

**Questions and Answers
for VA118-15-N-0780**

Vets.gov Technical Support RFI

Item #	Draft PWS Section #	Page #	Draft PWS Section Text	Question(s)
1	5.2.1 and 5.2.4	9 of 43 and 11 of 43	PWS Section 5.2.1, 2 nd bullet, states, <i>“Identify Veteran-facing links to be included in the portal by the initial launch date of 11/11/15.”</i> PWS Section 5.2.4 is titled <i>“5.2.4 VETS.GOV INITIAL DEPLOYMENT”</i> .	Question 1A: Are the initial launch and initial deployment the same event with the same requirements and deliverables? Answer: Yes. The initial release of vets.gov includes the release of the public facing website and the vets.gov platform. Question 1B: If they are not the same event, what requirements and/or deliverables differentiate them? Answer: Same event.
2	5.2.4	11 of 43	PWS Section 5.2.4, items b and f state <i>“b. Develop portal content required for initial launch.”</i> and <i>“f. Assist DS with preparation of launch content materials”</i> .	Question 2A: What is “content material” in this context? Answer: Content material can include, but is not limited to, public facing content on the website (e.g., website content, required links, help / FAQ content, etc.), or technical support content (e.g., help desk scripts, technical documentation, user manuals, etc.) Question 2B: Is the contractor responsible for the entire “5.2.4 VETS.GOV INITIAL DEPLOYMENT” task or is the contractor supporting DS in performing the “5.2.4 VETS.GOV INITIAL DEPLOYMENT” task? Answer: The contractor is responsible for all of the technical tasks to deploy vets.gov, under the direction of DS.
3	5.2 and 5.2.2	8 of 43 and 9 & 10 of 43	PWS section 5.2 is titled <i>“5.2 VETS.GOV INITIAL LAUNCH – BASE TASK”</i> . PWS Section 5.2.2, 1 st paragraph, states: <i>“In order to support single sign-on, the Contractor shall provide an identity verification service to verify Veteran status as the first step of establishing single sign-on.”</i> ; and the deliverable for PWS Section 5.2.2 is <i>“A. IAM licenses”</i> .	Question 3A: For the initial launch date of 11/11/15, is the contractor only responsible for supplying the IAM licenses? or Answer: This requirement will provide support and increased capabilities to Vets.Gov after the initial launch. The timelines set forth in the PWS will be revised accordingly. Question 3B: Is the contractor responsible for delivering a complete and functioning IAM solution, integrated with the access mechanisms of all the systems linked to by the Vets.gov portal, on the initial launch date of 11/11/15? Answer: VA is looking for a solution. (See answer to 3A in regard to timeline.)
4	5.2.1	9 of 43	PWS Section 5.2., 1 st bullet states, <i>“Complete the design, development, unit and functional testing of all capabilities and functionalities pertaining to the creation of a single Veteran-facing portal that will provide Veterans with a single point of entry to all</i>	Question 4A: In order to develop an estimate of the effort and other costs, can the Government supply the list of all Veteran-facing systems across VA including VBA, VHA and NCA? Additionally, for each identified Veteran-facing system, will the government identify the current access/security

