Veterans Intake, Conversion, and Communications Services (VICCS)

Performance Work Statement (PWS)

Task Order 1: Mail Processing Services (MPS)

Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)

Date: July 19, 2019

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VICCS

1. Background

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), requires contractor services to automate its initial triage and handling of mail associated with Veterans benefits and rapidly accelerate our drive to Mail Box Zero - where Veterans Mail is handled the day it is received.

VBA delivers a wide variety of monetary and non-monetary benefits to Veterans including Vocational Rehabilitation, Education, Disability Compensation and Pension benefits. As part of this processing, VBA annually receives over seven million submissions ("mail packets") containing around twelve million documents through multiple intake channels such as paper mail, faxes, and electronic uploads. Many of these packets include standardized VBA forms requiring specific actions, while other packets contain unstructured documents including correspondence or evidentiary documents used to substantiate claims. VBA converts the documents in the packet into electronic images and makes the images available to government employees working from a mail portal. Employees then manually review packets and, in addition to uploading the documents into a repository, depending upon the presence of certain types of documents, might create entries in a case management system (such as creating a claim) or process a system transaction (such as changing a claimant address). This process can take from seven to twenty days, depending upon facility, mail volumes and staffing and increases a Veteran's wait for benefits. Due to the number of employees involved in processing packets, Veterans can also be impacted by process inconsistencies and quality errors.

Through this contract, VBA intends for the Contractor to automate processing all incoming mail by noon the day after it is received, dramatically reducing Veteran wait times, improving consistency and freeing up these skilled employees to assist Veterans in other ways and improve VBA's delivery of benefits. See the below process flow for a high-level depiction of the mail process with specific elements highlighted which VBA expects the Contractor to automate:
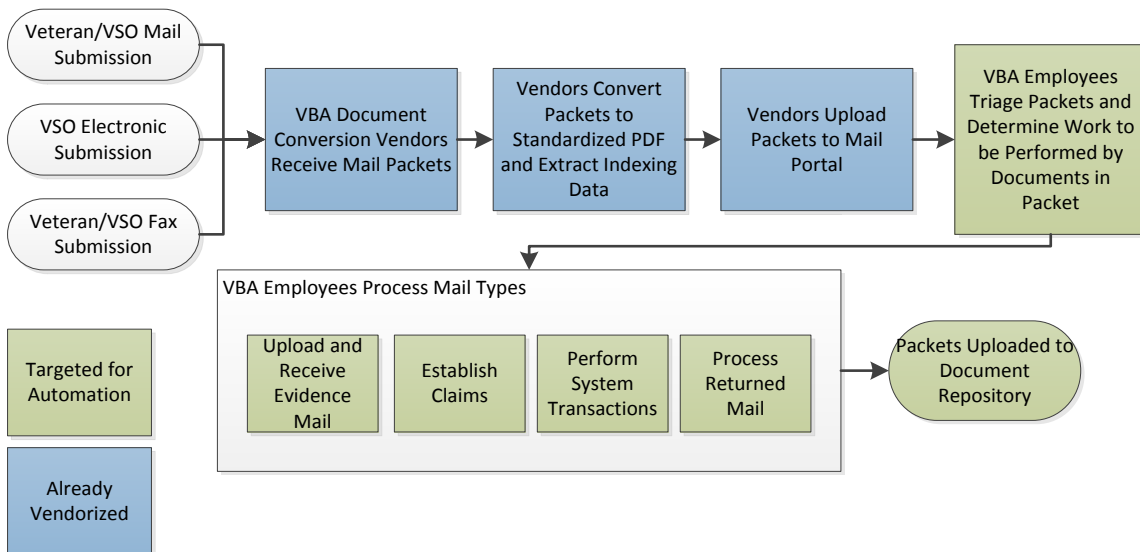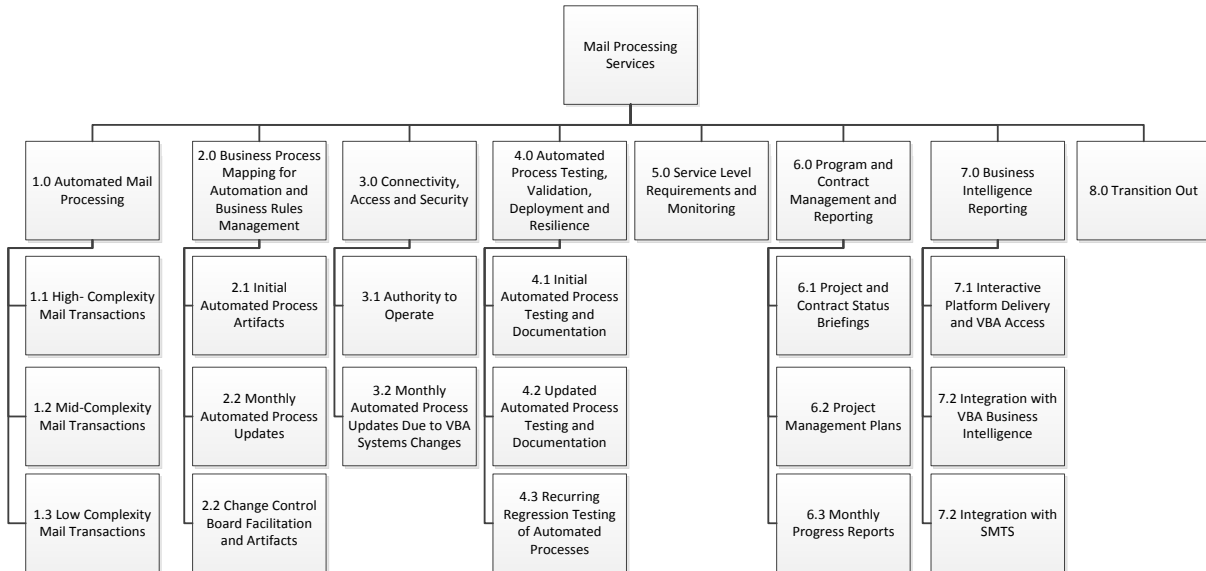

Fig. 1: Current State Mail Process

2. Scope of Work and Conceptual Approach

The Contractor shall provide mail processing services for unattended automation of the triage and handling of mail packets after document conversion. These services encompass not only the direct processing of mail packets but also the ancillary services, milestones and deliverables necessary to prepare for and execute the work. The work breakdown structure (WBS) graphic below depicts these tasks, which are described later in this PWS.

