

Birmingham Annex/Huntsville CBOC PBX System

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, NJ 07724

2. Description of Action: This proposed action is to include brand name specifications in a Firm-Fixed-Price Delivery Order to be issued against the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) V Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC).

3. Description of the Supplies or Services: VA, Office of Information Technology, Service Delivery and Engineering, Field Operations Region 3, in support of the Birmingham Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) requires Unify Private Branch Exchange (PBX) equipment and services for activation of the new Birmingham VA Medical Center Annex and Huntsville Community Based Outpatient Clinic. The required Unify PBX equipment will interface directly with the existing Unify PBX equipment that is presently installed at the Birmingham VAMC. All contractor personnel working performing maintenance must be Unify HiPath 4000 PBX and OpenScope Branch certified. Delivery and installation shall be completed no later than 6 months after award. The period of performance for implementation and delivery of the required equipment and the associated maintenance shall be 12 months from date of award.

4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting this exception to fair opportunity is Section 41 U.S.C. 4106(c)(2) as implemented by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 16.505(b)(2)(i)(B) entitled, "Only one awardee is capable of providing the supplies or services required at the level of quality required because the supplies or services ordered are unique or highly specialized."

5. Rationale Supporting Use of Authority Cited Above: Based on extensive market research, as described in section 8 of this justification, it was determined that limited competition is viable among resellers for the required brand name PBX equipment and support. VA currently uses Unify PBX equipment for its voice telecommunications services within the Birmingham VAMC and its nine associated CBOCs. No other brand hardware can integrate seamlessly with the current Unify infrastructure to extend integrated telecommunications capabilities from the Birmingham VAMC to its new Annex and the Huntsville CBOC. There is no middleware currently available in the marketplace that translates brand specific code found on the PBX hardware to allow multiple brands to be integrated and to interoperate between multiple facilities.

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6. Efforts to Obtain Competition: Market research was conducted, details of which are in section 8 of this justification. This effort did not yield any additional sources that can meet the Government's requirements. It was determined however, limited competition is anticipated among authorized resellers for the required brand name Unify PBX bundles and services on the NASA SEWP V GWAC.

7. Actions to Increase Competition: The Government will continually conduct market research by surveying the marketplace to determine if there are any other brands of PBX equipment that can meet VA's needs.

8. Market Research: The Government's Information Technology (IT) Specialists performed market research in May 2015 by researching other similar brands of PBX hardware to ascertain if other products could integrate with the current Birmingham VAMC Unify telecommunications infrastructure. The Government's IT Specialists reviewed similar PBX bundle hardware from Cisco, Avaya, and Nortel. After review of these products, it was determined that the only product that could meet VA's needs was the Unify OpenScape Branch 500i PBX server bundle which can only be obtained through Unify or an authorized reseller. None of the other solutions can integrate and interoperate with the existing Unify infrastructure currently constituting the Birmingham VAMC telecommunications network as discussed in section 5 of this justification.

In May 2015, additional market research was conducted by utilizing the Provider Lookup tool found on the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for Enterprise Wide Procurement (SEWP) V Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) website. Unify Inc. is the rebranded name of Siemens Enterprise Communications (Siemens). Therefore, the Provider Lookup tool was used to lookup both company names. The market research yielded 16 resellers of Unify/Siemens brand products. Of the 16 resellers one is a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB), one is a Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Zone Small Business, six are Small Businesses and eight are large businesses.

9. Other Facts: None.