			<p><i>Veteran-facing systems across VA including Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and National Cemetery Association (NCA)."</i></p>	<p>systems used to authenticate users?</p> <p>Answer: Veteran facing systems are publicly available websites. There are approximately 300-400 websites that we anticipate migrating to vets.gov. The contractor will provide DS support in conducting assessments and discovery about these websites in order to inform migration planning. The Government will determine access and security requirements.</p> <p>Question 4B: For each identified Veteran-facing system, can the Government identify who will be responsible for any required changes to these systems so that they will accept the Vets.gov IAM as the authentication authority? (i.e., Current maintainers of these systems or the contractor awarded this vets.gov contract)</p> <p>Answer: The resultant awardee will be required to work with contractors that are currently responsible for maintaining the various systems that will have to be modified to accept the Vets.Gov IAM at the direction of DS.</p>
5	5.4	11 & 12 of 43	<p>PWS Section 5.4, 1st paragraph states, <i>"The Contractor shall analyze requirements provided by the Digital Service team and VA business components to apply user-centered design concepts to each project to be added to the Vets.gov portal."</i></p>	<p>Question 5A: As this is an optional task, we assume that these "projects" are not the same as the base task requirement to make all Veteran facing systems available through Vets.gov; Is our assumption correct?</p> <p>Answer: Correct, this is currently written as an optional task that is separate from the Base task.</p> <p>Question 5b: In order to develop an estimate of the effort to complete these projects, can the Government identify the potential scope of these "projects"?</p> <p>Answer: Prior to final RFP release, the Government will attempt to better define the scope of these projects.</p>
6	5.2.3	10 of 43	<p>PWS Section 5.2.3, 2nd paragraph states, <i>"The Contractor shall follow the Digital Service team's continuous delivery practices and utilize the DS developer toolkit consisting of Ruby on Rails (RoR), PostgreSQL, Docker, Jenkins, Selenium, RSpec, New Relic, and Amazon Web Services."</i></p>	<p>Question 6A: Whenever the draft PWS refers to DS or the DS developer toolkit, does this refer to a Government wide DS toolkit or one specific to the VA?</p> <p>Answer: The vets.gov SDK (software development kit) will be a VA-wide tool that all vets.gov in-house and contractor developers will use to migrate / deploy content and services to the vets.gov platform.</p> <p>Question 6B: Can the Government please supply a detailed listing/description of the entire DS toolkit?</p> <p>Answer: The DS toolkit currently consists of Ruby on Rails (RoR), PostgreSQL, Docker, Jenkins, Selenium, RSpec, New Relic, and Amazon Web Services.</p> <p>Question 6C: We assume that all items within the</p>

				<p>toolkit are in the VA TRM; is our assumption correct?</p> <p>Answer: All items are either in the VA TRM or will be entered into the TRM approval pipeline.</p> <p>Question 6D: Can products, tools and utilities that are not in the DS toolkit but are in the VA TRM be utilized?</p> <p>Answer: Yes</p>
7	3.0, 5.2.2	6 of 43 and 9 of 43	<p>PWS Section 3.0, 1st paragraph, 2nd sentence states, "<i>The Contractor shall provide Identity Authentication capabilities</i> as well as support throughout the development lifecycle including compliance testing, deployment, operations and maintenance."</p> <p>PWS Section 5.2.2, 1st paragraph, 2nd sentence states, "<i>In order to support single sign-on, the Contractor shall provide an identity verification service to verify Veteran status as the first step of establishing single sign-on.</i>"</p>	<p>Question 7A: The requirement to provide an Identity verification service requires an infrastructure and framework to: (1) Physically verify the veteran's identity with ID documents; and (2) Connect to a System of Record to verify identity. Does the government intend for these capabilities to be established and available for the first 20,000 users at initial launch of 11/11/15?</p> <p>Answer: This requirement will provide support and increased capabilities to Vets.Gov after the initial launch. The timelines set forth in the PWS will be revised accordingly.</p>
8	5.2.2	9 of 43	<p>PWS Section 5.2.2, 2nd paragraph, item a, states "<i>The Contractor provided IAM service shall include:</i> <i>a) Multi-factor authentication</i>".</p>	<p>Question 8A: Does the government require that this be in place for the initial 20,000 users at initial launch of 11/11/15?</p> <p>Answer: This requirement will provide support and increased capabilities to Vets.Gov after the initial launch. The timelines set forth in the PWS will be revised accordingly.</p> <p>Question 8B: Does the government have a preferred multi-factor authentication methodology?</p> <p>Answer: No.</p>
9	5.2.1	9		<p>Question 9: VA requests the contractor to "complete the design, development, unit and functional testing of all capabilities and functionality pertaining to the creation of a single Veteran-facing portal that will provide..." Does VA have a defined roadmap that outlines the currently understood scope of "all capabilities and functionalities"? Can this roadmap and the list of capabilities and functionality be provided to assist with scope and costing purposes?</p> <p>Answer: VA currently does not have a defined roadmap. The roadmap will evolve to match evolving vets.gov priorities.</p>
10	5.2.2	9		<p>Question 10: VA currently utilizes a VA-developed identity and access service and utilizes a DoD credentialing service for Veteran access to personalized services in its existing eBenefits and myHealtheVet sites. What role, if any, does the DS team see these services playing in Vets.gov architecture?</p> <p>Answer: To Be Determined.</p>

