

**JUSTIFICATION FOR  
OTHER THAN FULL AND OPEN COMPETITION  
(PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH FAR 6.303-2)**

1. **Contracting Activity:** This Justification and Approval (J&A) for Other Than Full and Open Competition is executed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Procurement, Acquisition and Logistics Strategic Acquisition Center – Frederick on behalf of VA Central Office (VACO) , Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (OMHSP).
2. **Nature and/or Description of the Action Being Processed:** This is a request for Other Than Full and Open Competition for an Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) Requirements contract with The University of Pittsburgh in accordance with FAR 6.302-3. The anticipated total value of this requirement inclusive of the base period and two one-year options is approximately \$7M. This figure represents a realistic estimate in accordance with FAR 16.503(a)(l) for a Requirements contract and is based on historical and anticipated contracts for OMHSP projects.

**Estimated Periods of Performance:**

Date of Award: 07/30/18  
Base period: 08/01/18 - 07/30/19  
Option Period I: 08/01/19 - 07/30/20  
Option Period II: 08/01/20 - 07/30/21

3. **Description of Supplies/Services Required to Meet the Agency's Needs:**

OMHSP is requesting an IDIQ Requirements contract vehicle to support Suicide Prevention predictive modeling, program development, and program evaluation. The following services would be procured using Task Orders depending on agency need:

**Predictive Analytics**Development of risk-model components, data sets, and delivery method

- Assessment of data validity, approach, and usefulness
- Design and execute pilot work
- Measure the effectiveness of the predictive analytical tool, iterate, and refine as appropriate
- Leverage additional information from the literature to recommend potential strategies to use with the predictive tool to improve Veteran outcomes and/or reduce wasted clinical resources

**Program Evaluation**

- With VA instruction of which initiative or program is to be evaluated, design evaluation(s) of VA program(s) that contains qualitative and quantitative assessments, as appropriate
- Assess the desired VA program with considerations for organizational health, impact on clinical and administrative processes, program goals, implementation, efficacy, and effectiveness.

- Assist in writing the final report including recommendations
- Assist in the development of any relevant manuscripts or presentations

#### **Program Development**

- Development of novel health service and public health interventions to address programmatic needs
- Designing and executing an implementation plan
- Assist in writing the final report including recommendations
- Assist in the development of any relevant manuscripts or presentations

The CLIN Structure for this IDIQ Requirements contract will be for all of the anticipated positions needed for the individual OMHSP requirements. These positions include, but are not limited to: **Professor, Assistant Professor, Graduate Student Researcher, Undergraduate Student Support, Project Manager, Pharmacist, and several others.** Each task order issued against the Requirements contract will include the position(s) needed for each individual request.

An IDIQ Requirements Contract with a base and two (2) one-year option periods is anticipated for this request. The estimated value of this requirements contract is below:

Base Year	\$2.2M
Option Year 1	\$2.3M
<u>Option Year 2</u>	<u>\$2.4M</u>
Total	<b>\$6.9M</b>

4. **Statutory Authority Permitting Other than Full and Open Competition:** The Statutory Authority Permitting Other than Full and Open Competition for this acquisition is 41 U.S.C. 3304(a)(3 and as provided in FAR 6.302-3(a)(2)(ii), **“To establish or maintain an essential engineering, research, or development capability to be provided by an educational or other nonprofit institution or a federally funded research and development center.**
5. **Demonstration that the Contractor’s Unique Qualifications or Nature of the Acquisition Requires the Use of the Authority Cited Above (applicability of authority):**

The University of Pittsburgh has established personnel with the specific essential expertise and innate institutional knowledge of VA services, VA data architecture, VA administrative and medical data, and VA clinical processes. It has previously demonstrated that it is able to integrate VA data and processes to develop innovative tools such as predictive models for the nationally deployed REACH-VET program, the appointment no show risk model, performed unique organizational health analyses evaluating the success of VA quality improvement initiatives, and program development of unique tools to improve VA services. Specifically, the University of Pittsburgh has led predictive modeling enhancements critical to the nationally deployed REACH-VET suicide prevention program. REACH-VET uses a predictive model of suicide risk to identify patients who require advanced intervention. It is deployed at all Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMCs), has over 200,000 Veterans in the program, and has reduced Veteran mortality. It is essential for the clinical

program predictive modeling to be continued, to be kept up to date and further enhanced. In addition, the University of Pittsburgh has existing essential knowledge of other predictive models and data analysis regarding access to care and appointment no-shows that is critical to ensuring access to mental health and suicide prevention services. This specific expertise includes practical application of investigative findings regarding predictive analytics and is a unique success in improving mental health clinical care with predictive decision support tools. This expertise must be leveraged, enhanced, and maintained to address ongoing needs of the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.

University of Pittsburgh is uniquely suited to further the VHA's Suicide Prevention program development. In order to maintain the suicide prevention data and predictive model development from the last 5+ years of partnership with VHA, VA must continue to engage with the University of Pittsburgh. Additionally, the University of Pittsburgh will meet the requirement without VHA experiencing substantial duplication of cost to get another organization to the same level of knowledge and experience with VA systems and data. This cost could not be expected to be recovered through competition. This sole source requirement will allow the VHA to maintain and further enhance Pittsburgh University's significant contributions to VA in the areas of systems analysis & prediction, operations management, data modeling - analysis and prediction, and support to OMHSP endeavors on local, regional and national-level projects like REACH-VET.

6. **Description of Efforts Made to ensure that offers are solicited from as many potential sources as deemed practicable**, including whether a notice was or will be publicized as required by Subpart 5.2 and, if not, which exception under 5.202 applies.

