

Request for Information Veteran Experience Data Curation Solution

1.0 RFI Instructions

This Request for Information (RFI) is issued for information and planning purposes only and does not constitute a solicitation nor does it restrict the Government as to the ultimate acquisition approach. In accordance with (IAW) Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 15.201(e), responses to this notice are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract. The purpose of this RFI is to obtain market information on capable sources of supply, industry practices, and input specific to the information provided. The Government 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 party's expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future Request for Quote, if any is issued. Any information submitted by respondents to this RFI is strictly voluntary. All submissions become Government property and will not be returned. Responses should clearly mark any information that is proprietary, restricted or competition sensitive information.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Technology Acquisition Center is issuing this RFI to determine Contractors capabilities in executing the Government requirements identified below in Appendix 2.

2.0 Background

VA provides a wide range of services to 9 million Veterans. During the delivery of these services, VA receives 140 million calls annually. These calls are serviced by 9,300 call agents spread throughout 1,800 VA contact centers. Insights gained from an analysis of the interactions between Veterans, their family members and VA highlight the need and urgency for VA to provide easy, effective, pleasant, and personalized service and support.

The Veterans Experience Office (VEO) launched the VA Secretary's priority - enterprise VA Contact Center Modernization project - to design and deliver an easy and more effective Veteran experience as Veterans interact with VA through all communications channels (Voice, Chat, Text, Video etc.). The outcome for the Contact Center modernization project over the next five (5) years is to improve the Veterans experience while optimizing the efficiencies across each contact center operations communications channel.

Data is a key pillar and the foundation of the VA enterprise contact center technology stack, however, the quality of machine learning from these data sets will be dependent on the accuracy of the data, its completeness, its ability to be bias free and to be consistent as the data is collected across all the systems and platforms.

3.0 Goals

The first goal of the enterprise VA Contact Center Modernization is to begin the process of migrating, centralizing, maintaining, and delivering accurate Veteran engagement

data from multiple contact center touchpoints (call centers agents, Vets.gov, surveys, mobile, telephony self-service, etc.) by using the latest data management tools and best practices for government contact centers utilizing a managed service provider and centralized data cloud storage repository.

The second goal of the project is to acquire and promote VA enterprise contact center modernization transformational technology that will be built using an “artificial intelligence (AI) first” approach. While AI initially uses data to respond to human inputs, it evolves to generate its own instructions through the process of machine learning, which means no humans are needed -- unless errors arise. For good results, data sets must be accurate, complete and large.

Veteran data, such as interaction details and outcomes, in a contact center environment is captured across distributed elements and components of the contact center platform as the customer journeys from “issue to resolution”. To enable insights into the journey, VEO is seeking the following technology business solutions to enable the automation of contact center data curation:

1. Data management strategy to capture and rationalize the vast amount of data that will be generated from multiple Veteran contact center interactions (calls, email, mail, on-line, chat, surveys, etc.);
2. Methods and mechanisms to link all interactions to a single journey;
3. Application of AI and Machine learning approaches to discover customer patterns, predict or anticipate customer needs and augment customers and agent tasks;
4. Use AI based robotic process automation (RPA) to eliminate manual tasks from the customer and agents journey.

The enterprise VA Contact Center Modernization project will be rolled out in two phases over the next five (5) years: Phase I: Initial Operating Capability (Pilot includes 10-15 multi-channel contact center operations) and Phase II: Full Operating Capabilities to scale implementation of the project across the enterprise.

Additional information on each phase can be found in Appendix 1.

4.0 Response

VA is seeking interested vendors that are capable of providing a Veteran Experience Data Curation Managed Services Solution for the Department of Veterans Affairs as a managed service. The solution shall extract and curate the data from contact center systems that operate across the full lifecycle of Veteran contact with the VA (from contact through contact resolution), to enable VA to perform advanced customer experience analytics (AI, machine learning, predictive, real time analytics, etc.), and enables identification of opportunities for improvement such as automation that includes

AI, predictive, real time analytics, etc. An initial set of minimum Government requirements for the desired solution are detailed in Appendix 2. The response must be limited to 20 pages and should clearly specify the following:

- Specific platforms that will be used in the solution
- The type of metadata repository that will be used
- The tools and processes used to maintain the data
- The methodology used to standardize the data across the disparate contact center platform in use in the VA
- Tools and advanced capabilities that can be leveraged by both the VA Contact centers and the VEO (business owners) and the vendor to support improvements and decision making applied to data (by both vendors and business owner)
- The rough order of magnitude of the costs of such a capability including ongoing maintenance

The RFI response describing this capability must be clear, concise, and complete. VA is under no obligation to provide feedback to the company, or to contact the company for clarification of any information submitted in response to this request. However, VA may contact certain respondents to seek further information as market research.

