplicated costs of approximately \$270,000.00 to \$300,000.00 to VA. This duplicative cost estimate is based on previous efforts for similar support. VA requires seamless training and KM support. Failure to award the proposed action will result in NSD and OI&T not having the required processes in place to support the increased workload and varied applications and services including Personal Identity Verification (PIV), Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS), and My Healthy Vet (MHV). PIV has replaced soft certificates and is a requirement for all VA personnel to have, unless an exception has been granted, in accordance with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (HSPD-12). VBMS is experiencing growing support requirements for benefit related services due to higher requests of Veteran support. MHV is a critical application that is VA's web portal for Veterans that provides a personal health record and access to VA services, including prescription refill and secure messaging

with their providers. Any decrease in support of the above mentioned applications will have a negative impact on Veterans and will result in VA staff not having the required technical resources available to support our Veterans, affecting portal to payment processing, slowing service delivery and up to and including affecting Veteran patient safety.

The existing contractor, ACET, has already established processes in place to support the Government's additional training and KM requirements. Modifying the current TO to incorporate the required tasks will ensure continuity of mission critical services required for VA to be able to execute its mission to deliver healthcare and benefits services directly to Veterans.

6. Efforts to Obtain Competition: Market research was conducted, details of which are in the market research section of this document. In accordance with FAR 5.301 and 16.505(b)(2), this action will be synopsisized at award on the Federal Business Opportunities Page (FBO) and the justification will be made publicly available.

7. Actions to Increase Competition: There are no barriers to future competition. The follow-on TO for NSD Operations will be solicited on a competitive basis among all T4 prime contract holders in the second quarter of this fiscal year, with an anticipated award in the third quarter of the fiscal year. During the solicitation process, the T4 prime contract holders will have the opportunity to propose a new approach to meeting the Government's training requirements. The training provided under this J&A is required to be delivered seamlessly, without disruption, while the requirements for the re-compete are being developed. If the follow-on effort is awarded prior to exercising the option(s) on this TO, VA would not exercise the remaining option period(s) and transition to the new TO. The requirements detailed above will be incorporated into the Performance Work Statement for the follow on effort.

8. Market Research: The Government's technical experts performed market research in November 2014, to determine if any other source other than ACET is capable of meeting the Government's requirements. The Government's technical experts visited the websites of the other 15 T4 prime contractors and reviewed each contractor's core competencies as well as testimonials on the specific work required. While sources were found that have the general capabilities of providing IT training, no source was found to have the established processes or that could economically and efficiently perform the required training and KM services in a seamless manner within VA's required timeframe without resulting in duplicative costs and delivery delays. It was determined that utilizing an already existing TO is the most efficient and suitable method for receiving the required Training and KM services. Based on the market research, ACET, as the incumbent contractor, has the already established processes in place and possesses the technical expertise and experience specific to the NSD for additional training and KM.

9. Other Facts: In accordance with FAR 16.505(b)(2)(i)(C), this logical follow-on effort shall be awarded on a sole-source basis as all awardees were given a fair opportunity to be considered for the original order.