

Transition of Co-located Hosting Services for Department of Veterans Affairs Request for Information (RFI)

1. Introduction

This Request for Information (RFI) is issued for information and planning purposes only and does not constitute a solicitation nor does it restrict the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as to the ultimate acquisition approach. In accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 15.201(e), responses to this notice are not offers and cannot be accepted by VA to form a binding contract.

The purpose of this RFI is to identify qualified contractors, who are able to meet VA's requirements in the transition of Co-located Hosting Services (CHS). Any contract/order that might be awarded based on information received or derived from this market research will be the outcome of the competitive process. The purpose of this RFI is to obtain market information on capable sources of supply, industry practices, and input specific to the information provided. VA is not responsible for any cost incurred by industry in furnishing this information. All costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested vendor's expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future Request for Proposal (RFP), if any is issued. Any information submitted by respondents to this RFI is strictly voluntary. All submissions become VA property and will not be returned.

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code applicable to this acquisition is 517311. The Small Business Size Standard for this NAICS code is 1500 employees. Please indicate your company size and socio-economic status under this NAICS.

2. Scope of Work

The Contractor shall provide a like-for-like transition of all Networkx contracted co-location services to a new contract vehicle award for Co-located Hosting Service (CHS). The like-for-like transition means that where a technology exists today, it will transition to a like technology provided by the contractor. For example, if a fiber cross connect is currently contracted, a fiber cross connect will be procured on the new contract.

VA intends to upgrade services if the existing contracted services have reached end of life and require an upgrade. The upgrade will be a like-for-similar upgrade. For example, if Battery Distribution Fuse Bays (BDFBs) are currently being used and they are at end of life, the replacement model will be procured as part of the Contractor's Transition Project.

VA seeks to acquire Co-located Hosting Service. A full technical description of the service type is in section 3 below. VA may award up to two (2) contracts, with each providing CHS at two data center locations. Alternatively, VA is considering making one award for all four locations.

3. Technical Description

There are requirements for a contractor to provide facilities for data centers that will be populated by Government Furnished Equipment (GFE), such as servers, routers and load balancers.

Under this proposed award, in its discretion, VA may procure support services and equipment (i.e. Service Related Labor, Service Related Equipment). The contractor shall provide all personnel, transportation, equipment, tools, materials, supplies, installation, management, supervision, engineering, maintenance, testing, and services necessary to make all housed equipment fully operational. The contractor shall provide qualified staff proficient in central office/data center engineering, construction, and maintenance to enable continuous operation of telecommunications systems as appropriate, to include Project Management and Transition Support. These services shall be fully defined, if a Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued.

See Section 3.7 Professional Services, for more information.

3.1 Description of Current Environment

VA's four (4) data centers are co-located in carrier facilities in Chicago, IL, Sterling, VA, Dallas, TX, and San Jose, CA. There are two (2) providers currently, each providing CHS at two (2) locations. A dual-carrier approach is currently being taken with diverse path access provided for redundancy at each location.

Each is a Tier 3 data center, with direct connection to Tier 1 Internet Service Providers (ISPs) from both data carriers via geographically redundant fiber points of presence. All four (4) data centers are manned 24x7x365 by contractor staff, and upon notification by VA, access is provided to VA's leased space to VA authorized personnel, at all times. Each data center provides *Smarthands* to enable data center personnel to provide hands-on access to GFE, with VA direction. The data centers house three groups of cages consisting of two 20-rack spaces and one 10-rack space. Total rack floor space is approximately 1800 square feet with a minimum of 120 watts per square foot.

VA envisions maintaining current legacy services in the initial transition to a new contract vehicle (like-for-like) leveraging existing equipment with a roadmap to an end state of a fully developed and modern carrier hosted solution.

3.2 Functional Definition

CHS shall include a secure location with cage and racks and include site surveillance. This service also provides external traffic access as required such as; internet and other dedicated connection (e.g., PLS and ETS) speeds, space requirements, maintenance support and operational support, as specified in Attachment 2 VA Co-Located Hosting Requirements.

3.3 Standards

The CHS contractor shall comply with the following standards:

1. TIA-942 Telecommunications Infrastructure Standard for Data Centers (as updated)
2. Statement on Standards for Attestation Engagements no. 16 (SSAE 16)
3. International Organization of Standardization standard 27001 Information Security (ISO27001)
4. Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI-DSS)
5. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)

3.4 Connectivity

The CHS contractor shall provide external connectivity as described in Attachment 2 under 'Network.'

