

INDUSTRY QUESTIONS

PWS

Section Question:

1.00 What is the organizational structure in relation to the SAC and the VISN?

VA RESPONSE:

The Department of Veterans Affairs is organized into 18 Veterans Integrated Support Networks under the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to support Veteran healthcare needs for designated geographical areas. Additional information on the VA VISN structure can be found here:

<https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/division.asp?dnum=1>

The Strategic Acquisition Center falls hierarchically under the VA Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (OALC) and has a purview to leverage VA's collective spend across each VISN within the VA enterprise.

VISNS are not hierarchically aligned to the SAC but work in partnership with SAC to ensure VA procurements represent the best value for Veterans and taxpayers.

Question:

How centralized is the contracting and purchasing departments within the VA?

VA RESPONSE:

In order to ensure no delays in meeting Veteran healthcare needs there are contracting and purchasing departments located within each VA hospital or VA Medical Center (VAMC) and at each Community Based Outpatient Center (CBOC).

There are four VA contracting activities assigned to look across all VA requirements to leverage VA spend as a single entity for certain healthcare products and services provided to Veterans. These are the Strategic Acquisition Center, the Technology Acquisition Center, the National Acquisition Center and the Denver Acquisition & Logistics Center. Additional information on these VA contracting activities can be found here:

<https://www.va.gov/officeofacquisitionoperations/sac/index.asp>

<https://www.va.gov/OfficeOfAcquisitionOperations/about/tac.asp>

<https://www.va.gov/oal/about/nac.asp>

Question:

How are new products introduced within the VA?

VA RESPONSE:

There are various ways new products are introduced within VA. The most common way is via allowance of a contractual “technology refresh” for companies VA has existing contractual relationships with.

Question:

How much autonomy does each VISN have to decide on what is purchased?

VA RESPONSE:

Each VISN has some autonomy to decide what is purchased depending on the individual Veterans’ healthcare needs. VA has initiated a “Standardization Integrated Product Team” to review medical commodities commonly used within each VISN across the VA enterprise and leverage spend on those “standardized” products. Standardization contracts are “mandatory use.”

Question:

Do the VISN's have to follow the direction on purchasing and pricing set by the SAC?

VA RESPONSE:

From a policy perspective yes. Pricing and purchases made by SAC are designated as “mandatory use” by the VA Senior Procurement Council and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Chief Procurement and Logistics Officer. In urgent and compelling situations, VA healthcare officials must have access to a wide array of options to meet Veterans’ healthcare needs.

Question:

Will all requests be centralized through the SAC or will we receive information directly from the VISNs

VA RESPONSE:

All requests under this requirement will be centralized through the SAC.

2.00

Question:

Will you provide the following data fields in your spend file:

Supplier: Who is delivering the product? (May be the same as manufacturer) i.e. Medline, etc.

Supplier Number: Specific item number assigned by supplier

Item Description: Product description

PO Date: Date the item was purchased (format of 6/1/2014)

Quantity: Number of items purchased per purchase order

Unit of Measure: i.e. each, box, case, roll, set

Price Paid: Price paid per individual unit of measure.

The following fields are highly suggested for a more thorough analysis:

Manufacturer*: Who makes the product (may be the same as the supplier)

Manufacturer Number: Designated item number assigned by manufacturer

Metric: Count of items per unit of measure. i.e. 50 items per box means the metric is 50

VA RESPONSE:

Under this requirement, SAC will not provide a spend file to the successful awardee. This requirement is intended to give the VA access to commercial spend data for products purchased across the VA enterprise. This data will enable SAC to ensure parity between prices offered to VA and prices paid by commercial healthcare entities.

2.10

Question:

The quantity required to purchase at different price points would be custom – and not available on the dashboard. Would that be acceptable?

VA RESPONSE:

It is acceptable for the quantity required to purchase at different price points to be a custom feature as long as this feature does not result in additional cost or fee to the VA.

Question:

What are the commitment level vendors can expect from the VA?

VA RESPONSE:

The VA is fully committed to a contract award in support of this requirement.

2.11 **Question:**

The Dashboard will reflect a rolling 12 months of Data. We will be able to identify "new" items on the custom analysis, will this be acceptable?

VA RESPONSE:

Yes, it is acceptable for the contractor to identify "new" items on the custom analysis. VA classifies an item as "new" if it has been commercially available for less than 12 months.

2.12 **Question:**

What type of information will SAC provide to Contractor for "new" items?

VA RESPONSE:

For "new" items SAC will provide the Manufacturer name, manufacturer part number and item description.

2.13 **Question:**

We do not provide Geographical information on the dashboard - but we could provide regional information on the custom analysis if required. We would use AHA 9 geographical regions. Is that acceptable?

VA RESPONSE:

Ideally the geographical information provided will align to the geographical regions encompassed by each VA VISN. Additional information on the geographical regions within each VISN can be found here:

<https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/division.asp?dnum=1>

Please provide a listing of the American Health Association 9 geographical regions and the correlation to the VA VISN structure with your response to this solicitation.

4.10 **Question:**

Will any individual VISN facilities require access or will access all be centralized at SAC?

VA RESPONSE:

This requirement is for SAC access only. All requests for information, data and analysis will be centralized at SAC.

4.20 **Question:**

Can the SAC provide an example of the type of request that they will submit to Contractor for review?

VA RESPONSE:

Yes, an example of the type of request SAC will submit to the Contractor for review will be provided.

Question:

What is the strategy for only 50 analyses?

VA RESPONSE:

Based on current award projections SAC anticipates 50 instances where Contractor analysis will be required.

5.20 **Question:**

Depending on the scope of request would the VA allow Contractor 3-5 hours to determine the turnaround time upon receipt?

VA RESPONSE:

Yes, a 3-5 hour review period is acceptable to determine the scope and turnaround time on receipt of a request from the VA as long as this does not conflict with the 48 hour turnaround time stated in the requirement.

Question:

1. Please outline the VA's purchasing strategy for purchasing products.

VA RESPONSE:

This requirement pertains to collection of prices paid data for medical commodities purchased by commercial entities for comparison with prices offered to VA for the same or similar commodities. The VA strategy for purchasing products is outside of the scope of this requirement.

Question:

- a. What level of standardization is required within the VA?

VA RESPONSE:

This requirement pertains to collection of prices paid data for medical commodities purchased by commercial entities for comparison with prices offered to VA for the same or similar commodities. The VA level of product standardization is outside the scope of this requirement.

Question:

2. What is the strategy for identifying the expected 40 analysis?

VA RESPONSE:

VA will identify if an analysis is required based on internal factors specific to each requirement. These factors may include time, the number of medical commodities to be priced, the dollar value of the medical commodities required and historical factors such as previous price disparity between the price offered to VA compared to prices commercially available for the same product.

- a. Category, Vendor?

5.00

Question:

Can you provide an example of the acceptance form?

VA RESPONSE:

Yes, a copy of the acceptance form will be provided.