# JUSTIFICATION FOR AN EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY

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 modification to the Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) Products Sustainment and Enhancement Services (PSES) Task Order (TO) 36C10B21N10030033, which was issued under the Transformation Twenty-One Total Technology Next Generation (T4NG) Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract VA118-16-D-1003 to GovCIO LLC (GCIO), 4000 Legato Road Suite 600, Fairfax, VA 22033. The purpose of this modification is to increase the firm fixed price (FFP) Not-to-Exceed (NTE) ceiling for Optional Task 1, to support tasks that are critical to ensure the newly required schedule is met for VRE's Readiness and Employment System (RES) and the subsequent accelerated retirement of the legacy Corporate, Waco, Indianapolis, Newark, Roanoke, Seattle System (CWINRS) by June 12th, 2027 - the end of the current performance period of the PSES TO. There will be no changes to the type of work or technical requirements being performed under the VR&E PSES TO, nor will the overall period of performance of the TO be extended due to this modification. This request stems from VBA's new requirement to move even faster to deploy RES in its entirety and to retire the 20+-year-old legacy CWINRS application more than two years earlier than previously planned.

3. Description of the Supplies or Services: The VR&E PSES TO was awarded on June 10, 2022 for a 12-month base period with four 12-month option periods to provide sustainment and enhancement support services for the Education Veteran Readiness and Employment Product Line (EVREPL). The VR&E PSES TO is the primary vehicle providing the resources to operate, maintain, develop, enhance, and integrate VR&E and Education (EDU) products/applications to streamline systems, improve scalability, increase availability of services, share and update data between related systems, and enable more efficient delivery in support of VA programs that provide access to education and training – as well as living expenses – for eligible Veterans and beneficiaries. These programs equip Veterans with the tools, counseling, and financial support necessary to successfully transition from the military into civilian employment. The base and each option period include the baseline requirements for project management and a small sustainment team. The majority of the work performed under the TO is procured via Optional Task 1 – Additional Sustainment Support, which provides the program office the flexibility to procure additional sustainment teams to support specific project requirements and initiatives for the systems within the EVREPL at a pre-determined FFP.

The VR&E PSES TO provides system improvement, operation, and maintenance for CWINRS, RES, Veteran Education Benefit Tools (VEBT), Electronic Virtual Assistant (eVA), and Federal Case Management Tool (FCMT) systems. Sustainment Teams

ensure these systems effectively manage current and future Veteran benefits claims submissions, support Veteran outreach programs and deliver benefits to Veterans and their survivors faster, more accurately, and more securely. The modernization of VA's benefits information technology (IT) systems required by the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act (PACT Act) has impacted the sustainment of VRE and EDU systems by driving the need for new system capabilities, new and improved testing and training environments, and new and updated IT support tools to provide faster search and response times across evidence files, improving workload management, and securing Veteran data.

The Optional Task 1 NTE ceiling was initially established based on an estimated number of Sustainment Teams that may be required over the life of the TO based on historical operations and maintenance needs for the EVREPL systems. However, due to the impact of the PACT Act, Optional Task 1 was exercised at a faster rate than originally estimated in order to accelerate planned projects and initiatives to meet Congressionally mandated requirements for the EVREPL systems. Due to this acceleration, a ceiling increase was approved earlier this year to support the VR&E EVREPL reaching a critical milestone of completing the migration of Chapter 31 functionality from the legacy CWINRS to the new RES which will be deployed nationally during 2026. After this increase, on March 27, 2026, VA Leadership put forth a new requirement to accelerate the scheduled migration of all functionality currently available in the legacy CWINRS application to RES, including Ch. 31, Ch.35, Ch.36 and Ch.18, and to retire CWINRS two (2) years earlier than originally planned. This will also require all current and historical data conversions to be completed by June 12, 2027. The accelerated retirement of CWINRS will save the Government from double-spending on the maintenance and enhancement work needed for two systems, RES and CWINRS, for two (2) additional years, currently budgeted at approximately $14M, while also delivering the improvements of the new system, RES, which supports Veterans communicating with their VR&E counselors using mobile devices, contemporary web-based security for Veteran data, seamless integration between the Veteran's VR&E benefits and other VA benefits, and supporting the VBA mandate to architect systems able to support a one-day turnaround from claim receipt to award – all things that are impossible using the 20-year old platform that CWINRS is built on.