11	5.2.4	11		<p>Question 11: What specific task does VA require from the contractor to satisfy "b. Develop portal content required for initial launch"?</p> <p>Answer: Answered in Question 2A. This capability will be required after the initial launch and timeframes will be specified in the final Request for Proposal.</p>
12	5.2.4	11		<p>Question 12: Are the APIs referenced in "e. Install and test Application Program Interfaces required for launch functionality" already developed? How many APIs are there? Will the contractor have any responsibility in developing/modifying these APIs?</p> <p>Answer: Some Application Programming Interfaces are already developed and will require integration work. Others will need to be refined and/or built by the contractor.</p>
13	5.6.5	15		<p>Question 13: The PWS requires the contractor to express developed content in recognized reference and authoritative terminology standards. In cases where content is obtained from other source systems and that system does not use standard reference terminology, does VA expect the Vets.gov portal architecture to include a terminology mediation service to translate the data to a reference terminology standard? Or, is this requirement directed only to content developed by the contractor?</p> <p>Answer: The contractor will use Agile development methodology and Human Centered Design principles that meet all vets.gov standards and guidance included in the vets.gov Playbook.</p>
14	5.2.4 b	11		<p>Question 14: Will the contractor be asked to write new content for the website, or will the VA provide new content to the contractor to be incorporated into the site?</p> <p>Answer: Both</p>
15	5.2	8-11		<p>Question 15: What are the underlying technologies that have been selected for the Vets.gov platform, including, but not limited to: portal platform and content management system?</p> <p>Answer: Portal is already described within the RFI. CMS is TBD; contractor support will be required to collect, aggregate and analyze CMS requirements.</p>
16	5.2	8-11		<p>Question 16: What are the expected usage volumes for Vets.gov? (i.e. visits per day, logins per day, # of total users, # of registered users)</p> <p>Answer: There is no means of reliably estimating the usage volumes at this time. The Contractor should plan for maximum general public usage for vets.gov.</p>

17	5.2	8-11		<p>Question 17: What are the current expected performance requirements for the Vets.gov site?</p> <p>Answer: 24/7 uptime. SLA of 99.999%</p>
18	5.5	12		<p>Question 18: What are the anticipated volume of tickets that will be handled via the O&M task?</p> <p>Answer: There is no means of reliably estimating the number of tickets at this time.</p>
19	5.4	11		<p>Question 19: In order to price the Optional Task 5.4, can the government provide the average number of hours expected for each of the 40 projects that might be included in this task?</p> <p>Answer: This will vary significantly depending on the current state of the service related to the project (e.g. whether it needs to be created anew, modified significantly, or migrated largely as-is) and in step with an Agile, human-centered design process will be scoped on an ongoing, per-project basis to best meet the needs of Veterans.</p>
20	5.2.4.g	11		<p>Question 20: Will the contractor be asked to conduct performance testing?</p> <p>Answer: Yes.</p>
21	5.3	11		<p>Question 21: Is the government's intent that the contractor serve as a reseller of the selected Identity & Access Management software to the government?</p> <p>Answer: It is the Contractor's discretion as to how it will provide the IAM requirements set forth in the performance work statement.</p>
22	5.5	12		<p>Question 22: Who will serve as the Tier 1 helpdesk for the Vets.gov site? Will this be part of the contractor's scope, or will the contractor be handling just Tier 2 and Tier 3 incidents?</p> <p>Answer: The Contractor will serve as the Tier 1 helpdesk for vets.gov. The PWS will be revised accordingly with the final RFP.</p>
23	5.2.3	10		<p>Question 23: Will the VA provide the development and testing environments, including environments for integration, regression and performance testing?</p> <p>Answer: Yes.</p>

24	5.2.1	9		<p>Question 24: What are the anticipated award and start dates for this work?</p> <p>Answer: Anticipated award date is scheduled for 2nd Quarter of Fiscal Year 2016.</p>
25	5.2	8-11		<p>Question 25: How much of the requested scope will be required for completion prior to the initial launch date of 11/11/15?</p> <p>Answer: This requirement will provide support and increased capabilities to Vets.Gov after the initial launch. The timelines set forth in the PWS will be revised accordingly.</p>
26	5.2.3 b	10		<p>Question 26: What level of integration will be required with the applications identified in Task 5.2.1?</p> <p>Answer: The level of integration will evolve throughout the various phases of development and deployment of Vets.gov. VA will work with the contractor to establish a roadmap pertaining to the integrations and resulting timeframes.</p>
27	5.2.1	9		<p>Question 27: Have the user interface designs already been developed, or will the contractor be responsible for developing those?</p> <p>Answer: User interfaces designs have already been developed.</p>
28	General			<p>Question 28: Is there an incumbent contractor currently performing work on VETS.Gov?</p> <p>Answer: No.</p>