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                              Mail Processing
                                 Services

  1.0 Automated   2.0 Business     3.0 Connectivity,  4.0 Automated    5.0 Service Level  6.0 Program and  7.0 Business    8.0 Transition Out
  Mail            Process Mapping  Access and         Process Testing, Requirements and   Contract         Intelligence
  Processing      for Automation   Security           Validation,      Monitoring         Management and   Reporting
                  and Business                        Deployment and                      Reporting
                  Rules                                Resilience
                  Management

  1.1 High-       2.1 Initial      3.1 Authority to   4.1 Initial                         6.1 Project and  7.1 Interactive
  Complexity      Automated        Operate            Automated Process                   Contract Status  Platform Delivery
  Mail            Process                             Testing and                         Briefings        and VBA Access
  Transactions    Artifacts                           Documentation

  1.2 Mid-        2.2 Monthly      3.2 Monthly        4.2 Updated                         6.2 Project      7.2 Integration with
  Complexity      Automated        Automated Process  Automated Process                   Management       VBA Business
  Mail            Process          Updates Due to VBA Testing and                         Plans            Intelligence
  Transactions    Updates          Systems Changes    Documentation

  1.3 Low         2.2 Change                          4.3 Recurring                       6.3 Monthly      7.2 Integration with
  Complexity      Control Board                        Regression Testing                  Progress Reports SMTS
  Mail            Facilitation                         of Automated
  Transactions    and Artifacts                        Processes
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VBA envisions the tasks proceeding thusly on an iterative basis with ever-increasing numbers of automated processes:

1. VBA and the Contractor mutually evaluate documents received in mail packets and their corresponding business processes to be automated.
2. VBA and the Contractor select a process to be automated in a given iteration/period.
3. The Contractor plans its work as described in Task 5.
4. The Contractor maps the process, documents the process and builds business rules and automation functionality as described in Task 2.
5. The Contractor obtains access to necessary systems and interfaces and develops against them as described in Task 3.
6. The Contractor tests its automation as described in Task 4.
7. The Contractor prepares reporting as described in Task 5.
8. The Contractor deploys its automated process and begins processing transactions as described in Task 1.
9. The Contractor's automation meets Service Level Requirements as described in Section 4.
10. The Contractor maintain its automated process and updates, tests and redeploys as needed by business process or systems as described throughout.
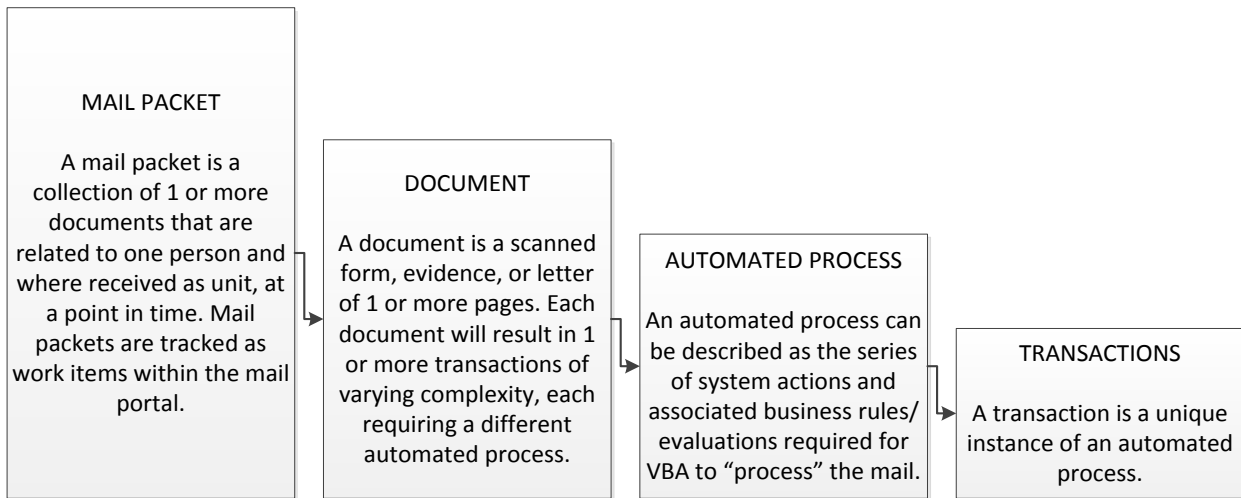11. The Contractor and VBA begin automating a new process.

3. Specific Tasks

3.1 Task 1: Automated Mail Processing

The Contractor will receive mail packets to be automated within a queue in the Centralized Mail Portal (current state) or through interfaces with one or more VICCS Vendors (future state). The Contractor shall evaluate the contents of the mail packet and, based on documents in the packet, shall perform unattended transactions with low, medium and high complexity automated processes in VBA systems by noon the following day based upon mutually agreed-upon business rules defined in Task 2.

Terms and Relationship Model

MAIL PACKET	DOCUMENT	AUTOMATED PROCESS	TRANSACTIONS
A mail packet is a collection of 1 or more documents that are related to one person and where received as unit, at a point in time. Mail packets are tracked as work items within the mail portal.	A document is a scanned form, evidence, or letter of 1 or more pages. Each document will result in 1 or more transactions of varying complexity, each requiring a different automated process.	An automated process can be described as the series of system actions and associated business rules/ evaluations required for VBA to "process" the mail.	A transaction is a unique instance of an automated process.

"Processing" the mail could mean simply checking the mail into a tracking system, or accomplishing a system update resulting from the mail, or a complex process that involves evaluating data from multiple screens/systems and accomplishing multiple form interactions, interacting with many menus, etc.

Example

The following example explains how this might work. Consider a mail packet containing the following documents: VA Form 21-526EZ, VA Form 21-22, and VA Form 21-686c (search https://www.va.gov/vaforms/search_action.asp if you want to see the actual forms).

1. The 21-526EZ might require the claim establishment transaction (high complexity automated process) requiring:
   a. Review and evaluation of data on two screens and systems updates in the Share application to update Veteran/claimant identity.
   b. Interfacing with a VA application programming interface (API) performing natural language processing to categorize disabilities claimed by the claimant (contentions).
   c. Review and evaluation of two screens and the completion of three web forms in the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) to create the claim, enter/categorize contentions and record which documents were contained in the mail packet.

