REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate
Office of Mission and Capability Support (MCS)
Mass Rescue Operations Fixed-Wing Aircraft Test for the Science and Technology Directorate

1.0 General Information

1.1 Introduction

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Procurement Operations (OPO) issues this Request for Information (RFI) on behalf of the DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), Office of Mission and Capability Support (MCS).

NOTE: THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY. This RFI is issued solely for information and market research planning purposes. This RFI shall not be construed as an obligation on the part of DHS. This is NOT a Request for Quotations or Proposals. No solicitation document exists, and DHS may or may not issue a formal solicitation as a result of the responses received to this RFI.

DHS is not seeking proposals at this time. Respondents are advised that DHS will not pay for any response or demonstration expenses. All costs incurred responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expense. Failure to respond to this RFI will not preclude participation in any future solicitation. Any information received will become the property of the Government and will not be returned to the submitter. Interested parties are responsible for adequately marking proprietary or sensitive information.

DHS's explicit intent, in this RFI, is to not receive from respondents any proprietary data, trade secrets, business sensitive information, or information considered CONFIDENTIAL under 18 U.S.C. §1905. DHS's constraint does not in any way relieve contractors from their responsibility to properly mark proprietary data when it is provided, nor does it alleviate any requirement for the Government to protect marked data. The Government is not obligated to protect unmarked data.

The information provided in this RFI is subject to change and is not binding on DHS. All submissions become the property of the Federal Government and will not be returned.

1.2 Program Information

a. Program Name: Maritime Safety & Security (formerly Maritime Border Security)

b. Managing Program Office: Office of Mission and Capability Support (MCS)

1.3 Procurement Information

c. 2023 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes:

- 481212 - Nonscheduled Charter Freight Air Transportation

d. Product Service Codes:

- V121- Transportation/Travel/Relocation- Transportation: Air Charter

2.0 Requirements

2.1 BACKGROUND

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) has partnered with the United States Coast Guard and industry partner on a research and development (R&D) effort to develop a viable search and rescue solution that could deploy during Mass Rescue Operations (MRO) on the high seas.

MROs at sea are Search and Rescue (SAR) operations characterized by the need to provide immediate assistance to large numbers of persons in distress in a situation that exceeds the capabilities normally available to SAR authorities. An MRO example is a catastrophic passenger vessel emergency in a remote area which requires passengers to leave the vessel with limited access or no access to the vessel's inherent lifesaving apparatus.

DHS S&T is developing a prototype flotation device with the purpose of keeping survivors out of the water during an MRO event that could be 25, 50, or even 100's of miles out to sea while additional USCG assets can be deployed to the rescue site. The prototype is a nonstandard innovative, large-capacity, ultralightweight floating device that can be deployed from air and surface assets during MROs. The prototype is capable of holding up to 100 survivors out of the water during long-term rescue operations, lowering their risk of injury from exposure.

2.2 PURPOSE OF THIS RFI

The protype is currently in development and testing. This RFI is seeking sources for aircraft charter services to assess the device's performance when deployed from a fixed-wing aircraft. The aircraft should be capable of flying at an altitude of approximately 250 to 500 feet at a speed of approximately 90 to 110 knots and have a rear cargo ramp. **Side door deployments will not be considered.** Examples of such aircraft include C130 (**HC-130J Long Range Surveillance Aircraft**) or HC-144 (**HC-144 Program Profile**). During this test, DHS S&T, USCG, and other stakeholders will observe how the prototype is safely handled, transported, and deployed from a fixed-wing aircraft.

NOTE: THIS RFI DOES NOT SEEK A VENDOR TO DEVELOP THE MRO DEVICE. THIS RFI IS SOLELY FOR AIRCRAFT CHARTER SERVICES TO PROVIDE SPECIFIC AIR ASSETS TO TEST THE DEVICE.

2.3 INFORMATION REQUEST

S&T is seeking responses from organizations who provide fixed-wing charter services, preferably with experience conducting cargo drops. Images of the prototype and its deployment from a USCG helicopter can be found in this DHS S&T feature article: **Feature Article: Helping USCG Prepare for a Black Swan Event | Homeland Security**.

The three main requirements for the aircraft are the following:

- Must be able to conduct a rear ramp deployment
- Must be able to deploy from approximately 250 feet altitude and 110 knots speed
- Must be similar to USCG's fixed-wing aircrafts (examples: **HC-130J Long Range Surveillance Aircraft** or **HC-144 Program Profile**)

DHS S&T would require the vendor to provide the following:

- Provide the fixed-wing aircraft and the crew.
- Charter a single flight path and manage mission requirements for flying over a body of water.

DHS S&T only requires the amount of time it takes from take-off to reach the right altitude and speed to deploy the prototype over a body of water. No specialized equipment or modifications to the aircraft will be required from the vendor.

DHS S&T will provide the deployment test & evaluation plan and procedures.

Responses should include the following information:

- Description of Aircraft Services
- Types of Aircrafts Similar to USCG Rear Ramp Fixed-Wing Aircrafts Available for Testing
- Experience Working with Government Agencies
- Previous Experiences Dropping Cargo or Deploying Devices from Aircraft.
- Provide Brief Statement of Drop/Deployment Procedures.
- Location Options Where Test Will Occur Over Body of Water
- Rough Order of Magnitude to Conduct One Test with Option for a Second Test

3.0 Responses to this RFI

3.1 Submissions

Information or inquiries submitted in response to this RFI must be submitted via email to Jennifer.Koons@hq.dhs.gov and Yao.Kole@hq.dhs.gov by July 10, 2026. In addition to specific information requested in section 2, submissions must:

- Include the RFI number (**70RSAT26RFI000022**) in the subject line of the email.
- Format in either Word or PDF format and address the requirements listed above.

Responses must have a cover letter that includes the following information:

- Company Name
- Company Address
- UEI Number
- Company's Size and Socio-Economic Status information for NAICS code(s): 481212 - Nonscheduled Charter Freight Air Transportation
- Technical Point of Contact(s) (Name, title, email, and phone number)
- Contracting Point of Contact(s) (Name, title, email, and phone number)
- List of all contract vehicles your company is an awardee under (e.g., Blanket Purchase Agreements, Indefinite-Delivery, Indefinite-Quantity contracts, etc.) and the administering Federal agency.

4.0 Review of Vendor Responses

Responses to this RFI may be reviewed by Government technical experts drawn from staff within DHS and other Federal agencies. The Government does not intend to provide a response to submissions for this RFI, but the Government reserves the right to meet with respondents, either individually or as a group, regarding this RFI. These meetings may be scheduled at the Government's discretion but are not guaranteed.