

Request for Information (RFI) for Certification Management System

Overview

This Request for Information (RFI) summarizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Office Acquisition and Logistics (OAL), Human Capital Management Service (AHCMS) interest to find a backup solution for VA's existing acquisition training and certification application system. VA's Federal Acquisition Certification (FAC) requirements are defined by The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), which is a component of the United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB). VA is looking for a solution to automate multiple elements of the process and perform as a viable backup to the existing FAC certification system. FAC certifications are like a professional license, especially when they pertain to employees in the GS-1102 Contracting series. The purpose of this request for information is to determine how industry currently automates professional licensing/credentialing processes, required continuing education (CE) or continuous learning (CL), and compliance management/enforcement. This RFI is for planning purposes only now, and shall not be construed as a solicitation or as an obligation on the part of VA.

Background

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Office Acquisition and Logistics (OAL), Human Capital Management Service (AHCMS) seeks a certification management solution that can manage the Federal Acquisition Certification (FAC) requirements to include, but not be limited to, Contracting (FAC-C), Program/Project Management (FAC-P/PM), and Contracting Officer Representatives (FAC-COR), certification applications, training courses, continuous learning tracking, and reporting capabilities.

The AHCMS Directorate is responsible for administering and maintaining Federal Acquisition Certifications (FAC). AHCMS also provides Acquisition Workforce (AWF) and human capital metrics to internal and external stakeholders. This Directorate's mission focuses on devising and implementing various Federal and Departmental initiatives to enhance and promote the professional development of VA's acquisition workforce. The current Certification Management System (CMS) is used to submit and track training and certification requests, continuous learning (CL) for renewing certifications, approving/disapproving certification applications through various approving officials, managing and tracking the Contracting Officer Warrant process, compliance management, and data and metrics reports. There are currently 35K active and inactive system users with various roles in the CMS.

"As-is" Overview

VA users log into the CMS using a unique username and password through a web-based application and can register for training that is used for FAC certification. Once the user applies for certification, the application is routed based on role or workflow. Applicants may upload documents and transcripts with personally identifiable information (PII) for proof that the OFPP requirements have been met. Applications are evaluated on a number of requirements, to

include training, education, and experience depending on the type of certification requested. Applications could route to different approvers based on office, role, type of certification, or workflow; applications are moved through the workflow with either an approval or disapproval; notifications are sent to the next approver in the workflow. This evaluation is a manual process to verify the applicant meets the experience requirements and it takes a trained program manager to adjudicate the submission. VA users will be able to upload or view external training and outside learning events since there are many types of mediums used to obtain training. After the certification is issued, the system automatically calculates a 2-year continuous learning period, tracks progress, and will revoke a FAC-C and FAC-COR certifications or expire a FAC-P/PM certification if the required CEs are not earned by the end of the renewal period.

The law provides that Contracting officers (1102s) alone obligate government funds via contracting actions over the micro-purchase amount with a warrant. The initial requirement for a warrant holder is having a FAC-C certification so VA warrant holders go through an alternate application process and workflow. The final approver can change depending on the type of warrant issued. The warrant holder and the warrant program team should see the status and receive notifications if the FAC-C prerequisite is revoked. Compliance and enforcement of the warrant is mission critical. It is also important to include a network outage contingency to ensure users are aware of the status of the certification and warrant to ensure continuity of operations in the event of a system outage.

The primary objectives of this RFI are to collect information regarding:

1. The availability of Industry fielded solutions in the marketplace that:
 - a. Allow users to apply for initial training
 - b. Allow users to apply for certifications
 - c. Track users Continuous Learning Points (CLPs) or Continuous Education Units (CEUs) requirements completed
 - d. Allow Warrant Issuance Management (Compliance Management)
 - e. Application of various business rules (e.g. cert revocation, expiration, warrant termination, etc.)
2. Replacement of the current CMS system by End of Calendar year or suggestions of when replacement would be feasible given the scope of work.
3. How large-scale programs manage professional licenses/credentials issuance and renewal
4. How large-scale programs handle and track continuing education requirements
5. How large-scale programs make it possible for end-users to take ownership of the process
6. How potential solution providers evaluate and estimate pricing for software solutions of this size, scope and complexity.
7. The timeline associated with fielding solutions: including design, development, training, system integration with existing dependent systems, and transition deployment activities.