2. The 21-22 form might require the Power Of Attorney (POA) update transaction (low complexity automated process), review of two screens in VBMS to validate the POA is new and to verify the POA history as wells completion of a web form to add the POA.
3. The 21-686c transaction might require a dependency update transaction (low complexity automated process), which might require review of two screens in the Share application to compare against existing dependents and the completion of a form.
4. The 686c transaction might be required to follow a successful 21-526EZ transaction.
5. VBA may identify criteria based on the content of any of these forms or data displayed in VBA systems requiring one or more transactions to be failed from automation to VBA staff.

Following the completion of these transactions, the Contractor shall approve the upload of the packet from the Centralized Mail Portal to VBA's document repository, VBMS, (current state) or directly upload the packet into VBMS (future state). The Contractor shall invoice VBA only for successful automation of a transaction unless VBA explicitly defines a requirement to fail the transaction from automation in the business rules defined in Task 2 or the Contractor encounters an error in VBA systems. The Contractor shall assume all automated processes minimally require the following components: 1) obtaining the contents of the mail packet for automation via API or Centralized Mail Portal queue; 2) evaluating the document contents and extracting any needed information from those documents in some way; 3) reconciling the identity of the Veteran associated with the mail packet with a valid entry in VBA systems (not all correspondence received is from a Veteran but almost all is related to/about a Veteran and information on documents/mail is not always accurate) by means of automated searching or creating identities if none exist; this may also require the contractor to alter packet identity traits used for upload (e.g. file number); 4) upload to VBMS once all processing is complete.

The Contractor shall categorize mail automation transactions into three buckets: low, medium and high complexity automated processes. The Contractor shall use the descriptions of each category in the table below to inform their approach:

Automated Process/ Transaction Type	Typical Mail Type	Representative Documents	Estimated Annual Documents	Representative Systems Count*^	Representative Screens/ Form/ Menu Count
Low Complexity	System Updates Evidence Mail	21-22, Evidence Mail	6M	2 or fewer	7 or fewer
Medium Complexity	Returned Mail	Returned Mail, 21-0966, 21-4138	2M	4 or fewer	14 or fewer
High Complexity	Claims Establishments Unstructured Mail	21-526EZ, 21-527EZ, 21-530, 21-534, 20-0995, 20-0996,	2.4M	6 or fewer	28 or fewer

*System counts exclude Centralized Mail Portal
^May also include APIs

Categorization for automated processes will be mutually agreed-upon with concurrence from the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) as part of VBA review and acceptance of business process mappings and Contractor-proposed automation in Task 2. Contractor performance on Task 1 shall not begin until VBA concurrence of Task 2 artifacts for the transaction in question. Contractor completion of testing in Task 3 and creation of reporting in Task 4 also shall be completed prior to deployment of an automated process to production and subsequent completion of transactions.

Deliverables:

- Low Complexity Transaction
- Medium Complexity Transaction
- High Complexity Transaction
- Initial Deployment of Automated Processes
    - Initial deployment of at least two (2) low complexity automated processes with fewer than 49% of transactions off-ramped (measured for two weeks post-deployment) within thirty (30) days of award.
    - Delivery of automated process artifacts as described in Task 2, completion of testing in Task 4 and reporting in Task 6 are prerequisites.
- Deployment of Automated Claims Establishment Process
    - Deployment of the 526EZ automated process with fewer than 20% of transactions off-ramped (measured for 2 weeks post-deployment) within sixty (60) days of award.
    - Delivery of automated process artifacts as described in Task 2, completion of testing in Task 4 and reporting in Task 6 are prerequisites.

ICMHS/DMHS Transition to VICCS

Although this task order is intended as the initial task order within VICCS, the Contractor shall initiate mail automation performance within the existing configuration of intake contracts supporting VBA, the Intake and Centralized Mail Handling Services (ICMHS) and Digital Mail Handling Services (DMHS) contracts. This means the Contractor shall initially obtain mail packets for automation by retrieving the packets from the Centralized Mail Portal provided by the DMHS, as a user would obtain mail packets today from the portal. The portal makes mail packets available to users assigned to a queue and within the queue makes available packet metadata (Veteran name, file number, document type, date of receipt) and the packet images themselves for either viewing or download in Portable Document Format (PDF) form. Some of the PDFs may have searchable elements, but the Contractor should anticipate needing to extract information on forms and documents to enable automation. Once transaction processing is complete, this also requires the Contractor to approve the upload of documents into VBMS via the Centralized Mail Portal.

In anticipation of subsequent VICCS task orders to be issued for document conversion and mail intake services, the Contractor shall create, expose and document an application programming interface to be used by the VICCS document conversion/mail intake vendor to send mail packets for automated processing and shall ingest packets

from this API when consumers are ready. The Contractor shall anticipate a situation where some packets may still reside in the Centralized Mail Portal and other packets are ingested directly. Once this API is active, the Contractor shall also upload documents directly to VBMS via API.

Deliverables:

- Mail Packet Ingest API
  - The Contractor shall deliver the API within 90 days of contract award.

VBA Systems Characteristics and Enabling Automation

VBA understands the Contractor will likely want to apply a mix of techniques to enable automation including robotic process automation (RPA) and integration with APIs. VBA sets no specific expectations regarding the techniques the Contractor shall apply other than they must eventually encompass unattended automation and that VBA is paying for the results of this automation in the form of transactions as a service, not for the development of the automation itself. This section broadly describes the VBA systems landscape to help the Contractor understand the likely challenges and interfaces impacting automation efforts.

The VBA systems architecture is a mixture of five categories of systems:

1. Visual Basic client applications
    a. Multiple VBA systems, including the Veterans Services Network (VETSNET) applications and Share run on Visual Basic 6 (VB6) clients installed on user desktops. Substantial functionality has been migrated to web applications, but the Contractor will need to access VB6 clients for many transactions. The Contractor may access these clients by utilizing Citrix Desktops. Application users authenticate using either Active Directory username and password or Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card. VBA will create PIV exempt accounts for the Contractor if needed.
2. Web client applications
    a. VBA's primary claims processing systems and document repositories for Compensation, Pension and Education, VBMS, The Image Management System (TIMS) and the Long-Term Solution (LTS), are web clients, accessible to users inside VBA's wide-area network. Users of these applications also authenticate through either Active Directory or PIV cards, meaning system accounts could be used. Access to VBMS could be granted by means of a Virtual Private Network (VPN) tunnel between the Contractor's servers and the VBMS VA internal IP addresses.
3. A robust API ecosystem
    a. Underpinning VBA's web applications (including VBMS) is a set of over 80 Oracle Weblogic services written in Java and communicating with applications via the SOAP protocol. These services serve as the communications layer between VBA web applications and VBA's Corporate Database.
    b. VBMS itself also makes available additional APIs via the SOAP protocol for document upload and claims establishment.

      c. Both sets of APIs use SAML tokens for authentication and have enabled access for external systems historically.

