



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**Office of Acquisition Operations**  
**Strategic Acquisition Center – Frederick**  
**321 Ballenger Center Drive, Suite 125**  
**Frederick, MD 21703**

**Justification and Approval for Other than Full and Open Competition**  
**6.302-5 – Authorized or required by statute**

1. Identification of the agency and the contracting activity.

This Justification and Approval (J&A) for Other Than Full and Open Competition is executed by the Strategic Acquisition Center in Frederick, Maryland on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Veterans Relationship Management Program Management Office (VRM-PMO).

2. Nature and/or description of the action being approved.

This action is a non-competitive award (sole-source) with Evoke Research and Consulting, LLC (Evoke), a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB), for the procurement of continued tactical project management support as VRM transitions to the Veterans Experience Office's (VEO) control and direction. This sole source is necessary because VRM is transitioning from VBA management to VEO, under Secretary McDonald's high priority initiative, which is led by the MyVA Task Force. Risk to MyVA and the VEO/VRM team would be inordinate with task order termination or change, and the prudent course is to not to compete this requirement (change contractors) but to keep the current contractor for 6 months, and re-compete for full and open competition (award of March 2017).

3. A description of the supplies or services required to meet the agency's needs (including the estimated value).

The proposed action is to provide 6 months of continued tactical project management support as VRM transitions to VEO control and direction. This mitigates risk to VA and allows VRM time to prepare for an open competition in the 2nd quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2017. The available contract vehicles and funding for re-competition are being analyzed by VRM and VEO as FY 2017 plans are adjusted to incorporate VRM's merging with VEO.

The contractor shall provide comprehensive project and program management support services to VRM organizations for a variety of projects throughout the period of performance of the contract. The project management support approaches employed by contractor staff should be consistent with project management best practices, notably those specified by Program Management Institute's PM Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) guide and the Software Engineering Institute's (SEI) Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI).

The contractor shall assist the Government in implementing disciplined, comprehensive, and flexible program and project management processes, including monitoring of project metrics, rigorous risk management, and prompt reporting on Government-approved cost, schedule, performance, and risk baseline.



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The [REDACTED] period of performance is from October 01, 2016 to March 31, 2017. Labor support increases from 23 to 27 persons with the Program Management (PM) category increasing by 3, from 8, to 11, and the PM Assistant category increasing by 1, from 5, to 6. The Senior PM category remains at 6 and the Business Analyst category remains at 4.

This increase is required because of additional support for VEO task priorities, as VEO now has two Enterprise Self Services, and twelve Agent Assisted tasks, where five tasks are now designated Deputy Secretary Strategic Priorities: Veterans Crisis Line, Call Center Way Forward, Health Resource Center, Health Eligibility Center and Fix the Phones.

The five strategic priorities require current requirements to be re-analyzed revised and upgraded to meet VA Central Office (VACO) and VEO human centered design requirements along with additional testing and integration activities of Agent Assisted Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software. These revisions and upgrades to improve the Veteran Experience are increasing the PM workload over the next six months. If this additional support is not obtained, project tasks are at risk of not meeting rollout schedules, user acceptance, and design specifications.

VRM's ongoing transition from VBA direction to VEO under the MyVA Task Force, which is Secretary McDonald's initiative to improve the Veteran experience while accessing VA service, is integral to VEO and VRM. Implementing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) for VA Call Centers, which are a main entry point for Veterans wanting to access service or benefits are critical for VEO success. So changing vendors at this juncture should be avoided as ongoing upgrades, release modifications, improvements to CRM software are undertaken into the next FY.

4. An identification of the statutory authority permitting other than full and open competition.

The statutory authority permitting other than full and open competition for this procurement is Public Law (PL) 109-461, Veterans First Contracting Program, as codified at 38 U.S.C. 8127 and 8128 and implemented at Veterans Affairs Acquisition Regulation (VAAR) Subsection 819.7007.

5. A demonstration that the proposed contractor's unique qualifications or the nature of the acquisition requires use of the authority cited.

38 U.S.C. 8127(c) permits a contracting officer to award a contract to a Center for Verification and Evaluation (CVE) verified SDVOSB using procedures other than competition if:

- (1) such concern is determined to be a responsible source with respect to performance of such contract opportunity;



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- (2) the anticipated award price of the contract (including options) will exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (as defined in section 134 of title 41) but will not exceed \$5,000,000; and
- (3) in the estimation of the contracting officer, the contract award can be made at a fair and reasonable price that offers best value to the United States.