Important things to consider when responding to the RFI

- The solutions will be required to conform to the Veteran-Focused Integration Process (VIP) project management methodology currently required for these types of solutions for the VA. Please see VIP website for details, <https://vaww.oit.va.gov/veteran-focused-integration-process-vip-guide/>
- The solution, when delivered, even if a COTS product or proprietary offering, should be built/bought/highly configured and owned by the VA. Exceptions would be considered for solution offerings that provide Software as a Service and does not require the solution to be highly adapted for VA purposes.
- Interfaces and data exchanges with existing VA systems, or other third-party service providers, such as FAI, DAU, etc. will need to be present in the response as well as fees associated with those exchange services if any.
- The CMS solution shall interface with internal systems already in use such as LMS/TMS, Active Directory, Exchange Server, etc.
- The solution shall describe whether a web-based graphical user interface (GUI) or client/desktop offering, capable of supporting more than 50,000 users with approximately 25 different roles needed with over 150 users in key roles to administer the program; this does not include the supervisors of the employees.
- The proposed solution should allow VA the ability to generate retrieve Data/Metrics/Reports on demand.

CMS RFI Request:

1. Describe your current technology offerings that are similar in size, scope and complexity about training, certification application, renewing certification, tracking continuing education requirements, warrant management, compliance, and reporting.
2. Assess the viability of procuring, deploying, hosting, and sustaining a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) product that meets the requirements.
3. Describe how scalable your proposed solution is in terms of
 - a. Adding/changing new training requirements
 - b. Adding new workflows or routing applications
 - c. Adding new custom certifications types that would require different workflows or approvers
4. Please indicate which technological solution is vendor owned vs. those that are purchased/leased, describe where appropriate. *NOTE: Solutions may include custom built applications and/or commercial off the shelf products.*
5. Provide detailed cost breakdown estimate, to include but not limited to:
 - a. Human Resource Management (including recommended hours required to implement requirements and gov't security clearance level/status)
 - b. Software Solution
 - c. Hardware solution
 - d. Networking Solution, (cloud is permitted)
 - e. User/System Training/Documentation
 - f. Overall Lifecycle Cost of System with end of life 10 years from implementation date
8. Provide recommended schedule of completion and implementation.
9. Identify risks associated with implementing new CMS

10. Describe any previous experience implementing within VA and/or Industry, Software as a Service or development of IT systems for learning management system, compliance management systems, or human capital management systems.
11. Describe your GUI interface and user experience of the proposed solution
12. Describe your proposed Business Intelligence capability.
13. Describe what mobile apps are available for use.
14. Describe whether or not users would be able to use QR codes as unique identifiers. (For example: could an employee attend a class and scan a QR code with a mobile app to sign into the class for attendance? Could they forward an email to another division and scan the QR code to show the status of the certification?)
15. Would an employee be able to use a person email address to log into? Does that allow them to receive forgotten passwords 24/7 and if they are no longer an employee then they could have access to their training records and certification history.
16. What security is in place to protect users' PII?
17. Please explain your end users' support? Help desk support?
18. Would VA be able to customize the COTS product similar to an open source product?
19. Does your product include an assessment tool? Could you please describe it?

Business Requirements:

1. Allow users to apply for initial training.
 - a. VA users will log into a system using a unique username and password through a web-based application which is either on a pc, mac, tablet, iPad, using windows, OS, iOS, or android. Currently VA employees go to Talent Management System (TMS), Cornerstone OnDemand (CSOD), Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS), & onsite Classroom training that can be used for initial training requirements and continuous learning.
2. Allow users to apply for certifications. More certification types and programs could be added later. Applications could route to different approvers based on office, role, type of certification, or workflow.
3. Track Users' Continuous Learning Points (CLPs) or Continuous Education Units (CEUs) requirements completed. VA users will be able to upload or view external training and outside system learning since there are many types mediums used to obtain training.
4. Allow issuance, compliance, enforcement and termination of VA warrants (Compliance Management). The initial requirement for a warrant holder is having a FAC-C certification so VA warrant holders go through a different application process and workflow. The final approver can change depending on the type of warrant issued. The warrant holder and the warrant program team should see the status.
5. Application of business rules (e.g. cert revocation of FAC-C and FAC-COR certifications and expiration of FAC-P/PM certifications.)
6. System, Process, or Solution must be easily upgradable/Scalable. A few of the common changes are listed below.
 - a. Adding/changing new training requirements
 - b. Adding new workflows or routing applications
 - c. Adding new certifications

7. Contingency Plan for network outage. Although the system may not be accessible can work be completed offline and update once it comes back online.
8. Ability to handle 50K users
 - a. Unique identifier
9. Ability to generate retrieve Data/Metrics/Reports on demand
10. Allow document storage and upload
 - a. Location: cloud or web services
 - b. Transcript /certification history
11. User-Friendly – Web-based solution