4. VA APIs for key enterprise data
      a. Separate from VBA, the VA enterprise also makes available APIs for authoritative data on identity and contact information.

5. Managed services client web applications
      a. These applications include the Centralized Mail Portal, which the Contractor will need to access to obtain mail packets as well as planned managed services associated with Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment benefits and Education benefits.

VBA will make available any documentation (including API documentation, training materials (for process mapping), test scenarios/scripts (for potential use in automation), functional requirements, etc.) surrounding these systems upon request after award, except for any proprietary documentation covered by non-disclosure agreements.

3.2 Task 2: Business Process Mapping for Automation and Business Rules Management

The Contractor shall elicit, document, manage and update the business rules and proposed automation approach associated with each automated process deployed by the Contractor. The Contractor shall meet with VBA staff, map the current state of the business process being automated including the systems and inputs used, business rules/variables evaluated, success and failure paths as well as process branches dictated by the contents of the mail packet and associated Veteran record. The Contractor shall provide all artifacts associated with the process including a finalized proposed automated process to VBA as a deliverable. The Contractor shall iteratively add automated processes during the contract and the Contractor shall provide these deliverables for each new automated process.

VBA anticipates automated processes will change over time due to the development of VBA systems, as well as the implementation of new Federal laws, court decisions and VA rulemakings. The Contractor shall deliver recurring automated process updates to accommodate these changes monthly.

These artifacts do not merely represent a contract deliverable, but, due to the nature of their initial and recurring acceptance on update, represent VBA's acceptance of the Contractor's automation approach for a given business process and constitute the basis of VBA's test acceptance and quality Service Level Requirements.

VBA and the Contractor shall manage the revisions and updates to the automated processes by means of a joint change control process and change control board (CCB). The Contractor shall facilitate all aspects of this change control process from tracking potential and requested changes, to facilitating regular change control board meetings (minimally monthly) and shall send representatives to attend other change control boards/processes potentially impacting mail automation.

Deliverables:

- Initial Automated Process Artifacts (Per automated process)

- o VBA business process documentation including process map, description, all other supporting materials
- o Proposed automated process documentation including comprehensive business rules, demo GIF/Video or planned API inputs/outputs, process map, description and variable list
- Recurring Monthly Update to Automated Process Artifacts (Monthly, per automated process up to 20)
  - o Revised automated process artifacts incorporating lessons learned, analysis and a changelog in addition to the changed artifacts
  - o The Contractor shall update any and all needed Automated Process Artifacts monthly. VBA will accept these updates as deliverables based upon the number of automated processes currently processing transactions in productions. For example, if the contractor has 15 automated processes in production, VBA will pay for 15 monthly updates. If the Contractor has more than 20 automated processes in production, the Contractor shall still perform updates to all automated processes requiring updates. VBA does not anticipate more than 20 processes requiring updates in a month.
- Change Control Board Facilitation and Artifacts
  - o To be provided monthly within 30 days of contract award
- Electronic Change Control Access
  - o Contractor shall grant VBA access to any tools used to track change, configuration or requirements management (e.g. Github, JIRA)

3.3 Task 3: Connectivity, Access, and Security

The Contractor shall manage all aspects of interfacing/configuring automation with VBA systems. This includes complying with the security requirements in VA Handbook 6500 and referenced NIST standards to safeguard the data of Veterans who depend upon VA. Security compliance includes obtaining and maintaining an Authority to Operate (ATO) which will prevent the Contractor from processing any transactions in production systems until complete. VBA does not require nor expect the Contractor to have an existing ATO. VBA will work with the Contractor to complete the ATO in an expedited fashion and obtain support to that effect. VBA does require the Contractor to make a good-faith, expedited and streamlined effort to obtain an ATO given VBA's support. The Contractor shall manage all efforts to obtain access to VA's systems or integrate with any of VA's expansive suite of APIs available for use. As mentioned above, the Contractor shall anticipate these systems and services will change over time and shall make configuration changes in its approach accordingly as well as account in those anticipated changes. Many of the VBA systems are on monthly agile release cycles and while these releases may not always change components (e.g. API interfaces, document object model element tags, web forms.) used in automation, some impacts should regularly be anticipated.

VBA cannot stress enough how the above requirements are contingent upon Contractor staff expeditiously obtaining and using VA network and email access to communicate with VA. The Contractor shall enter information into VA systems for ATO purposes. The Contractor shall use VA encrypted emails to send and receive Personally Identifiable Information (PII) associated with testing (which are not differentiated from real PII by VBA's email filters) and production operations. The Contractor shall receive

API documentation or schema examples containing PII using VA encrypted email. VA will send the Contractor encryption certificates and login credentials via encrypted email. Neglecting timely VA email access and usage by Contractor staff will cause performance failures.

Deliverables: (See deliverables table for NTE quantities per performance period)

- ATO For Automation Platform
  - Within 30 days of contract award
- Monthly Automated Process Updates Due to VBA Systems Changes (Monthly, per automated process up to 20)
  - For Contractor cost recovery associated with frequent VBA systems updates
  - Invoiced per transaction type currently performing transactions in production
  - The Contractor shall update any and all needed Automated Process Updates monthly. VBA will accept these updates as deliverables based upon the number of automated processes currently processing transactions in productions. For example, if the contractor has 15 automated processes in production, VBA will pay for 15 monthly updates. If the Contractor has more than 20 automated processes in production, the Contractor shall still perform updates to all automated processes requiring updates. VBA estimates that there would be fewer than 20 processes requiring updates in a month.