It is a well-known that several educational organizations including Colleges and universities are involved in suicide prevention programs/ research. VHA's election to award a sole source to the University of Pittsburgh is dictated by the need to leverage the expertise that the University has developed in addressing the ongoing needs of the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention during 5 years of Partnership with VHA.

Although VHA elected to award a sole source to the University of Pittsburgh, the proposed action was synopsisized on the Federal Business Opportunities Page on June 05, 2018 in accordance with FAR Section 5.201. Interested parties were requested to provide evidence of their capabilities to fulfill the requirement.

In response to the notice, two interested vendors: EdjAnalytics LLC and (EdjAnalytics LLC and Resurgent LLC) submitted their capabilities statement. After submitting its capability statement, EdjAnalytics LLC forms a joint venture with Resurgent LLC to submit a second capability statement. They (EdjAnalytics LLC and Resurgent LLC) contend that they conduct their work in three areas:

Data Audit-	Thorough review of the data to assess its quality, depth and usefulness in creating a framework to accomplish the project goals.
Analysis and Modeling-	Utilizing advanced data science techniques in combination with

modern computing power, custom Edj models identify the likelihood of future outcomes across the given population. and  
Delivery and Intagration- Our solutions are built to integrate seamlessly into existing workflows across the organization

EdjAnalytics LLC and Resurgent LLC add that they have successfully built models to predict human behavior in education, healthcare, and industry for the follwoinfg organizations:

- Jefferson University Hospitals
- Norton Healthcare
- PNC Bank
- Bellarmine University
- A Kentucky Public School System

After reviewing the proposed capabilities, the program office determine that the EdjAnalytics LLC and Resurgent LLC cannot meet the requirement for the following reasons:

- The vendor does not provide past performance of Veteran suicide prevention and mental health expertise, which is integral to planned work for Veteran suicide risk modeling.
- The vendor does not demonstrate specific technical capability in working within VA data systems. Integral to the work is understanding and working with VA data fields, VA dataset architecture, and VA data dashboard deployment architecture. This understanding requires knowledge of how VA data fields reflect VA clinical care. The vendor does convey expertise in policy and IT contracting related to VA and DoD data but not specific technical expertise in using such data. The predictive modeling required by our team supports a currently clinically deployed program and we require the vendor to have technical expertise in working with VA data.
- The vendor does not provide methodology or past performance to recommend evidence based strategies from the scientific literature to mitigate risk.
- The vendor does not meet the requirements to perform VA program evaluation and development in suicide prevention and mental health. The vendor lists no specific expertise of qualitative evaluation, training material development, health services research, public health program development, organizational health analyses, and experience in implementation science.
- The vendor lists no experience in performing scientific writing and publication.

As required by 6.305(a) the agency shall make publicly available the justification within 14 days after contract award.

7. **Determination by the CO that the Anticipated Cost to the Government will be Fair and Reasonable:** No award shall be made until the Contracting Officer determines the price to the Government is fair and reasonable. This determination will be based on a comparison of current contract pricing in the market, the Independent Government Cost Estimate, or other information made available consistent with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 13.

8. **Description of the Market Research Conducted and the Results, or a Statement of the Reasons Market Research Was Not Conducted:** Based on the authority cited (see above) the Vetbiz database was not searched and no other market research initiatives were taken as VHA intends to maintain and leverage the research and the development capability of the University of Pittsburgh developed in partnership with VHA for 5 years in suicide prevention matters. Nevertheless, in accordance with FAR Section 5.201 the Contracting Activity at SAC-F will synopsise the proposed acquisition, advising industry of the pending acquisition and soliciting inquiries from interested parties.

9. **Any Other Facts Supporting the Use of Other than Full and Open Competition:** The FAR allows restrictive provisions or conditions to the extent necessary to satisfy the needs of the agency or as authorized by law (FAR Subsection 11.002(a)(1)(ii)). As such, the Government has discretion to reasonably restrict competition as long as that requirement is needed to meet the agency's minimum need. Such was determined to be the case in this instance for the procurement of Suicide Prevention predictive modeling, program development, and program evaluation Support.

10. **Listing of Sources that Expressed, in Writing, an Interest in the Acquisition:**

University of Pittsburgh  
200 Lothrop St,  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
(412) 647-2345

11. **A Statement of the Actions, if any, the Agency May Take to Remove or Overcome any Barriers to Competition before Making subsequent acquisitions for the supplies or services required:** VA plans to use full and open competition in its related outreach activities. In this instance, due to on the need to maintain research capability, no other efforts to remove barriers are necessary.

12. **Requirements Certification:** I certify that the requirement outlined in this justification is a Bona Fide Need of the Department of Veterans Affairs and that the supporting data under my cognizance, which are included in the justification, are accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

**Technical Representative Certification:**

Pursuant to FAR 6.303(c), I certify that any supporting data that is my responsibility and which forms a basis for the justification is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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Terence Hubert  
Health Systems Specialist, VHA  
Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention


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7/5/2018

Date

**Contracting Officer Certification/ Approval:**

Pursuant to FAR 6.303-2(b)(12), I certify that this justification is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief and approval is thus provided.



Digitally signed by Allen L. Smith  
DN: cn=Allen L. Smith, o=Strategic  
Acquisition Center- Frederick,  
ou=Division 3,  
email=allen.smith3@va.gov, c=US  
Date: 2018.07.05 10:49:41 -04'00'

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Allen L. Smith  
Contracting Officer  
Strategic Acquisition Center – Frederick

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7/5/2018

Date

**Agency Competition Advocate Certification/ Approval:**

The Agency Competition Advocate (see 806.501) signature below meets the justification approving authority requirements in accordance with FAR 6.304 (a)(2), Approval of Justification. Proposed contract amount is over \$700,000 but not exceeding \$13.5 million.

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Clint Druk  
Agency Competition Advocate  
Office of Acquisition Operations

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Date