

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 sole-source firm-fixed price contract to MUMPS AudioFAX, doing business as AudioCare Systems (AudioCare) to procure texting license that will provide automated appointment reminders via text messages in support of the VA Medical Appointment Scheduling System (MASS) project.

3. Description of the Supplies or Services:

This is for use as part of the Medical Appointment Scheduling System (MASS) pilot in Columbus, OH. This license will deliver texting capability for appointments in light of the VeText decision. It will allow the VA the ability to send text notifications and reminders of appointments to the Veterans.

The proposed action is for the purchase of automated texting capability for use with the AudioCare system currently being used at the Columbus, OH pilot site for MASS. This capability will allow the system to send text messages and reminders of appointments to Veterans in an effort to ensure Veterans are better able to attend their scheduled appointments. It is another way of ensuring Veteran's needs are being met in a timely manner.

The contractor will provide the capability in the MASS pilot that will align the VA Columbus site with the rest of VA, as per direction from the Secretary of VA to provide such texting function. The contractor will support the testing and integration of the texting capability with the current MASS architecture.

The choice to use AudioCare texting capability as part of the MASS pilot in the Columbus, OH VA has been made because AudioCare is already integrated as part of the MASS solution. AudioCare is currently supporting reminders as voice messages being sent to the patients. The AudioCare Text solution is widely used in VAMC locations such as: Denver, Salt Lake City, Dallas, San Antonio, Valley Coastal, Orlando, Richmond, Charleston, Huntington, Washington DC, Salisbury, Pittsburgh, Nashville, Altoona, Cheyenne, Albuquerque; just to name a few. The AudioCare product is also currently supported by a sustainment contract that would be leveraged by this acquisition.

The cost includes 12 months of maintenance and warranty services and shall be delivered within 30 days of contract award. After the first year, maintenance and warranty shall be provided at no additional cost under the nationwide AudioCare maintenance contract.

4. Statutory Authority:

The specific authority providing for a limited source award is Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 8.405-6(a)(1)(i)(B), "Only one source is capable of providing the supplies or services required at the level of quality required because the supplies or services are unique or highly specialized." The specialized need is in reference to the AudioCare currently installed and used in VA, specifically in the Columbus, OH VA Medical Center (VAMC).

5. Rationale Supporting Use of Authority Cited Above:

The proposed source is AudioCare Systems Inc., located at 744 West Lancaster Avenue, Suite 250, Wayne, PA 19087. This is the current provider of AudioCare Automated Communication system that provides for reminders being sent out to Veterans in the Columbus, OH VAMC pilot site for MASS. This system is integrated with the MASS solution that has been released to the site. The AudioCare system will be enhanced with this texting capability. At this time, no other texting capability solutions will meet the schedule of a fully integrated pilot site for MASS and no solution can perform interoperably with the existing MASS infrastructure due to the proprietary nature of the AudioCare products.

This is a brand name justification in support of FAR 11.105, Items Peculiar to One Manufacturer.

There are a number of texting solutions that can be used by VA to satisfy the function of utilizing text messages for Veterans regarding their medical appointments. Adding a new provider to send messages (texting) will create complexity in the integration of yet another vendor in the coordination of those reminders, with the end result being possible delays in getting notifications to the Veterans as well as additional costs to the MASS project. The AudioCare solution is already implemented in VA and also already supported by a nationwide maintenance contract.

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 item. In accordance with FAR 5.301 and 16.505(b)(2)(ii)(D), the award notice for this action will be synopsized on the Federal Business Opportunities Page and this justification will be made publicly available within 14 days of award.

AudioCare Reminder

7. Actions to Increase Competition

VA is implementing solutions that will continue to use standard interfaces and Application Program Interfaces (APIs) so that VA can integrate the solution seamlessly from any vendors. The agency is also continuing to work with the program office to perform additional market research so that other AudioCare Communication Software solutions can be considered.

8. Market Research

A search of alternative providers of texting solution was done via an internet search in May 2018. There are numerous companies that may provide a texting solution and below are five such providers:

1. Trumpia
2. Zingit Solutions
3. TimeTrade
4. TeleVox
5. SolutionReach

However, as noted in section 5, these providers do not meet the needs of the MASS pilot site in Columbus, OH as they are not capable of being fully integrated with messaging systems already in place and supported at the site due to the proprietary nature of the AudioCare products.

There are various text messaging solutions that could potentially be used to satisfy the requirements of sending text messages/reminders to the Veteran regarding their appointments within the Columbus, OH VAMC. Based on the current pilot implementation within MASS, none of these products can meet the Government's interoperability and compatibility requirements to meet the MASS pilot schedule. Additionally, Audiocare is already in use at the Columbus, OH VA to send voice type reminders and the system is already integrated and in production.

9. Other Facts

N/A

10. Technical and Requirements Certification: I certify that the supporting data under my cognizance, which are included in this justification, are accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Name

Date:

6/21/2018

Title

Signature:

Curtis Clay

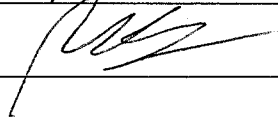
AudioCare Reminder

11. Fair and Reasonable Cost Determination: I hereby determine that the anticipated price to the Government for this contract action will be fair and reasonable based on ***(insert the methods that will be used to determine a fair and reasonable price)***.

Name _____

Date: 6/21/18

Procuring Contracting Officer _____

Signature: 

12. Procuring Contracting Officer Certification: ***For a proposed contract exceeding the simplified acquisition threshold but not exceeding \$700,000, the contracting officer's certification required by FAR 16.505 (b)(2)(ii)(C)(1) will serve as approval.***

I certify that this justification is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. As this contract action does not exceed \$700,000, the certification below required by FAR 16.505(b)(2)(ii)(C)(1) serves as approval.

Name _____

Date: 6/21/18

Procuring Contracting Officer _____

Signature: 