Be advised that set-aside decisions may be made based on the information provided in response to this RFI. Responses should be as complete and informative as possible.

As part of your RFI response, please provide the following information. At this time, VA is seeking responses for Phase 1: Initial Operating Capabilities of this initiative only (see Appendix 1). Please provide responses for scalability as requested.

1. Provide a summary of your technical solution(s) for data curation in VA that will enable delivery of functionality described by the Government's requirements in Appendix 2. Be specific of the nature of the platform, the software and tools used, the storage options, etc. For any requirement not met by the proposed solution, describe any third-party integration arrangements that currently exist to address the gaps. Please identify the requirement, third party solution, and contribution to the solution. The summary should address the following:
 - a. How the data will be extracted, curated and prepared for performing advanced analytics through the customer journey
 - b. How the data can be leveraged to perform predictive, real time and other forms of advanced analysis
 - c. How the solution will apply AI and machine learning to drive automation and improved customer experience
2. If on premise and off premise hosting options exist, please describe functional differences and limitations between the two and indicate the following:

- a. Do the solution(s) integrate with commercial cloud such as, Amazon Web Services (AWS), Salesforce, or Microsoft Azure?
 - b. Explain the reliability of these solution(s). Include information such as availability, recovery time metrics, etc. that they can support.
 - c. Are the solution(s) compliant with FEDRAMP and HIPAA Security requirements? If not, describe current efforts to obtain accreditation.
3. Describe how your capability supports the VA in creating an authoritative data source for customer experience data in the future. Please include any processes around governance that will be used for data migration and curation to ensure the quality and accuracy of the data.
4. The current VA call center infrastructure consists of various hardware and software from multiple manufacturers. Explain how the proposed solution(s) enable the automated/efficient curation of, and standardization of data used across disparate systems. Do the solution(s) include the ability to build a unified model across all platforms? If not, please describe the recommended approach to achieve standardization to enable the types of cross contact center/cross platform analysis the VA wants to perform. Please describe the methodologies that will be used to efficiently extract, transform, and load the data through the customer experience lifecycle.
5. VA has historically required the use of relational databases for data processing. Describe any other types of database or non-database driven solutions VA should consider that may be more cost-effective but still able to handle complex customer data processing from a large number of disparate systems. Describe the type of data processing methods your solution(s) can leverage. Do you have opensource solutions that can offer the capability to process, query and visualize the data for analysis? Please provide any advantages and disadvantages for these methods.
6. Please provide a Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) (Not a Quote) detailing the costs associated with the managed services solution characterized by licensing (SaaS if offered), installation and configuration, and maintenance activities. The ROM shall be based on 10-15 contact centers that collectively handle an average monthly call volume of 1.9 million calls. These will typically have a full stack of software – IVR/ACD (e.g. Cisco, Avaya, etc.), CRMs (e.g. Microsoft Dynamics, Salesforce), Workforce Management (Nice), Knowledge Management (e.g. eGain, Salesforce, etc.), telephone carriers (e.g. Verizon, Century Link, etc.), multiple websites, with support for chat. The ROM shall be broken down into three tiers: 1) ROM for data curation only 2) ROM for AI tools and support 3) ROM for 1) and 2). If feasible, also include a ROM for scalability of this solution to include more contact centers and a proportional amount of call volume.
7. Describe the scalability benefits and limitations of the solution(s), including any impacts on performance as call volume and data streams increase.

8. Provide a roadmap or plan for future development efforts and life expectancy of your proposed solution(s). Include details about any associated companion services your solution(s) provide to support the following:
 - a. Data curation training
 - b. Data analytics training
 - c. Consulting services that support maturing VA management utilization of customer experience data
 - d. Consulting services that identify the use of automation, and other recommendations to improve customer experience in each platform and across platforms.
9. Describe similar work efforts of this scope and complexity that you have been involved in. Have you performed this type of work with the Federal Government? Provide supporting detail indicating whether you were the prime contractor or a subcontractor.
10. If a small business, describe your type of small business. Are you able to comply with FAR 52.219-6 and 52.219-14 in execution of this effort? Are you able to comply with VAAR 852.219-10, VA Notice of Total Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Set-Aside and with subcontracting limitations in 13 CFR 125.6 in execution of this effort?

