

LIMITED-SOURCES JUSTIFICATION

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: The proposed action is to award a sole source, firm-fixed-price, delivery order under General Services Administration (GSA) Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) Contract Number GS-35F-0047S with Government Retirement & Benefits, Inc. (GRB), located at 330 John Carlyle Street, Suite 600, Alexandria, VA 22314.

3. Description of the Supplies or Services: VA Office of Information and Technology (OI&T), Region 3 has a requirement for the renewal of GRB Platform Software subscriptions. This software provides retirement estimate reports, service computation date reports, and average salary reports. GRB Platform Software is procured on a yearly subscription basis. The subscription includes a hosting fee, which includes all required hardware, software, bandwidth, information technology administration, updates, and technical support provided by GRB. The period of performance for this effort shall be 12-months from date of award, with two subsequent 12-month option periods.

4. Authority: This acquisition is conducted under the authority of the Multiple-Award Schedule Program. The specific authority providing for a limited source award is Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 8.405-6(a)(1)(i)(B), Only one source is capable of providing the supplies or services required at the level of quality required because the supplies or services are unique or highly specialized.

5. Rationale Supporting Use of Authority Cited Above: Based on the market research, as described in section eight of this justification, it was determined that competition is not viable as GRB is the proprietary owner and only authorized vendor that can provide the required brand name GRB Platform software subscription. Only the required GRB software will satisfy the Governments functional requirements. GRB Platform software is used by Human Resource (HR) departments across the Department of Defense, Office of Personnel Management, VA, and other federal agencies as the federal retirement benefits calculator. This software provides capabilities for accurately computing various complex estimates needed in allowing Federal employees to make informed decisions with their retirement options. The calculating capabilities of this software are specific to Federal employees to include, but not limited to the following: Deposits/Redeposits, Federal Employees Retirement System Annuity Supplements, Post-1956 Military Service Deposits, Part-Time Service Proration Factors, Alternative Form of Annuity, Retirement Coverage Determination,

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Federal Erroneous Retirement Coverage Corrections Act (FERCCA) Determination, FERCCA Benefits Comparison, Severance Pay, and Lump-Sum Annual Leave Payment. Other specific calculations include Service Computation Dates (SCD), Leave/Reduction In Force SCD, Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) SCD, Retirement SCD, Social Security Estimates such as Old-Age Benefits, Amount of Civil Service Retirement System Offset, Windfall Elimination Penalty, High-3 Salary, Breaks in Service, Less Than 3-Year Period, Part-Time Employment, Reemployed Annuitants, Excess Leave Without Pay, Single/Joint Life Annuities, Installment Payments, and Loan Calculator. The GRB Platform product is the only product that satisfies the Government's requirement for having the capability of allowing restricted access to the SCD, Leave Computation Date (LCD), and TSP date calculation functions. This limited user role allows HR Processing and Records (P&R) staff the ability to perform these calculations as required without having access to unnecessary personal information. Additionally, the limited user roles allow HR Specialists to generate full retirement portfolios which requires access to the full suite of applications and tools and personal data, while limiting the access to HR and P&R staff that only require the LCD, TSP data, and SCD as they process lower level duties for VA. This provides VA with the ability to limit access which allows separation of duties to HR staff that are qualified to provide full retirement consultations versus support staff that only require access to make preliminary decisions, and limits exposure of sensitive data which would otherwise be openly available to staff that do not require access.

Further, the GRB product has been utilized by VA HR departments in Region 3 since approximately 1996, and is used throughout the enterprise. In using this system, the departments have created a significant amount of unique employee data, reports, and estimates. In the event that the GRB licenses are not renewed, significant time and effort, estimated to be at least eight months, would be necessary to reformulate this data in its entirety, possibly resulting in data errors which would negatively impact employees and retirees through delayed response times or miscalculations. Based on the above, the GRB software is the only product that can meet VA's requirements.

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. In accordance with FAR 5.301 and 8.405-6(a)(2), this action will be synopsized at award on the Federal Business Opportunities Page (FBO) and the justification will be made publicly available.

7. Actions to Increase Competition: In order to remove or overcome barriers to competition in future acquisitions for this requirement, 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 fully competed.

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8. Market Research: In May 2016, VA conducted market research by reviewing similar software in the marketplace. Specifically, VA technical experts examined the Federal Annuity Claims Expert System (FACES) as a possible alternative to GRB Platform. However, the FACES software does not satisfy all VAs' requirements. Specifically, FACES does not provide the functionality to allow restricted user access to the SCD, LCD, and TSP date calculations. FACES requires its users to be in an HR Retirement Specialist role in order to have access to its system, while GRB Platform has two levels of access that restricts access to personally identifiable information. As stated above, this lack of functionality creates an issue as sensitive data would be readily available to VA staff that does not require access. GRB was contacted to determine if there were additional Government distribution channels for the required services however, GRB responded that it sells the required software subscriptions directly to the Government and does not use resellers. GRB is a small business and is the only source of these services.

In July 2016, the Contract Specialist performed market research by searching the Vendor Information Pages (VIP) database (www.vip.vetbiz.gov/). The VIP market research was conducted through a keyword search of "retirement" for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSB) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB). This search yielded 32 vendors that provide some form of "retirement" service. While there were 32 SD/VOSB vendors identified under the VIP search, this requirement is for a brand name service from the Original Software Developer (OSD), GRB, and there are no authorized resellers. Additional market research was conducted in February 2016, by releasing a Request for Information (RFI) #23259 on NASA SEWP. No vendors responded to the RFI, nor were there any vendors identified as being able to provide the required GRB software after performing an additional search utilizing the NASA SEWP V Provider Lookup tool. The requirements described herein have however, been found to be within scope of the GSA Schedule 70 Special Item Number 132 32 in a separate determination. Since brand name GRB Platform software subscriptions are required for this action, and this item was not developed by a SD/VOSB concern, it is not subject to set-aside. Based on the market research, it was determined that only GRB can meet all of the Government's requirements. Therefore, the action cannot be set-aside for SD/VOSB or any other socio-economic group and will be solicited on a Sole Source basis to GRB.

9. Other Facts: None.