Market Research Report

For

Acquisition Requirements Division/Information Technology Agency

***Part 1 (Part 2 excluded as recommendations are included in Part 1)***

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Organization:IDEX Agency

Report Title: Technical Support Services

PSC and NAICS Code: PSC D314 – Automatic Data Processing Acquisition Support Services; D318 – Integrated Hardware/Software/Services Solutions; D399 – Other Computer Services; R410 – Program Evaluation/Review/Development.

NAICS 541513 – Computer Facilities Management Services; 541511 – Custom Computer Programming Services; 541512 – Computer Systems Design Services; 541519 – Other Computer Related Services

Portfolio: Information Technology Services and Project Management Services

Estimated Value: $2,581,390.68 estimated average of evaluated prices based on valid GSA price schedules, including all options

Market Research Objectives

This market research report seeks to provide background information on market capabilities to support information technology support services. The primary goal is to identify at least two businesses that fit within one of the business profiles identified in FAR Part 6, Subpart 2, Sections 03-07. The nature of the required services are likely to be well established within existing GSA contract vehicles and this report will be used to help identify any previous instances of such services to further refine the requirement. Cost factors based on GSA pricing schedules can be compared to comparable civil service positions. The assumption is that the technical capabilities to manage the required services (see Service Description) are not available within the civil service system. Additionally, this is not a long-term requirement and is not suited to encumbering the budget with permanent civil service positions since term positions are not likely to be filled in time to address this requirement.

Service Description

Per the developed statement of work, the Information Technology Agency (ITA) requires enhanced Information Technology (IT) services to support a broad range of customers in the National Capital Region (NCR). These services include production support, database management and administration, system analysis, system implementation, user training, user support, project management, and metrics reporting.

A key elements of this service requires administrative oversight and management of the Knowledge Worker System (KWS), which plays a critical role in tracking acquisition packages that can be generated by up to 1,288 employees. Additionally, there are approximately 1,800 contract requirements generated each year.

The proposed contract will require the awarded contractor to assess the current KWS and aid in converting to a new requirements tracking system. The conversion will require parallel processing during a pilot period while information is transitioned from KWS to the new system. The contractor will be required to monitor the pilot program and report on any design enhancement or modifications that may be identified during the pilot to correct operational deficiencies.

The contractor will be required to develop the following management plans to assist the ITA in managing the system transition:

Project Management Plan

Risk Management Plan

Quality Management Plan

Test and Acceptance Management Plan

Transition Management Plan

These plans will be reviewed by designated staff of the ITA to ensure compliance with information security requirements and maintenance of systems integrity.

The contractor will review current ITA business processes and provide a comprehensive report to suggest business process improvements. Reports will be generated using Microsoft Office Enterprise Software packages. The contractor will provide flow diagrams of the various businesses processes that link acquisition activities to warehouse and deployment activities.

The contractor will provide KWS reports to ITA staff to show the status of acquisition packages, credit card purchases, and provide graphical presentations of the age of the transactions.

The contractor will scan/enter acquisition documents into the KWS and notify buyers of data entry while providing customers a log tracking number for the transaction.

The contractor must have expert knowledge of simplified acquisition procedures and must ensure that acquisition activities are ISO 9001 compliant.

This requirement shall not be acquired under FAR Part 12. Potential contractors will be sought using the GSA Advantage! Website (https://www.gsaadvantage.gov/advantage/main/start\_page.do).

All required work will be done within ITA facilities using Government Furnished Equipment (GFE).

Services of this nature are available through GSA. Another source, but not evaluated for this report is NITAAC. This service supports the National Institutes of Health, but other agencies are authorized to use the contract vehicle. This contract vehicle provides a wide range of support services that align closely with this requirement. Information on this contract vehicle is available via <http://nitaac.nih.gov/contracts/cio-sp3/contract-holders>.

GSA.gov was the site used for this requirement due to a large volume of available contractors meeting the objectives identified in the beginning of this document. Since market research reports are “living” documents, it is suggested that the requirements team meet to discuss other possible options before pursuing this action.

