

JUSTIFICATION AND APPROVAL
FOR OTHER THAN FULL AND OPEN COMPETITION

1. Contracting Activity: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Office of Procurement Acquisition and Logistics
Technology Acquisition Center
23 Christopher Way
Eatontown, NJ 07724

2. Description of Action: The proposed sole source action is for a 90-day modification to contract 36C10B18C2763 to Vertx Enterprise Solutions, LLC (Vertx), 2010 Corporate Ridge Drive, Suite 700, McLean, VA 22012, for agile development and operations of Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for VA API Gateway.

3. Description of the Supplies or Services: The proposed action is a modification to existing contract, 36C10B18C2763, to extend the period of performance by a total of 90 days consisting of a 60-day extension at no additional cost to the Government and one, 30-day optional task for transition services to the existing 12-month period of performance. The contractor shall provide agile development and operations of APIs for VA API Gateway, including but not limited to platform design, API development and maintenance, developer documentation, and product management best practices to work with teams internal and external to VA, using modern software development methods and tools. This will provide increased, improved, and timely access to benefits and healthcare to Veterans via Decision Support Tool, VA online scheduling (VAOS), and other VA applications (i.e. Benefits Intake API, Claims API, Health API). As a result, Veterans have access and control over their data that has a meaningful impact on their lives and the lives of their families. The agile development and operations of APIs for VA API Gateway are required to ensure the VA API environments remain operational. The period of performance is a 60-day extension at no additional cost to the Government, plus one, 30-day optional task.

4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting other than full and open competition is 41 U.S.C.3304(a)(1) as implemented by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 6.302-1 entitled, "Only One Responsible Source and No Other Supplies or Services Will Satisfy Agency Requirements."

5. Rationale Supporting Use of Authority Cited Above: The proposed source is Vertx, 2010 Corporate Ridge Drive, Suite 700, McLean, VA 22012. The original contract was awarded to Vertx on September 21, 2018, as a result of a competitive action on the Federal Business Opportunities webpage. Vertx is currently providing the agile development and operations of APIs for VA API Gateway and is currently meeting the requirements of the contract. Vertx has worked closely with VA over the past 11 months and has obtained and demonstrated significant knowledge of VA's current VA API environments, integrations, services and applications with VA data source systems and VA API Gateway. Only Vertx can provide the aforementioned agile development and operations of APIs for VA API Gateway without any disruptions. VA anticipates award of a competitive task order (TO) under the Transformation Twenty-One Total Technology Next Generation (T4NG) contract vehicle on October 25, 2019, which would encompass the services detailed in Section 3. There were unanticipated delays that

occurred in August 2019 that delayed award of this competitive TO. The integrity of the procurement of the anticipated competitive TO was compromised which resulted in several organizational conflicts of interest (OCI). As a result, the competitive TO is delayed as the Government is required to review each OCI and make a determination and document the file accordingly.

VA's current contract with Vertx is scheduled to expire on September 20, 2019. As previously stated, VA is in the process of competitively awarding a TO to replace the services covered by Vertx. Due to the aforementioned issues with the competitive acquisition, the current acquisition is delayed. Loss of Vertx support during this gap would significantly inhibit VA API Gateway and would severely impact VA's ability to complete its mission. Therefore, VA requires continued support of Vertx to ensure there is no impact to VA's mission, Veterans or their families.

As a result of the Mission Act, which was signed into legislation by the President in June 2018 to streamline VA's community care programs, VA API Gateway is currently providing critical APIs to provide eligibility and facility information to the Decision Support Tool, VAOS, and other VA applications (i.e. Benefits Intake API, Claims API, Health API). This enables Veterans to receive urgent and primary care within the community care network for improved healthcare while also satisfying the legislative requirements of the Mission Act. Any lapse in agile development and operations support of these APIs would add serious risk to VA upholding the commitments and requirements of the Mission Act. The Health API program enables VA to provide better healthcare services to our Veterans. The Health Record API helps Veterans manage their health by digitally accessing and viewing their medical records, schedule an appointment, find a specialty facility, and securely share their information with caregivers and providers. Any lapse in support would impact Veterans: Veterans would not be able to digitally share their medical records with their caregiver and providers, Veterans access to basic health services and Mission Act related health service eligibility would be more difficult and less timely, researchers would lose the ability to study healthcare data and provide innovative solutions, the ability to do procedure-specific research, and cost analysis would be severely impeded and would prevent any procedure specific research or cost-based analysis.

Only Vertx can meet VA's requirements to support the agile development and operations of APIs for VA API Gateway due to the complexity of the requirements. In addition to the lead time to award a new contract of approximately 60-90 days, any other source other than Vertx would require significant ramp up time of approximately 30-60 days inclusive of system access in accordance with the Personal Identification Verification security requirements and elevated access privileges. These elevated privileges are required for multiple environments. Failure to continue to provide support for the agile development and operations of APIs for VA API Gateway would have a severe impact to VA and Veterans.

VA is requiring a 60-day extension at no additional cost to the Government to account for the anticipated award date of October 25, 2019. In addition, the Government is

including one, 30-day optional task for transition support services as a new vendor will require at least 30 days to successfully onboard and receive access privileges to effectively sustain this system. Without the 30-day transition, the VA API Gateway would be without support while a new contractor is onboarded leading to the critical failures.

6. Efforts to Obtain Competition: There is no competition anticipated for this acquisition which would satisfy the Government's requirements. Additionally, the proposed action will be synopsized on the Federal Business Opportunities Page in accordance with FAR 5.201.

7. Actions to Increase Competition: VA anticipates awarding a competitive TO on October 25, 2019 under the T4NG contract vehicle.

8. Market Research: Market research was performed in June 2019 and eight vendors were identified on the T4NG contract vehicle that are able to provide the VA API Gateway services. However, while these vendors have the requisite capabilities, the program office determined that none could transition immediately without a degradation or disruption of support. Any new vendor would require 30-60 days to onboard and undertake transition activities as discussed previously. As a result, there is no feasible manner for another vendor to provide the Lighthouse VA API Platform services without disrupted support.

9. Other Facts: None.