

JUSTIFICATION FOR AN EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY

1. Contracting Activity: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Office of Acquisition Operations
Technology Acquisition Center
1701 Directors Blvd, Suite 600
Austin, Texas 78744
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 Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) V Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) for the renewal of brand name International Business Machines (IBM) Platform Load Sharing Facility (LSF) software licenses and associated maintenance.
3. Description of Supplies or Services: VA Office of Information and Technology Information Technology Operations and Services have a requirement for software licenses and associated maintenance. Specifically, VA requires the following software licenses: 50 IBM Spectrum LSF-IBM Platform Application, 1560 IBM Spectrum LSF-IBM Platform LSF, 1560 IBM Platform RTM Data Collectors-IBM, one IBM Platform RTM-IBM Platform RTM Install, 130 IBM Platform Cluster Manager. In addition, VA requires the purchase of one Spectrum LSF Suite for workgroups Install license and SW subscription/support, 53 Spectrum LSF Suite Server Capacity Resource Value Unit License plus Software Subscription and 600 IBM Spectrum Scale Data Management per Terabyte license and support. The proposed action is to renew IBM brand name software which supports the existing Genomic Information System for Integrative Science (GenISIS) computing infrastructure located at the VA Pittsburgh and Boston HealthCare Systems. GenISIS is used by VA research personnel to process and analyze Veteran genetic data, to identify alternative healthcare treatment. The adjustment to the existing license and renewal of maintenance will provide for the sustainment of the current IBM Platform LSF computing environment. The renewal of maintenance support for the LSF infrastructure will provide access to new releases and versions of licensed IBM Platform LSF software; receipt of eNotifications to alert when new versions releases and technical support information become available for licensed products; cross-platform software technical support, including Windows and Linux operating system; 24x7 online technical support, including enhanced self-help and search capabilities; voice support for new deployments, migration, and code-related questions; and 24x7 problem resolution within two hours by phone for all "Severity 1" situations.

IBM Platform LSF licenses simplify the entire computer cluster management process from the initial deployment to final production, thus significantly improving the time for cluster readiness. The automated provisioning, maintenance, and monitoring capabilities of this software enables productivity to the information technology administrators in assigning and managing computing tasks for all cluster components and assets and helps improve overall system performance while optimizing the

resource utilization. The period of performance is for 12 months, with two 12-month option periods. The total estimated price for the proposed action including options, is [REDACTED]

4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting an exception to fair opportunity is 41 U.S.C. 4106(c)(2) as implemented by Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 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: Based on the market research as describe in Section 8 of this justification, it was determined that limited competition is available among authorized resellers for the required IBM-LSF software maintenance and support. IBM-LSF software is a proprietary software product; therefore, no other software provider has the proprietary code to perform the necessary maintenance. This code is needed to ensure all the services provided are properly configured. The current Infrastructure Operations (IO) structure is based on existing IBM-LSF software. VA requires support compatible with the existing infrastructure protocols and functionality for continued operational availability. Software upgrades to include major releases, point releases, and service releases of applicable software on a quarterly basis, or within 48 hours in cases where a high risk vulnerability fix becomes available are required. Only IBM or an authorized reseller can provide the necessary software updates because of the propriety source code. No other source is capable of providing the required software maintenance that meets VA's unique functional requirements.

In addition, only IBM-LSF software can meet all of VA's needs. No other brand name license is compatible or interoperable with the existing IBM-LSF proprietary database structures, protocols, and software application programming interfaces. This includes 130 physical servers and hundreds of applications that can only work with IBM brand name software. Utilizing any other brand name software would result in VA having to replace the existing servers and complete a massive redesign and redevelopment effort to re-code the hundreds of applications to work with another brand name software. This would result in delivery delays of at least a year and duplicated cost of at least [REDACTED] that would not be recovered through competition. This estimate is based on similar efforts. Failure to renew these brand name licenses will jeopardize all research in genomic and personalized medicine currently being performed in the VA and delay any medical discoveries in areas of special interest to veterans such as PTSD, schizophrenia and bipolar illness, cardiovascular risk factors, kidney disease, cardiometabolic diseases, multi-substance addiction, age-related macular degeneration, multiple myeloma, and lung cancer.

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, the undersigned VA

technical representative determined that limited competition is available among authorized resellers for brand name Salesforce licenses, as well as software maintenance and support. In accordance with FAR 16.505(a)(4)(iii)(A)(1), this justification will be provided with the solicitation to all appropriate NASA SEWP V GWAC holders. Furthermore, in accordance with FAR 5.301, 16.505(b)(2)(ii)(D), and 16.505(a)(4)(iii), the award notice for this action will be synopsisized on the Federal Business Opportunities website and this justification will be made publicly available within 14 days of award.

7. Actions to Increase Competition: The Government will continue to conduct market research to determine if there changes in the market place that would enable future actions.

8. Market Research: Market research was conducted by the Government's technical experts in February 2018 to ascertain sources other than IBM or IBM authorized resellers' ability to provide the above-mentioned products and services. The research consisted of reviewing various software license service plans offered on the NASA SEWP V GWAC and reviewing website for similar software and maintenance support from Microsoft Hyper-V and Citrix. Based on a review of these items, the Government technical experts determined that none of these brands can meet VA's interoperability and compatibility requirements outlined in Section 5 of this Justification. The technical experts confirmed that the brand name IBM-LSF software and maintenance support are the only products available to meet all of the Government's requirements. The source codes required for updates and maintenance to the software is proprietary to IBM or its authorized resellers. Only IBM or its authorized resellers have the source code and other proprietary data to provide upgrades and fixes necessary to support the existing requirements.

Additional market research was conducted in April 2018 by the Contract Specialist by utilizing the Provider Lookup tool on the NASA SEWP V GWAC website which identified numerous resellers of the required IBM software maintenance and support including 18 prospective Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) GWAC holders. Therefore, competition is anticipated on NASA SEWP V among authorized resellers of the required brand name maintenance support.

9. Other Facts: None