Background

ITA has provided wide-ranging IT acquisition support to the NCR. The recent decision to migrate from KWS to a new requirements tracking system has led for the need to procure services to support the transition. Ideally, this contract will be in place for execution at the beginning of the upcoming fiscal year to facilitate initiation of the migration in time to comply with impending data security requirements. This is a new requirement for ITA, but the concept of data migration is not new to the Government. There are a number of GSA service suppliers who have a record of performance in data transition (Akimeka, SpecPro Technical Services, Eyak Development Corporation, TKC Integration Services, LLC.).

Typical problems linked to data migration contracts are usually associated with the contractor’s lack of familiarity with Government data systems or network infrastructure requirements. While those issues have hampered past efforts, data standardization efforts and programming protocols that are widely used have made such problems less likely to occur in today’s IT environment.

For this requirement, contractors will be screened by the contract officer to determine if any past performance information is available that identifies any contractor weaknesses in executing data transition projects.

The Defense Information Systems Agency has issued a solicitation for the benefit of the United States Cyber Command (HC1028-15-R-0026, available for viewing on FedBizOpps.Gov) that requires data management and knowledge management for USCYBERCOM, which is a clear indication that services of this nature are being sought by other Government entities/agencies. There are also a sources sought notice (PL83122015003) to determine the availability and technical capabilities of small businesses to provide cyberspace environment planning and project management.

As data use and storage needs have continued to grow, the market has evolved to grow with it. From large magnetic tapes to DVDs, the ability to store large amounts of data on portable devices has grown considerably. Storage drives now operate much faster and computing capabilities have allowed faster processing of information, which has led to the growth of information technology businesses to support growing demand, especially in maintaining data and data security.

To evaluate the proposed contractors, it will be ideal to identify any contractors who have previously performed successful data migration activities for the Government.

The key to a successful solicitation is going to be clearly defined outcomes to allow contractor proposals to provide distinct plans for fulfilling the requirement (performance-based SOW).

Potential Supplier Information

The following table lists three potential vendors identified on GSA Advantage:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Vendor Name** | **Location** | **Point of Contact** | **Capability** |
| MindFinders, Inc.  Contract: GS-35F-0611Y  Small Disadvantaged Business | Washington, D.C. | Name: Tim Booker  Phone: 202-772-4177  Email: [tbooker@themindfinders.com](mailto:tbooker@themindfinders.com) | Capable of providing all services required for this need. Vendor has limited labor categories, which might prove problematic as the requirement is refined and broader staff requirements are identified. CPARS access requested to determine if vendor has past performance information available to determine if the level of risk to the Government is significant if this vendor performs the service. |
| ECOMPEX, Inc.  Contract: GS-35F-0469L  Small Disadvantaged Business | Reston, VA. | Name: Hubin Jiang  Phone: 703-288-4436  Email: [hubin.jiang@ecompex.com](mailto:hubin.jiang@ecompex.com) | Vendor has a much broader list of labor categories, which might prove helpful if the requirement is refined and additional or substitute positions are required. Project management position (technical support manager) is more closely aligned with the requirement than MindFinders, Inc. CPARS access requested to determine if vendor has past performance information available to determine if the level of risk to the Government is significant if this vendor performs the service. |
| Astor & Sanders  Contract: GS-35F-0672R  Disadvantaged, Woman-Owned Small Business | Rockville, MD. | Name: Sadhna Agrawal  Phone: 301-838-3420  Email: [sagrawal@astor-sanders.com](mailto:sagrawal@astor-sanders.com) | Vendor labor categories are very narrow in depth but broad in scope. While the existing labor categories appear to match well with the requirement, if further refinement is necessary and additional positions are identified, it might be difficult for the vendor to be competitive for this action. CPARS access requested to determine if vendor has past performance information available to determine if the level of risk to the Government is significant if this vendor performs the service. |

Each vendor appears to have the capability to provide the required service. The price differentials are addressed in the Market Research spreadsheet. A remaining step in the process is gaining access to past performance information to assess how each (if any) of these vendors performed this type of service for the Government in the past. Without past performance information, taking a neutral approach, there is nothing in the vendors’ Federal Supply Service Schedules that would indicate a high risk to the Government in terms of vendor capability to perform the required service. It might be possible to identify successful vendor performance in the private setting, but this will require considerable research to determine and assess.

Small Business Opportunities

Each of the proposed vendors is considered a small business, so FAR 6.203 and 6.207 (Astor & Sanders is a Woman-Owned Small Business) apply for this requirement.