3.4 Task 4: Automated Process Testing, Validation, Deployment, and Resilience

VBA sets a high bar to deploy to its production environments. VBA's systems pay out over $100BN annually to millions of Veterans, many of whom rely on their payments as a primary source of income or as their means to attend schooling. To avoid such issues, the Contractor shall perform robust testing before they can deploy an automated process to production, advancing through multiple test environments in serial. Minimally, the Contractor shall anticipate VBA requiring testing in at least four (4) test environments prior to production deployment. The Contractor shall provide to VA all test artifacts (including scenarios and test summary reports) created in support of the testing for review and approval to ensure required test scenarios and conditions are anticipated. The Contractor shall also perform testing for each new automated process and shall regularly perform regression testing when systems automated processes are operating on are changed (monthly).

To deploy automated processes, the Contractor should anticipate deploying on weekends/non-work hours to minimize impact toVBA employees. The Contractor shall take a phased approach for deployments with the capability to process a single or subset of all potential transactions available at a given time (including filtering by VBA facility "station" / work queue/zip code) and the ability to deploy multiple versions of an automated process concurrently which each process different subsets of transactions (for comparison/evaluation purposes or to reflect workload variation). In support of deployments, the Contractor shall provide VBA with deployment plans for each deployment.

The above testing and deployment requirements apply not only to the Contractor's automation solution, but also to testing and deployment of specific integrations (such as

document uploads to VBMS, ingest of mail packets and any APIs the Contractor intends to consume).

In conjunction with each deployment of automation process, the Contractor shall perform the functions of a Program Management Office (PMO) and leverage the principals of Organizational Change Management such as creating communications for VBA employees to ensure understanding regarding the changes occurring. The Contractor shall also construct a user guide and appropriate standard operating procedures for the field employees to review off-ramped items and take appropriate action. The contractor shall also develop and sustain a method for VBA employees to provide feedback and identify potential defects, unintended process implications, training or procedural gaps and/or potential improvements with automated processes. This feedback tool will be transparent to VBA leadership and key personnel to ensure that reported defects are addressed in accordance with the Service Level Requirements (SLRs). The Contractor shall create and disseminate additional communications as automated process are updated, as new automated processes are deployed and, on an ad-hoc basis if clarifications are needed for employees to ensure automated and failed work items are being properly routed and reviewed.

The Contractor shall use continuous integration and monitoring to verify automated processes are working properly and the Contractor shall create automated notifications in the event of outages/degradations. In the event of a catastrophic failure or defect in automation, the Contractor shall have established procedures to ensure degradation of performance doesn't affect Veteran's claims and to communicate degradations clearly and immediately to VBA. In the event a failed deployment, the Contractor shall have fallback/rollback mechanisms in place to allow and maintain the prior version of automation. In the event of a defect, the Contractor shall immediately communicate the issue to VA which is being tracked and then provide regular updates in appropriate forums until the defect is resolved. The Contractor shall ensure that any automation causing errors will be halted as soon as it is identified, providing halting has no impacts to other operations. Any remediation required by erroneous implementation by the Contractor shall be performed by the Contractor correcting affected records. Within each test plan (initial and updated), the Contractor shall include an error remediation approach to correct records affected by errors.

Deliverables:

- Initial Automated Process Testing and Documentation (Per automated process)
    - VBA acceptance of this deliverable is a criterion for processing transactions for a given automated process as described in Task 1
    - The Contractor shall deploy automated processes and deliver deployment plans as part of this deliverable.
    - The Contractor shall deliver change management artifacts and communications/communications strategies for deployment as part of this deliverable.
- Updated Automated Process Testing and Documentation (Monthly, per automated process, up to 20)
    - The Contractor shall perform testing and update documents for any and all automated processes requiring updates monthly. VBA will the accept the testing and documentation as deliverables based upon the number of

automated processes currently processing transactions in productions. If the Contractor has more than 20 automated processes in production, the Contractor shall still perform testing and provide documentation for all automated processes requiring updates. VBA estimates there would be fewer than 20 processes actually requiring updates in a month.

- o The Contractor shall deploy automated processes and deliver deployment plans as part of this deliverable.
- o The Contractor shall deliver change management artifacts and communications/communications strategies for deployment as part of this deliverable.
    - ▪ Delivered not fewer than 2 weeks prior to deployment.
- o

- Automation Regression Testing and Documentation (Monthly, per Automated Process)
    - o The Contractor shall regression test all automated processes monthly. VBA will pay for this testing as a deliverable based upon the number of automated processes currently processing transactions in production. For example, if the contractor has 15 automated processes in production, VBA will pay for 15 monthly regression testing deliverables. If the Contractor has more than 20 automated processes in production, the Contractor shall still perform all required testing, but VBA will pay for a total of 20 as VBA assumes this will mainly be automated.
    - o The Contractor shall deploy and deliver monthly deployment plans as part of this deliverable.
        - ▪ Delivered not fewer than four business days prior to deployment.

3.5 Task 5: Program and Contract Management and Reporting

To manage this expansive scope of work the Contractor shall employ program, project and contract management in accordance with industry best-practices (e.g. PMBOK). The Contractor shall deliver and maintain contract artifacts depicting the contract work breakdown structure, schedule, staffing and risks. VBA anticipates staffing, background investigations timeliness and security to be the highest probability, highest impact risks affecting both schedule and scope delivered. The Contractor shall plan its onboarding of staff to mitigate this risk.

The Contractor shall regularly report on its work from a contractual and project management perspective. Contract reporting shall encompass contract deliverable status including transactions completed and detailed transaction data, cost performance, invoicing information and project management reporting such as hiring plans, as well as ad hoc reports requested by VBA.

VBA intends for mail automation to be a partnership between itself and the Contractor and for the Contractor to work with VBA for all intents and purposes as part of an integrated, multi-vendor, multi-organization collaborative team rather than merely as a service provider. To this end the Contractor shall meet formally regularly with VBA on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis to coordinate and enable success and shall also participate in broader VBA internal and Mailbox Zero team meetings. The Contractor shall also provide a minimum of two liaisons (a project manager (PM) and a technical lead) to permanently work on-site at VBA's headquarters. VBA will provide space and

government-furnished equipment for them to use. The PM and technical lead will interface with VBA staff to assist same in proactively mitigating issues, clearing blockers, and rapidly provide status on emergent issues. Beyond this, the Contractor shall seek to ensure staff interacting with VBA use VBA systems, email and messaging (Skype and Slack).

Once the Contractor deploys automation, VBA will become increasingly reliant on automation to keep up with Veteran demand as it moves staff into other roles to serve Veterans. As such, continuity of operations (COOP) becomes a critical responsibility for the Contractor. The Contractor shall put in place COOP/disaster recovery (DR) processes to meet VBA's service-level requirements related to uptime and recovery time and shall participate in VBA COOP planning and exercises.