For SDVOSB/VOSB firms, indicate whether at least 50% of the cost of performance incurred is planned to be expended for employees of your concern or employees of other eligible SDVOSB/VOSB firms.

11. Identify existing contract vehicles (VA, GSA, NASA SEWP, etc.) of which you are a contract holder and can be utilized to procure the Veteran Experience Data Curation solution and integration services.
12. Please provide your technical and functional comments/recommendations on elements of VA's requirements that are necessary to develop a complete Veteran Experience Data Curation Managed Services Solution for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The page limit for the response is no more than **20 pages**. Responses should also include the company profile (to include, but not limited to, history, business size and socioeconomic category, applicable North American Industry Classification (NAICS). The response should also include a list of all subcontractors proposed and their respective role in the performance of this requirement.

Please send your questions and responses regarding this announcement to Contract Specialist John Vardouniotis - ioannis.vardouniotis@va.gov, Contract Specialist Tinamarie Giraud – tinamarie.giraud@va.gov and Contracting Officer Kevin Monahan – kevin.monahan@va.gov

Please Note: VA may elect to contact individual companies based upon the content of their RFI submission. VA may engage these companies to gather further information through email correspondence, telephone calls, virtual or physically located meetings, and/or other means.

Responses are due no later than 12:00 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Wednesday, October 31st, 2018. Faxed copies are not acceptable.

Contracting Office Address:

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Appendix 1 – Phase Timeline

Phase 1: Initial Operating Capabilities (1 year): Develop an Initial operating capability (IOC) using 10-15 VA contact center operations for a managed service provider to oversee the enterprise contact center modernization data management project. This includes:

- Data architecture
- Data quality management
- Data warehousing (using cloud services)
- Business intelligence and analytics
- Metadata management
- Data security management
- Artificial intelligence (AI) and automation tools
- End user training

Software as a service provider scope of work includes: Establish on-going data collection process to capture near real-time and historical data for up to a period of 12 months for 10-15 VA contact center operation from:

- Telephone carriers
- Interactive Voice Response (IVRs)
- Automatic Call Distribution(ACDs)
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- Knowledge Management (KM)
- Surveys
- VA.gov and other customer facing sites

Phase 2: Full Operating Capabilities (2 -5 years): Scale from IOC to a Full operating capability (FOC) project to migrate the additional 1,700 contact center operations onto the cloud storage platform using a managed services provider.

Appendix 2 – Requirements

The Contractor shall provide a VA Contact Center data curation solution that will enable delivery of the functionality described by the following minimum requirements:

ID	Theme	Sub-Theme	Requirement
	System	Scalability	The system shall be scalable to support all VA enterprise contact centers.
	System	Data Ownership	The system shall be designed to return all data to the VA immediately upon request.
	System	Security	The system shall be FEDRAMP compliant.
	System	Privacy	The system shall be HIPAA compliant.
	System	Data Sources	The system shall have the ability to ingest raw data from telephone carriers.
	System	Data Sources	The system shall have the ability to ingest raw data from Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems.
	System	Data Sources	The system shall have the ability to ingest raw data from Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) systems.
	System	Data Sources	The system shall have the ability to ingest raw data from Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems.
	System	Data Sources	The system shall have the ability to ingest raw data from Knowledge Management (KM) systems.
	System	Data Sources	The system shall have the ability to ingest raw data from Customer Survey systems.
	System	Data Sources	The system shall have the ability to ingest raw data from Workforce Management systems.
	System	Data Sources	The system shall have the ability to ingest raw data from additional digital source systems that utilize APIs.
	System	Data Sources	The system shall maintain data profiles
	System	Data Quality	The system shall utilize integrated tools to support data quality needs.
	System	Data Accuracy	The system shall have the ability to produce data accuracy reports
	System	API Standards	The system shall utilize non-proprietary APIs.
	System	Cloud Service	The system shall utilize cloud storage solutions.
	System	Cloud Integration	The system shall have the ability to integrate with existing VA contracted cloud services.
	System	Real Time Analytics	The system shall have the ability to leverage data to support real time analysis.
	System	Artificial Intelligence	The system shall have the ability to apply Artificial Intelligence (AI) methodologies to drive automation.
	System	Optimization	The system shall have the ability to apply optimization to support data driven decision making.
	System	Reporting	The system shall have the ability to produce data collection reports to ensure data source traceability.
	System	Access	The system shall have the ability to allow access to raw data.