This requirement could be segmented but due to the small nature of the requirement, it would not be the most efficient way to award the contract. A small business can fulfill this requirement, unless past performance information indicates that previous small business efforts have proved unsuccessful in performing this type of work.

AbilityOne Program

While the AbilityOne Program offers a wide range of services and products, the offered services do not align adequately with this requirement and would represent a high risk to the Government in terms of successful performance. As identified in the Small Business Opportunities portion of this document, there are sufficient small business set aside opportunities that directly align with the requirement than what is available through the AbilityOne Program. If this requirement were unbundled, the contract administration portion of the requirement could be managed by resources available under the AbilityOne Program. Unbundling this requirement would not be in the Government’s best interest due to the small size and nature of the requirement.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This requirement lends itself to award as a small business set aside with competition among the identified vendors (see FAR Subpart 6.2 and Subpart 19.5).

It is recommended that the positions currently identified in the SOW be mapped to the positions that are available on the vendor price lists based on the proposed vendors. For example, the Technical Support Manager is really performing Project Management duties, which are clearly delineated in the price lists and are focused on IT project management requirements (the nature of this requirement is IT, and the available vehicles are IT focused). Otherwise, the duties should be identified in the SOW and the vendors can respond with the position titles associated with those duties.

There is no available evidence that indicates the proposed vendors cannot perform the requirements identified in the SOW.

The GSA Advantage Website documents a number of vendors with existing IT Schedule 70, Category 132-51 contracts (per the GSA Website, this schedule is the “largest, most widely used acquisition vehicle in the federal government”).

If the acquisition team determines that the vendors listed in this document are inadequate to support the requirement, it is highly recommended to modify this Market Research Report and look at the NITAAC Website (<http://nitaac.nih.gov/nitaac/>) to identify three other vendors who could perform the necessary work.

The SOW for this requirement did not address enough performance based characteristics for the work, which complicates efforts to match expected performance with desired outcomes. It is highly recommended that the SOW be reviewed and revised to provide more outcome-based information (goals or objective outcomes) prior to solicitation. This will allow potential vendors to provide proposals that clearly identify how they plan to meet the Government’s objectives. For example, is there a quality threshold for the new requirements tracking system that could be incorporated into the SOW?

In the absence of past performance data, there is risk that the potential vendors may not have the ability to meet the desired outcomes for this requirement. Prior to solicitation, it is suggested that other contracting offices be contacted to solicit input on vendor performance for like requirements (this is necessary in the absence of available CPARS information).

Due to the nature of this requirement (IT related), specific terms, conditions, and clauses to address contractor access to Government systems (e.g., security classification requirements, if applicable, must be included in the solicitation on DD 254). The use of Government furnished equipment and facilities must be specified in the solicitation and incorporated into the contract prior to award. Dates for contractor performance will be specified in the contract (e.g., start date, interim progress reporting dates).

Performance criteria will be identified in the Quality Assurance Surveillance Program document included in the contract.

FAR Part 52 regarding stop-work orders applies for this requirement and must be included.

Market Research Techniques Used

The market research approach for this requirement consisted of solicitation reviews on FedBizOpps to determine if any like requirements are currently being sought by the Government (see Background section for further information). The structure for the search on FedBizOpps was linked to Defense Information Services Agency RFIs and solicitations since they specialize in IT requirements.

An Internet search yielded the NITAAC Website (http://nitaac.nih.gov/nitaac/), which showed a number of IT solutions that would tie-in well with this requirement. This program is for three Government-Wide Acquisition Contracts (GEWACS) that are open to all federal agencies, despite being a primary vehicle for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This particular program should receive strong consideration since pricing is comparable to the proposed vendors, and the labor categories and performance requirements are very closely aligned with this requirement.

The GSA Advantage Website was used to structure a search for specific positions identified in the SOW for this requirement. While some positions aligned exactly with what positions were being sought, some of the positions did not and were adjusted to reflect the actual duties performed versus the position’s title (e.g., in some cases, Production Support Specialist was not available, but the duties did fall under the scope of a specialized data entry or data management position).

To determine the contract escalation rate, the Bureau of Labor Statistics Website was consulted in addition to many other business related Websites to determine the most likely inflation scenario for the option years. The Market Research spreadsheet contains notes regarding the inflation factors used to calculate future year costs for this requirement.