Deliverables:

- Project and Contract Status Briefings
    - Project Kick-Off Briefing
        - To be held in-person at VBA Headquarters (1800 G St. NW)
        - Delivered within five (5) business days of contract award
        - The Contractor shall coordinate all logistics with VBA staff
        - The Contractor shall submit an agenda and presentation
    - Weekly/Monthly Project Update Meetings
        - May be virtual/in-person
        - The Contractor shall facilitate, submit agenda, capture action items and minutes
        - The Contractor shall review contract and project status, deliverables submitted, transactions Completed and detailed transaction report
    - In-Person Quarterly Progress Reviews
        - To be held quarterly, in-person at VBA Headquarters (1800 G St. NW)
        - The Contractor shall coordinate all logistics with VBA staff
        - The Contractor shall submit an agenda and presentation
- Project Management Plan and Subcomponents
    - Change Control Plan
    - Communications/Organizational Change Management Plan
    - Configuration Management Plan
    - Integrated Master Schedule (IMS)
    - Staffing Plan
    - Subcontractor Management Plan
    - Technical / Management Plan
    - Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)
    - Continuity of Operations/Disaster Recovery Plan
    - Initial COOP/DR Plan
        - The Contractor shall deliver prior to deployment of first automated process
    - Monthly Updates to COOP/DR Plan
        - To be updated monthly with the deployment of additional automated processes and changes to the Contractor's architecture.
- Monthly Progress Reports
    - Operational Report (budget, hiring, etc.)
        - Trends over time

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- o Productivity Report (process definition, equipment types, etc.)
  - Trends over time
- o Quality Report (metrics, measurement, maintenance procedures, etc.)
  - Trends over time
  - Performance issues with mitigation strategies
- o Contractor Privacy and Security Training Report
- o Contractor Staff Roster
- o Deliverable Matrix (status of all PWS deliverables for the reporting period)

3.6 Task 6: Business Intelligence (BI) Reporting

The Contractor shall provide reporting in support of VBA BI. BI reporting shall encompass 1) delivery of data to VBA on an interactive platform (e.g. Tableau, OBIEE) accessible to VBA staff where they can access and manipulate it to generate needed reporting; 2) delivery of data to VBA by interface where it can be extracted, transformed and loaded into VBA's data warehouse and; 3) data transmissions to the VICCS Source Material Tracking System (SMTS) via API.   The Contractor shall anticipate delivery of data to VBA's data warehouse will take the form of daily database snapshots/materialized views via secure file transfer protocol. The Contractor shall anticipate reporting to the SMTS will be transactional via API, but potentially in batches vs. single transactions. The SMTS API does not yet exist. The Contractor shall expose all metadata generated (e.g. timestamps, systems statuses, error messages/reasons) by automated processes to these platforms. The Contractor shall provide a data dictionary defining each data element and describing its provenance/generation in support of both methods.

Deliverables:

- Interactive Platform Delivery and VBA User Accesses
  - o The Contractor shall provide access a minimum of 500 users and shall assume a minimum of 300 concurrent users.
  - o The Contractor shall enable platform reporting and deliver access prior to production deployment of the first automated process.
  - o The Contractor's reporting platform shall use authentication procedures for Contractor and VA resources authorized to access, view and edit available tracking information and metadata including one of the VA approved authentication methodologies which allow users access to VA services via their VA Personal Identity Verification (PIV) badge
- Integration with VBA BI
  - o The Contractor shall integrate within 90 days of contract award
- Integration with SMTS
  - o The Contractor shall integrate with the SMTS within 90 days of deployment of an SMTS API and its accompanying documentation.
- Data Dictionaries
  - o The Contractor shall deliver initial data dictionaries prior to production deployment of the automated service. The Contractor shall update data dictionaries with deployments or updates to automated processes.

3.7 Task 7: Mail Automation Services Transition – Out

The Contractor shall establish a detailed transition-out plan transitioning all current historical data information from its production systems detailing dates, tasks, milestones, dependencies, risks and risk management strategy, tools, and data/data structure to meet requirements the of this PWS. At the end of the period of performance, the Contractor shall transition all data and information from its production systems to VA or its designated agent.

Deliverables:

- Transition Plan
    - The Contractor shall deliver the plan not less than 90 days before the end of the later period of performance or not more than 30 days after VBA notifies the Contractor of an intent not the execute an optional period of performance.
- Transition of Data
    - The Contractor shall initially deliver all data not less than 30 days prior to the end of the period of performance and shall update the final data not more than 15 days after the end of performance.

4. Service Level Requirements and Monitoring

As alluded to in VBA's background statement goals to improve timeliness and quality, the following Service Level Requirements (SLR) shall be in effect for this effort.   The Contractor shall incorporate transparency into its business process, systems and data such that VBA or an agent of VBA can independently monitor the Contractor's compliance with SLRs. All customized coding for systems, businesses rules/processes, data generated as part of this contract and documentation associated with this contract shall be considered Government information and shall be immediately provided upon request. Where VBA employs an agent, VBA will allow the Contractor to stipulate non-disclosure agreements for proprietary information limiting the agent's ability to share with parties other than the United States Government.

SLR Name	Description	Monitoring	Performance Level	Response/Issue Resolution Time
Automation Uptime	Availability of automation to process transactions	VBA BI, Contractor Reporting, Third Party Agent Monitoring Tools	99% Available when dependent systems are available	12 Hours
Transaction Turn-Around Time (TAT)	Time to process a transaction from entry to mail queue/upload to Contractor	VBA BI, Contractor Reporting, Third Party Agent	By 12 pm ET day after receipt	1 Day

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		Monitoring Tools		
Transaction Quality	Accuracy of the automation outcome; measured against process maps and documented business rules	VBA BI, Contractor Reporting, VBA 3rd Party Agent	99 Percent Cumulative Average	Weekly
Transaction Error Handling Turn-Around Time	Time to handle errors in transactions from time of error to correction or identification of an offramp scenario	VBA BI, Contractor Reporting	1 hour to identify and halt automated process	1 Day to Fix Affected Records
Transaction Error Handling	All errors that occur in transactions must be addressed and root cause analysis completed, and updates to automation as needed	VBA BI, Contractor Reporting	Errors identified within 24 hours	1 week to correct causes of errors and update and resume automation
Process Mapping Accuracy	Accuracy of the business process rules, diagrams and mapping that is	Contractor Reporting, VBA Review	95 Percent of initial process mapping is accurate and requires minimal changes	Updates must be made within 2 business days of any gaps or errors identified at any time including post-deployment
Testing Accuracy	Evaluation of the testing scripts and results in accordance with VBA business processes and rules	Contractor Reporting, VBA Review	99 percent accuracy	1 day To remediate any gaps in test scripts
Data Availability and Reconciliation	Contractor ensures that transaction data is available for Government retrieval	VBA BI, Contractor Reporting, Third Party Agent Monitoring Tools	99 percent up time and 100 percent data reconciliation	1 day

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5. Order Type

The effort shall be proposed on a Firm Fixed-Price basis as specified in the task descriptions in this PWS.