3.5 Technical Capabilities

The CHS requires the following capabilities:

1. At the contractor's facility, the contractor shall be responsible for the following:
 - a) Assuming responsibility for all damage or injury to persons or property occasioned through the use, maintenance, management, and operation of the contractor's facilities, GFE, or other equipment by, or by the action of, the contractor or contractor's employees and agents. VA shall in no event be liable or responsible for damage or injury to any person or property occasioned through the use, maintenance, management, or operation of any facility, GFE, or other equipment by, or by the action of, the contractor or the contractor's employees and agents in performing under this contract, and VA shall be indemnified against claims for damage or injury in such cases.
 - b) Completing any necessary pre-delivery preparations for the delivery site, site security, or storage facilities to temporarily or permanently accommodate the GFE in a safe and secure manner.
 - c) Relocating GFE from contractor's initial receiving points or temporary storage facilities to the final contractor facility and installation site.
 - d) Preparing the final installation site including the provisioning of necessary physical space, environmental systems, and network connectivity, including but not limited to: Internet working connections, fire suppression, HVAC, power, lighting, water, sewer, telephone and communications, physical security systems, network security systems, disaster resistance and recovery systems, cages, racks, and UPS, emergency power systems, all on a 24x7 basis.
 - e) Facilitating GFE setup, including assembling, loading, configuring, testing, and (at end of life) crating and packing GFE for return. Determinations of inter-compatibility and inter-operability shall be conducted by the contractor as soon as practical after delivery and setup.
 - f) Providing contractor personnel with all required national citizenship, security clearances, training, and technical certifications to receive, use, maintain, manage, operate, package, transport, or ship sensitive and secure GFE.
2. Authorized VA personnel and third-parties shall have access to GFE 24x7x365. VA personnel shall conform to the contractor's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) in effect at the specified contractor facility, except where the AUP conflicts with VA policy, or other applicable government executive orders, regulations or laws.
3. The contractor shall provide a service management capability such that user can remotely monitor facility and equipment status in real-time.
4. The service management capability shall present alarms remotely to the user in real-time for facility and communication failures.

5. The service management capability shall continuously update and remotely present to the user the status of power for each rack, cooling, environment temperature, entry/exit logs, smoke detection, and connectivity.
6. VA is implementing a Telecom Expense Management System (TEMS) software platform that will support all of VA's telecommunications procurements to provide full life-cycle telecommunications asset management to include ordering, billing, inventory monitoring, and purchase order tracking and e-Bonding. The contractor shall e-Bond its business system with the VA TEMS to allow for Electronic Ordering that provides the ability to convert all telecommunications service requests into service orders that the VA can submit through e-Bonding to the contractor's business system. The contractor's system shall send electronic invoices and order process notifications to the VA TEMS via eBonding.

3.6 Features

Mandatory features required for each facility are detailed in Attachment 2 VA Co-Located Hosting Requirements.

3.7 Professional Services

The contractor shall provide professional services to perform planning and design, day to day operations, maintenance and repair, upgrading, and configuration, or any combination of these services, for hosting telecommunications systems within the contractor co-location facility. The Contractor shall provide the professional services in accordance with standard industry engineering practices, Government Codes, Standards and Executive Orders, VA standards, VA project-specific requirements, National and Local Codes and applicable Industry Standards.

The Contractor shall provide the following design and engineering, implementation, and management and maintenance services that include:

- a) Identify hardware (e.g., racks, power distribution systems, and other SRE) , and SRL required by the agency to deliver the required Co-location Hosting Services.
- b) Provide complete project management for design, engineering, implementation, installation, access coordination, provisioning, hardware testing, and service activation for contractor provided equipment (SRE) in coordination and with approval from VA. Coordinate installation activities with VA to minimize the impact on the current environment.
- c) The Contractor shall implement updates in coordination and mutual agreement with VA and test new releases to resolve any security concerns, ensure compatibility with the existing environment, minimize service disruptions, and maintain equipment functionality.

4. RFI Response Instructions

NOTE: The capability package must be clear, concise, and complete. All proprietary/company confidential material shall be clearly marked on every page that contains such. VA is under no obligation to provide feedback to the contractor, or to contact the company for clarification of any information submitted in response to this RFI.

The Technology Acquisition Center (TAC) point of contact for this RFI is Contract Specialist, Seena Ninan and Contracting Officer, Mary Craig. RFI responses are to be submitted directly to seena.ninan@va.gov and mary.craig3@va.gov by 10:00 AM Eastern Time (ET), June 8, 2018.