The proposed action meets all three of the requirements of 38 U.S.C. 8127(c). First, Evoke has been verified by CVE as owned and controlled by a service-disabled veteran. Evoke provides acquisition, administrative, compliance, and information technology support services to Government agencies. Further, Evoke has successfully provided services to the VA similar to the required services for approximately four years. Evoke is also registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) as an SDVOSB under the applicable North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code. As such, Evoke is determined to be a responsible source with respect to performance of this opportunity.

Second, the anticipated award price [REDACTED] does not exceed the statutory threshold of \$5,000,000.

Finally, the contracting officer estimates that the award can be made at a fair and reasonable price that offers best value to the United States. The VA possesses ample historical pricing information that can be used to determine whether the proposed price is fair and reasonable and, depending on the contracting officer's analysis of the proposed price, to further negotiate the proposed price. Further, Evoke has already competed and has been awarded a contract with the VA for similar services; it is likely that it will again be able to submit an offer providing the best value to the Government. Most importantly, the contracting officer will not award a contract without first determining that the proposed price is fair and reasonable and the offer represents best value.

6. A description of efforts made to ensure that offers are solicited from as many potential sources as is practicable, including whether a notice was or will be publicized as required by Subpart 5.2 and, if not, which exception under 5.202 applies.

In accordance with 819.7007(b), the determination to make a sole source award to an SDVOSB is a business decision wholly within the discretion of the contracting officer; therefore, the requirement to ensure that offers are solicited from as many potential sources as practicable is not applicable to this procurement. In addition, 819.7007(c) further authorizes the contracting officer to make the award without first determining that only one SDVOSB source can meet the requirement.

A notice of the proposed action will be synopsisized via the Government Point of Entry (GPE) in accordance with FAR Section 5.201, and the agency will make publicly available the justification required by 6.305(a) within 14 days after contract award.



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7. A determination by the Contracting Officer that the anticipated cost to the Government will be fair and reasonable.

No award shall be made until the Contracting Officer determines the costs to the Government to be fair and reasonable. This determination will be based on the historical pricing data agreed to in one or more VA contracts for the same or similar services.

8. A description of the market research conducted (see Part 10) and the results or a statement of the reason market research was not conducted.

Market research was conducted using CVE's Vendor Information Pages (VIP) database to ensure that Evoke is verified by CVE as an SDVOSB. The VIP search confirmed that Evoke is verified by CVE. In addition, Evoke has been determined to be responsible, and is registered in the SAM as a small business under the relevant NAICS code.

9. Any other facts supporting the use of other than full and open competition.

The FAR allows restrictive provisions or conditions to the extent necessary to satisfy the needs of the agency or as authorized by law (FAR Subsection 11.002(a)(1)(ii)). As such, the Government has discretion to reasonably restrict competition as long as that requirement is needed to meet the agency's minimum need.

10. A listing of the sources, if any, 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 any subsequent acquisition for the supplies or services required.

The VA is currently in the planning phase of a requirement for a long-term, competitive contract for the same services. The sole-source contract will be for six months to permit the transition of the required services to the long-term contract as soon as the long-term contract is ready for award.



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12. Certifications / Signatures.

**Technical Representative Certification:**

Pursuant to FAR Subsection 6.303(c), I certify that any supporting data that is my responsibility and which forms a basis for the justification is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

[Redacted Signature]

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

[Redacted Name]

Program Analyst  
Veterans Relationship Management

**Contracting Officer Certification/ Approval:**

Pursuant to FAR Subsection 6.303-2(b)(12), I certify that this justification is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief and approval is thus provided.

[Redacted Signature]

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

Tara Flores  
Contracting Officer  
Strategic Acquisition Center – Frederick

**Agency Competition Advocate Certification/ Approval:**

The Agency Competition Advocate (see 806.501(a)<sup>1</sup>) signature below meets the justification approving authority requirements in accordance with VAAR 806.304, Approval of Justification, Table 806.304-1 and FAR Section 13.501(a)(2)(ii). Proposed contract amount is over \$650,000 but not exceeding \$12.5<sup>2</sup> million.

[Redacted Signature]

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

[Redacted Name]  
Agency Competition Advocate  
Office of Acquisition Operations

[Redacted Signature]