6. Performance Details

6.1 Periods of Performance

The Base Period is 12 months from Task Order award date.
Option Period 1 is a 12-month period from the date of exercise of the option period
Option Period 2 is a 12-month period from the date of exercise of the option period
Option Period 3 is a 12-month period from the date of exercise of the option period
Option Period 4 is a 12-month period from the date of exercise of the option period

6.2 Places of Performance

Efforts under this contract shall be performed at Contractor and Government facilities. No work shall be performed outside of the Continental United States (CONUS).

The following work must be performed at the indicated Government site:

Quarterly Progress Reviews identified in Task 6 shall be performed at VBA, 1800 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006

- The Contractor key staff working on-site as described in in Task 6 will perform work at VBA, 1800 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006

6.3 Travel or Special Requirements

Travel will be required for this contract. Anticipated travel needs are below. Number of individuals traveling will depend upon the Contractor's proposed staff to be assigned to the various contract tasks.

Travel shall be in accordance with FAR 31.205-46 and requires concurrence in advance by the Contracting Officer Representative (COR).

Anticipated locations include the following:

- Location 1 – Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), 1800 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006

6.4 Contract Management

All requirements of Sections 7.0, Contract Management, of the VICCS Basic PWS apply to this effort. This Task Order shall be addressed in the Contractor's Progress, Status, and Management Report as set forth in the VICCS Basic contract.

6.5 Government Furnished Equipment (GFE)/Government Furnished Information (GFI)

- VA has developed the Emergency Notification Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for use during any network/system issues affecting any Contractors

supporting the services provided in this PWS. The SOP includes Government and Contractor emergency contact lists and establishes a clear process for Contractor-to-Contractor and Contractor-to-VA notification during any system outages or periods of degraded services. The SOP does not supersede the Contractor's incident notification requirement as documented in VA Handbook 6500 and appendices; but rather should be used to augment those policies and enable rapid communication of emergent notifications whenever they occur. VA will provide the Emergency Notification SOP within the first 45 calendar days of Task Order award and update the SOP at minimum bi-monthly (every other month) as Government and / or Contractor resources change.

6.6 Position Sensitivity

Position Sensitivity	Background Investigation (in accordance with Department of Veterans Affairs 0710 Handbook, "Personnel Suitability and Security Program," Appendix A)
Low / Tier 1	**Tier 1 / National Agency Check with Written Inquiries (NACI):** A Tier 1 / NACI is conducted by OPM and covers a five-year period. It consists of a review of records contained in the OPM Security Investigations Index (SII) and the DOD Defense Central Investigations Index (DCII), FBI name check, FBI fingerprint check, and written inquiries to previous employers and references listed on the application for employment. In VA it is used for Non-sensitive or Low Risk positions.
Moderate / Tier 2	**Tier 2 / Moderate Background Investigation (MBI):** A Tier 2 / MBI is conducted by OPM and covers a five-year period. It consists of a review of National Agency Check (NAC) records [OPM Security Investigations Index (SII), DOD Defense Central Investigations Index (DCII), FBI name check, and a FBI fingerprint check], a credit report covering a period of five years, written inquiries to previous employers and references listed on the application for employment; an interview with the subject, law enforcement check; and a verification of the educational degree.

In accordance with VA Handbook 0710, Personnel Security and Suitability Program, the position sensitivity and the level of background investigation commensurate with the required level of access for the following tasks within the PWS are:

Position Sensitivity and Background Investigation Requirements by Task

Task Number	Tier1 / Low Risk	Tier 2 / Moderate Risk
1	☒	☐
2	☒	☐

Task Number	Tier1 / Low Risk	Tier 2 / Moderate Risk
3	☒	☐
4	☒	☐
5	☒	☐
6	☒	☐
7	☒	☐
8	☒	☐

The Tasks identified above, and the resulting Position Sensitivity and Background Investigation requirements identify, in effect, the Background Investigation requirements for Contractor individuals, based upon the tasks the Contractor individual will be working. The submitted Contractor Staff Roster must indicate the required Background Investigation Level for each Contractor individual based upon the tasks the Contractor individual will be working, in accordance with their submitted proposal.

6.7   Option Periods

If the Option Period(s) are exercised by VA, the Contractor shall continue to perform Tasks 1-8 and all subsections and provide all requested deliverables excluding the Project Kick Off meeting described in Task 6.

7.   Key Personnel

The Contractor shall be responsible for managing and overseeing the activities of all Contractor personnel, as well as Sub-Contractor efforts used in the performance of this Task Order. Contractor management responsibilities shall include all activities necessary to ensure to accomplishment of timely and effective support, performed in accordance with the requirements contained in the PWS.

Certain skilled experienced professional and / or technical personnel are essential for accomplishing the work to be performed. These individuals are defined as "Key Personnel" and are those persons whose résumés were submitted and marked by the Contractor as "Key Personnel" and shall meet the minimum requirements set forth below. Substitutions shall only be accepted if the Contractor is compliant with the "Substitution of Key Personnel" provision identified below.