Late responses will not be reviewed. Page limitation is limited to no more than 24 pages, including the three 1-page case studies and the one 2-page case study.

Written questions shall be submitted via e-mail to seena.ninan@va.gov and mary.craig3@va.gov by 5:00PM ET, May 24, 2018. All question and answer information will be posted publicly via FBO.

Interested parties are to provide the following information in their response:

1. Provide Company Information:
 - a. Company Name
 - b. CAGE/DUNS Number under which the company is registered in SAM/VetBiz.gov
 - c. Company Address
 - d. Point of contact name
 - e. Telephone number
 - f. Email address
 - g. For Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB)/Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) concerns, indicate whether at least 50 percent of the cost of performance incurred is planned to be expended for employees of your concern or employees of other eligible SDVOSB/VOSB concerns. Provide a detailed description of the 50% or more of the service the SDVOSB/VOSB will be providing plus a detailed description of the services provided by non-SDVOSB/VOSB's.
 - h. What contract vehicles do you have available to provide these Co-located Hosting Services?
 - i. Do you plan to be a Prime or subcontractor? Can your company independently provide the entire range of requirements? If not, which requirements cannot be met and describe teaming arrangement to meet all of the requirements. Describe which tasks will be provided by each team in terms of percentage of work.
2. Describe your service approach to support Co-located Hosting Service roll out and describe how this can scale to support potential space, power, and HVAC capacity growth requirements into the future. Provide a brief summary describing your company's available solution (business and technical) to meet the requirements, to include:
 - a. Square footage, power, and environmental conditions supported
 - b. Geographic locations (indicate those that you would recommend to provide service to VA)
 - c. Indicate whether your solution meets all of the capabilities identified above. If not which capability cannot be met with business process outsourcing solution. Identify alternative approaches to meeting the capability if available.

- d. What are your company's processes to satisfy the requirements for adherence to schedule, agility, flexibility, responsiveness, scalability and reliability, service quality and consistency, and continuous improvement?
3. Provide feedback on the proposed approach, including any alternate recommended approach to a phased roll out in order to transfer service from an existing location to a new location.
4. Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) pricing for the anticipated volume. This should include implementation, project management and transition in of services.
5. Recommended Service Level metrics, targets and measurement windows for the following Performance Metrics: Internet Availability, Service Requests, Change Request, Event Notification-Service Availability Impacting, Event Notification-Security Breach (as defined by NIST guidelines), and Response Time-Service Availability Impacting. Provide additional Performance Metrics (if any) that are standard components for these services.
6. Proposed standard transition/implementation timelines. Address the impact and risks to the implementation timeline of the distance of relocation. Provide standard timelines and activities for implementation of the services (based on establishing this service at a client of similar scope and volume).
7. If you have operated as a prime contractor in providing a hosting services implementation of this size and magnitude solution:
 - a. Provide three case studies (no more than one page each), that describe how you have provided or currently provided these services to an organization of similar scope, size and complexity to VA, which supports at least 1800 square footage of rack space. Describe how you implemented those services. What were the risks and mitigating strategies? Also include data demonstrating zero downtime or 100% facility availability during the previous 10-year period.
 - b. Provide a case study (no more than two pages) that describes how you implemented and transitioned a client to your hosting services from pre-existing hosting services provided by another contractor. The client scope, size, complexity and data center infrastructure footprint must be similar to VA. Indicate the percentage of the work that was performed by your company as the prime contractor in this case study.
- c. Provide a list of the number of clients that you have successfully implemented and supported as a prime contractor, demonstrating the number of years' experience as a data center operator. The client's scope, size, complexity and data center infrastructure footprint must be similar to VA. Additional information such as power and environmental capacity and geographical scope should be included, as available.
8. Provide a statement which affirms whether your organization complies or does not comply with each of the listed requirements stated in Attachment 2-VA Data Center Requirements.
9. Provide a description of your transition assistance services that you are able to provide to VA and at what cost.

10. Provide a statement regarding your capability to provide the feature of e-Bonding with the VA Telecom Expense Management System (TEMS), for electronic ordering and invoicing, including each of the data elements listed in item 6 of **Section 3.5 Technical Capabilities**.
11. Are any of the technical requirements or features listed not typical of an industry standard stack for the hosting services? If so, which ones? Are there any typical industry features that are missing?

Attachments

Attachment 1 VA Co-Located Hosting RFI Inventory Information

Attachment 2 VA Co-Located Hosting Requirements