

JUSTIFICATION AND APPROVAL  
FOR AN EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY

1. Contracting Activity: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)  
Office of Acquisition Operations  
Technology Acquisition Center  
1701 Directors Boulevard, Suite 600  
Austin, TX 78744
  
2. Description of the Action: This proposed action is for a firm-fixed-price Task Order (TO) issued under General Services Administration (GSA) Alliant Government-Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) Number GS00Q09BGD0056, for Optical Regional Area Network (ORAN) maintenance services at VA Central Office (VACO) locations to include the Capital Region Readiness Center (CRRC) in Falling Waters, West Virginia and the VA Medical Center in Martinsburg, West Virginia. The base period of performance will be seven months and will also include two, three-month option periods.
  
3. Description of Supplies or Services: The purpose of this acquisition is to continue the ORAN maintenance services with Northrop Grumman Information Technology, Inc. (NGIT) for an additional seven months from June 1, 2012 until December 31, 2012. The contractor shall provide ORAN maintenance services of a robust transmission infrastructure that is secure, redundant, and considered "best of class" in the fiber optic transmission industry, with all aspects complying with current industry standards which will ensure successful operation of a completely diverse fiber optic ring. In addition, the network infrastructure must provide high-bandwidth, high-availability, manageability, and scalability. The contractor will maintain the connection and equipment racks at all VA locations in order to maintain the network. The contractor shall also be responsible for monitoring and repairing the network to include the fiber links and equipment at both the Falling Waters and Martinsburg locations. Since the CRRC will be the repository for VA data and connectivity, the fiber optic ring will play a more important role now than it has in the past. VA Office of Information Technology will migrate most of its customers from the Capital Region Data Center to the CRRC in Martinsburg this year. Martinsburg will function more as the hub while Falling Waters will remain a connection point in the fiber optic ring. The total estimated value of the proposed action inclusive of the option periods is \$1,609,999.
  
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)(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: The proposed source for this action is NGIT, 7575 Colshire, Drive, McLean, Virginia 22102. NGIT has been under contract with VA to build and maintain the current ORAN system since 2005. NGIT has worked very closely with the technical and functional resources in VA and gained significant knowledge of the network. Only NGIT has the specific expertise necessary to ensure that appropriate connectivity is provided to each VA location and only NGIT understands the configuration of the network equipment required to ensure operation of

the network without failure. NGIT has the necessary expertise to provide the connection and maintenance services to the Government and manage the ORAN network equipment. The Program Office researched other companies but determined that they cannot provide the aforementioned maintenance services; specifically, the necessary interoperability or compatibility requirements to ensure continuous, uninterrupted operation of the network. NGIT developed and constructed the fiber optic ring and has detailed knowledge of each connection point within the network and no other source has such knowledge. This knowledge is required to provide the aforementioned ORAN maintenance services. NGIT also installed the Dense Wave Division Multiplexing (DWDM) equipment and installed fiber optic connections. Only NGIT understands the timing for performing frequent fiber optic checks for potential problems, equipment checks and amplifier evaluations. Only NGIT has the specific knowledge of the network to meet the Government's needs.

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 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: The Government's technical experts have determined that future requirements for these services will be met using an Inter-Agency Agreement (IAA) with the District of Columbia (DC) Government. VA does not anticipate any future competition once the IAA is in place with the DC Government.

8. Market Research: The Government's technical experts conducted market research by discussing VA's needs with the following companies in April 2012: Applied Data Systems, Inc., Verizon Communications and AT&T Corporation. These three companies were selected because of their expertise with telecommunication systems. Applied Data Systems is the current contractor for maintenance of VA's Optical Metropolitan Area Network, which services some of the VA offices in the DC area. The contractor has the expertise to maintain an optical ring but, after discussions, revealed it cannot provide the dark fiber connectivity between the sites. Verizon Communications and AT&T Corporation are both contractors on GSA's Network contract and have experience with establishing Network and Sonet rings. Both of these companies also lack the necessary ability to provide the dark fiber connectivity between the sites. No objections were raised by these three companies as to the Government's assessment that they could not currently meet VA's needs. Only NGIT has the expertise to understand the required connections and the configuration of the equipment needed to maintain the operation of the network without interruption while possessing the service level agreements with local carriers to access the fiber connections.

9. Other Facts: None