The following table includes a listing of Key Personnel / Positions identified for this Task Order:

Position	Description	Minimum Education	Minimum Experience
Program Manager	Manager performs tasks requiring management of a large-scale program,	Bachelor's degree and	8 years

	encompassing multiple projects, with a total lifecycle budget and complexity comparable to the task order/contract at hand. Tasks may include planning, initiating, managing, executing, and closing out small and large-scale programs in support of an agency's mission.	Program Management Professional (PMP) Certification	
Senior Business Process Engineer	Engineer is accountable for the successful mapping and optimization of VBA business processes and translation into automated processes.	Bachelor's Degree	8 years
Test Manager	Test Manager is responsible for planning and overseeing testing of automated processes.	Bachelor's Degree	8 years
Quality Lead	Quality Lead is responsible for leading the Contractor's internal quality monitoring process and evaluating the performance of automated processes in production and coordinating with VA on quality issues.	Bachelor's Degree	8 years
Senior Network Engineer	Senior Network Engineer is responsible for obtaining and maintaining connectivity to VA systems including submission of all Contractor Artifacts to enable such access.	Bachelor's Degree	8 years
Security Lead	Security Lead is responsible for ensuring automated processes as well as internal Contractor processes are compliant with VA security standards.	Bachelor's Degree	8 years

The personnel at a minimum shall have the education and experience as described above. In addition, experience can be demonstrated by certifications such as the Project Management Institute (PMI) Project Management Professional (PMP) certification and the International Institute of Business Analysis (IIBA) Certified Business Analysis Professional (CBAP).

Substitution of Key Personnel

If any change to the key personnel positions becomes necessary (substitutions or additions), the Contractor shall immediately notify the Contracting Officer and COR in writing, accompanied by a detailed explanation of the circumstances necessitating the proposed substitution and the résumé of the proposed replacement personnel who shall be of at least substantially equal ability, education, experience, credentials, and qualifications as the individual(s) being removed and/or replaced. No substitution or replacement of the key personnel shall occur within the first 90 days after date of Task Order award.

8. General Requirements

8.1 Communicating with the Government

The Contractor shall communicate with the Government on the VA network, with a VA account, using VA systems, encrypted email when required, and using video conferencing (Skype is the current VA video conferencing technology and VA personnel also regularly use Slack in lieu of skype).

8.2 Method and Distribution of Deliverables

The Contractor shall deliver documentation in electronic format, unless otherwise directed in Section B of the solicitation/contract. Acceptable electronic media include:

- Microsoft (MS) Word 2016
- MS Excel 2016
- MS PowerPoint 2016
- MS Project 2016
- MS Access 2016
- MS Visio 2016
- Adobe Portable Data Format (PDF)

Appendix A: Acronyms

A&A	Assessment & Authorization
ATO / IATO	Authority to Operate / Interim Authority to Operate
BI	Background Investigation
CBAP	Certified Business Analysis Professional
CCB	Change Control Board
CO	Contracting Officer
CONUS	Continental United States
COOP	Continuity of Operations
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
CS	Contracting Specialist
DCII	Defense Central Investigations Index
DoD	Department of Defense
DR	Disaster Recovery
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation

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FICAM	Federal Identity, Credential, and Access Management
GFE / GFI	Government Furnished Equipment / Government Furnished Information
ICAM	Identity, Credential, and Access Management
ICD	Interface Control Document
ICMHS	Intake, Conversion and Mail Handling Services
IIBA	International Institute of Business Analysis
IMS	Integrated Master Schedule
IT	Information Technology
NAC	National Agency Check
NACI	National Agency Check with Written Inquiries
OBPI	Office of Business Process Integration
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PBSA	Performance Based Service Assessment
PIV	Personal Identity Verification
PM	Project / Program Manager
PMBOK	Project Management Book of Knowledge
PMO	Program Management Office
PMP	Project Management Plan
PWS	Performance Work Statement
SII	Security Investigations Index
SMTS	Source Material Tracking Services
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
VA	Veterans Administration
VBA	Veterans Benefits Administration
VICCS	Veterans, Intake, Conversion and Communication Services
WBS	Work Breakdown Structure

Appendix B: Schedule of Deliverables

Note: Days used in the table below refer to calendar days unless otherwise stated. Deliverables with due dates falling on a weekend or holiday shall be submitted the following Government work day after the weekend or holiday.

Task	Deliverable ID	Deliverable Description
Task 1	A	**Low Complexity Transaction** Continuous Delivery Estimated QTY 8 Million units per year
	B	**Medium Complexity Transaction** Continuous Delivery Estimated QTY 3 Million units per year
	C	**High Complexity Transaction** Continuous Delivery Estimated QTY 3 Million units per year
	D	**Initial Deployment of Automated Processes** Due within thirty (30) days of award
	E	**Deployment of Claims Establishment Automated Process** Due within sixty (60) days of award
	F	**Mail Packet Ingest API** Due within ninety (90) days of award
Task 2	A	**Initial Automated Process Artifacts** Per Automated Process
	B	**Recurring Automated Process Artifacts** Per Automated Process per month
	C	**Change Control Board Facilitation and Artifacts** Due within sixty (60) days of award and monthly thereafter
	D	**Electronic Change Control Access** Due within thirty (30) days of award
Task 3	A	**ATO For Automation Platform** Due within thirty (30) days of award
	B	**Automated Process Updates Due to VBA Systems Changes**

Task	Deliverable ID	Deliverable Description
		Due monthly
Task 4	A	**Initial Automated Process Testing and Documentation** Per Automated Process Due NLT 2 weeks prior to proposed implementation date
	B	**Updated Automated Process Testing and Documentation** Per Automated Process per month Due NLT 2 weeks prior to proposed implementation date
	C	**Automation Regression Testing and Documentation** Per Automated Process per month
Task 6	A	**Project and Contract Status Briefings**
	A1	**Project Kick-Off Briefing** Due within five (5) business days of award
	A2	**Weekly Project Update Meetings** Due recurring weekly
	A3	**In-Person Quarterly Progress Reviews** Due Quarterly
	B	**Project Management Plans and Subcomponents** Due NLT than thirty (30) days after award
	C	**Monthly Progress Reports** Due monthly
Task 7	A	**Interactive Platform Delivery and VBA User Accesses** Due NLT sixty (60) days after contract award
	B	**Integration with VBA Business Intelligence** Due NLT ninety (90) days after contract award
	C	**Integration with SMTS** Due NLT ninety (90) days after contract award
	D	**Data Dictionaries** Due NLT one (1) week prior to production deployment of the automated service
Task 8	A	**Transition Plan** Due NLT ninety (90) days before the end of the final period of performance or not more than 30 days after VBA notifies the

Task	Deliverable ID	Deliverable Description
	B	Contractor of an intent not the execute an optional period of performance **Transition of Data** Due NLT thirty (30) days prior to the end of the period of performance