

JUSTIFICATION
FOR AN EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY

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 issue a firm-fixed price delivery order against the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) V Governmentwide Acquisition Contract vehicle for the procurement of Cisco brand name video conferencing (VTC) systems, installation services, and maintenance support.
3. Description of the Supplies or Services: VA's Office of Information & Technology (OI&T), Information Technology Operations and Service, End User Operations has a requirement for the procurement of VTC Systems and ancillary items for the new facility for the Veterans Affairs Central Office located at 811 Vermont Avenue NW Washington, DC. The proposed action is to obtain a quantity of 130 Cisco brand name VTC equipment and Cisco installation and maintenance support as well as ancillary items that do not need to be Cisco brand name. The only brand name requirement in this proposed action are the VTC systems and associated services. The equipment will be used provide conference rooms and executive offices with VTC and AV equipment for meetings, presentations, events, and training sessions. VACO requires VTC systems in every conference room of the new facility to expand its existing Cisco based Enterprise Video Tele-Conference Network (EVTN) to support increased demand for meetings with personnel from the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Regional Offices, Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMC) and Office of General Counsel (OGC) Regional Offices nationwide. The Contractor shall also provide installation services, and 12 months of maintenance support for the equipment installed. Specifically, maintenance support shall include a toll free number to call in maintenance support requests, response time of 4 hours, hardware replacement, web-based technical support, phone technical support, web and telephone Service Availability of 24 hours a day / 7 days a week, and onsite Tech Support Monday through Friday 7 AM to 6 PM. The period of performance for this effort shall be 12 months, inclusive of the delivery and installation of the equipment, which shall be completed within 60 days from receipt of order, and the maintenance and software support for 12-months.
4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting an exception to fair opportunity is Section 41 U.S.C. 4106(c)(2) as implemented by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Paragraph 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: Based on extensive Market Research, as discussed within section 8 of this justification, limited competition is expected for the brand name Cisco items and services proposed under this effort.

Currently VA owns and operates a Cisco Enterprise Video Tele-Communication Network (EVTN), which is comprised of over 14,000 Cisco devices, some of which include the Video Control Servers (VCS), Multipoint Control Units (MCU), and Telepresence Management System (TMS), and thousands of VTC endpoints, all of which are proprietary to Cisco. This EVTN system provides VA with a robust Enterprise solution that is redundant, customizable, and has high-availability telecommunication features. The proposed action will augment this EVTN system by providing additional Cisco VTC equipment to VACO. Procurement of other VTC systems, other than the required brand name Cisco VTC system, will cause interoperability issues with the EVTN system, as only this system communicates with the endpoints through proprietary software.

Additionally, no other solution provides specific VA requirements, such as system control/maintenance and system/endpoint accessibility. Specifically, only the brand name Cisco VTC system satisfies VA's functional requirement to allow for simple network management protocol (SNMP) communication from the VTC endpoints to the Telepresence Management System (TMS). While SNMP is a standard protocol, the application of the SNMP for Cisco brand name VTC endpoints is unique. Specifically, it is used to provide constant communication between the VTC endpoints and the core infrastructure system such as the TMS, VCS, and the MCU server to report its status and provide the information needed to perform maintenance related tasks. Furthermore, without this required functionality, the endpoint will not be accessible to be controlled and managed remotely by VA Information Technology Operations and Service, End User Operations staff. SNMP is required by VA to provide device status and monitoring, scheduling and remote configuration and maintenance in real time across the Enterprise without having to log in to the device manually. Additionally, the EVTN utilizes Cisco proprietary software through SNMP to provide, monitor, control, and maintain the EVTN video phone book information of each VTC endpoint. This VA functional requirement is only provided by Cisco and provides VA, and specifically VACO, with ability to look up and contact any facility that is part of the EVTN, saving crucial time in the event of emergencies or events in which VACO must be in contact with the field without delay to set up/configure dial-in networks. In addition, no other source other than a reseller can provide the aforementioned services without access to Cisco's proprietary code. Access to the code is required to ensure all the services provided are properly configured.

Based on the above, the required Cisco VTC equipment must be procured as described within this justification.

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. It was determined however that limited competition is viable among authorized resellers for this brand name Cisco VTC equipment and brand name agnostic equipment and services. The Product Description has been written to include salient characteristics for the brand name agnostic equipment and services. In accordance with FAR 5.301 and 16.505(b)(2), this action will

be synopsisized at award on the Federal Business Opportunities Page and the justification will be made publicly available.

7. Actions to Increase Competition: 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 competed.

8. Market Research: Market research was conducted by VACO ITSS subject matter experts from January 2017 to May 2017. Market research consisted of VA technical personnel reviewing products similar to Cisco VTC devices, such as Polycom and Lifesize. Based on the research, the Government's technical experts determined that no other product can integrate into the existing VA EVTN network and maintain full functionality. Other VTC systems brand names such as Polycom and Lifesize will not integrate into this EVTN network. Review of these products was based on their current functionality and actual VA experience using said brand name equipment on VA's EVTN environment. Additionally, VA VTC subject matter experts regularly review industry trade publications and conduct internet research to ascertain if any other equipment is available. Based on all of these market research efforts, the Government's technical experts have determined that only Cisco brand name VTC equipment can meet all of VACO's needs.

Additional market research was conducted via review of the NASA SEWP V GWAC Product verification tool in June 2017 to identify if limited competition is viable among resellers of the required Cisco products and services. Based on this market research, limited competition is viable among resellers of the required hardware and services.

9. Other Facts: N/A