

JUSTIFICATION
FOR EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY

1. Contracting Activity: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Office of Acquisition and Logistics
Technology Acquisition Center
23 Christopher Way
Eatontown, New Jersey 07724
2. Description of Action: The proposed action is for a firm-fixed-price delivery order issued under the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for procurement (SEWP) V Government Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC), for Cisco Systems Inc. (henceforth referred to as Cisco) brand name Video Teleconferencing Equipment and NEC Corporation of America (henceforce referred to as NEC) Multi-Line Phones and Digital Line Cards to support the activation and expansion requirements for the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 6, Hampton Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC).
3. Description of Supplies or Services: The VA, Office of Information Technology, VISN 6 Hampton VAMC requires equipment to support the expansion of the Hampton VAMC. The facility is undergoing an expansion to add a second floor to the facility. The 28,000-square-foot expansion will provide rooms for primary, specialty, and mental health care for Veterans.


Description of Cisco Video Codecs:

VA has a requirement to procure four Cisco Video Codecs with a one year standard warranty. The Cisco Video Codec is an all in one video conferencing unit that includes both audio and video engines to enable high-definition video collaboration (i.e., video conferences) and application sharing into meeting rooms, boardrooms, and other special purpose rooms. These codecs will interconnect with the existing Enterprise Video Teleconferencing Network (EVTN) systems. The EVTN infrastructure provides the capability to allow any video device on the VA network to communicate with any other video device. Ongoing support for the EVTN systems is covered under the existing VA Cisco Enterprise Support Agreement (ESA). Support under this ESA includes access to both minor and major releases within the licensed feature set for the warranty period of one year. Procurement of Cisco Video Codecs will ensure seamless integration with other EVTN endpoint devices including Cisco Unified Communications Manager, Video Communications Servers, and the TelePresence Management Suite that provides detailed management, maintenance, and support of these video devices.

Description of NEC hardware and licenses:

The Hampton VAMC second floor addition project also has a requirement for 90 brand name NEC Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephones, 90 NEC SV95 Standard User Licenses, one NEC PAD Card, and two NEC Polycom conference phones to support an augmentation to the existing Private Branch Exchange (PBX) telecommunication system. The NEC VoIP telephones, licenses, and conference phones will be added to the existing NEC PBX infrastructure to ensure the existing Hampton VAMC telecommunication system remains fully operational.

Delivery of all hardware and software referenced above will be required within 30 days after delivery order award.



4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting this exception to fair opportunity is 41 U.S.C. 4106(c) (2) 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: Based on extensive market research, as described in paragraph 8 of this document, it was determined that limited competition is viable among authorized resellers for the brand name Cisco and NEC products.

Rationale for Cisco Video Codecs:

Only brand name Cisco Video Codecs can meet the Government's technical requirements for the Hampton VAMC second floor addition. The existing EVTN core infrastructure and network management platforms are based on a Cisco platform. VA requires hardware and software to be compatible with the existing platform to ensure continued operational availability. Due to Cisco's proprietary source code, only Cisco Video Codecs can meet the Government's technical requirement for interoperability and compatibility with the EVTN system. The use of any other brand name product will impact the ability to support and manage the existing EVTN infrastructure's hardware and software and result in interoperability and compatibility issues. In order to consider a similar brand name product, a complete replacement of the currently fielded EVTN system would also be required. It is estimated that this replacement would result in duplicated costs of \$500,000 and delivery delays of 18 months or more. Failure to procure Cisco Video Codecs for EVTN will seriously degrade VA's ability to support Veteran care at the Hampton VAMC.

Rationale for NEC hardware and licenses:

Only brand name NEC hardware and licenses can meet the Government's technical requirements for the Hampton VAMC second floor addition. The required phones and line cards must be fully compatible with the existing NEC PBX infrastructure which consists of NEC components. Due to its proprietary nature, and specifically the routing and communication protocols that exist within the NEC PBX platform, only NEC brand phones and line cards are compatible and interoperable with the existing equipment. No other brand name phones and line cards will communicate and function within the existing NEC architectural design due to these proprietary constraints. Failing to upgrade the existing PBX system and equipment with the requested phones and line cards will hamper operational availability of the telecommunications network at Hampton VAMC and ultimately compromise its delivery of health care to Veterans.

6. Efforts to Obtain Competition: Market research was conducted, details of which are in section 8 of this justification. This effort did not yield any additional sources that can meet the Government's requirements. However, it was determined that limited competition is viable among resellers for these brand name items. In accordance with FAR 5.301 and 16.505(b)(2)(ii)(D), the award will be synopsisized and the justification will be posted on the Federal Business Opportunities website within 14 days of award. Additionally, the justification will be provided with the Request for Quotation.
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: Government technical experts reviewed solutions offered from other sources to ascertain if these solutions could meet VA's requirements.

Market Research for Cisco Video Codecs:

In July 2017, Government technical experts reviewed solutions offered by similar platforms to ascertain if these solutions could meet VA's requirements. Specifically, the Government's technical experts conducted web-based research for similar industry solutions from Lifesize Icon 600 and Polycom Realpresence 700 series. The alternative solutions reviewed would not provide the necessary interoperability, compatibility, and integration with the site's existing Cisco infrastructure for the reasons explained above. As a result of the market research, the technical experts conclusively determined that only Cisco or Cisco authorized resellers can meet VA's requirement.

Market Research for NEC Hardware and Licenses:

In July 2017, the Government's technical experts reviewed phones and line cards available from other manufacturers to ascertain if these items could be implemented into the existing infrastructure at Hampton VAMC. Specifically, the Government's technical experts conducted web-based research on similar products from Avaya and Cisco. The Government's technical experts confirmed that due to proprietary reasons only brand name NEC phones and line cards are compatible and interoperable with the existing NEC PBX components currently in use at Hampton VAMC. Accordingly, only NEC phones, licenses, and PAD cards from NEC or an authorized reseller can meet all the Government's requirements for the reasons explained above.

Additional market research was also conducted in August 2017, utilizing the NASA SEWP V GWAC Provider Lookup Tool and multiple resellers of both Cisco and NEC were identified, including 22 service-disabled Veteran-owned small business resellers that sell both NEC and Cisco products. The requirement discussed herein has been found to be within scope of the NASA SEWP V GWAC in a separate determination. As a result of the aforementioned market research, VA intends to issue Request for Quotation number VA118-17-Q-2395 on the NASA SEWP V GWAC.

9. Other Facts: None.

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