This aggressive schedule change requires additional resources and funding under Optional Task 1 during Option Period 4 of the current TO to support this critical milestone for the EVREPL. Additional VR&E Sustainment Teams will be required to support integration work between VA systems and RES to make this new schedule viable and for the systems to remain compatible, perform migration of all active and non-active case data, provide technical support for VRE requirements teams and RES development teams as they quickly try to understand the logic for Ch.18, Ch.35 and Ch.36 cases, and convert appropriate current and historical data from the legacy CWINRS system to RES. Specifically, in order to meet the requirements for this new accelerated schedule, six (6) Additional Sustainment Teams will be needed, to include two (2) teams for Configuration/Data Migration, one (1) team for Reporting and Quality Assurance, two (2) team for Change Management/Training, and one (1) team for CWINRS Tuxedo Replacement. These additional teams were not included in the

previous estimated cost for increasing the Optional Task 1 ceiling as they directly correspond to VA's new requirement to retire CWINRS more than two (2) years earlier than originally planned.

In order to support the successful accelerated delivery of these critical initiatives and major technical milestones, eliminate significant risk and potential loss of VA's investments in the EVREPL systems to date, VA requires an increase to the Optional Task 1 NTE ceiling in order to obtain the current vendor's continued performance during Option Period 4 to complete the upwardly-revised and accelerated scheduled functionality, integration, data migration, training, and orderly transition from the legacy CWINRS system to the new RES system, which was scheduled to be completed by 2029, but is now required to be completed by the end of VR&E PSES TO Option Period 4 in June 2027. [redacted]

4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting an exception to fair opportunity is Section 41 U.S.C. 4106(c)(2) as implemented by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Overhaul VA Deviation 16.507-6(b)(2), entitled "Only one awardee is capable of providing the supplies or services required at the level of quality required because the supplies or services ordered are unique or highly specialized."

5. Rationale Supporting Use of Authority Cited Above: VA's sustainment and enhancement work under the VR&E PSES TO provides essential improvements to the VR&E EVREPL systems, including RES and CWINRS. Initial timelines for the shift from the VR&E EVREPL legacy systems to RES have been accelerated to align with VBA's #1 priority for full deployment of RES. To that end, VA Leadership has accelerated the schedule for the migration of the entire scope of the legacy CWINRS system, including Ch.18, 31, 35 and 36 functionality, to RES from September 30, 2029 to June 12, 2027, over two (2) years earlier than originally planned. Leadership also requires that CWINRS be retired by the end of the current TO's performance period of June 12, 2027. Accelerating the schedule to deploy RES and retire CWINRS reduces risk to VBA's VR&E field work as well as provides savings to the Government associated with eliminating further security and 508-compliance updates for dual systems. Specifically, retiring CWINRS over two (2) years earlier than planned will eliminate the duplicate effort and cost of maintaining both systems to remain compliant with all current laws, enhancing both systems when new legal and/or policy changes are enacted, and ensuring operational compatibility between the dual systems to ensure these VA tools meet mandated transparency standards and provide Veterans and beneficiaries with reliable, actionable information when selecting education and training options.

To complete the critical technical milestones required to completely retire CWINRS during Option Period 4 of the current TO, VA requires the current vendor, GCIO, provide additional sustainment teams necessary to support the national deployment of not only Chapter 31 functionality, but also Ch. 18, Ch. 35 and Ch. 36 functionality, training for field users, and data migration of all active cases and historical data for all VRE benefits from the legacy CWINRS system to RES. GCIO is the only vendor who can deliver on

this expedited schedule, which essentially requires the performance of three (3) years of planned work be completed within the next 12 months. GCIO is the only vendor that has the necessary resources, skills, and understanding of the technical requirements to accelerate the transition of Ch. 18, Ch. 35 and Ch. 36 functionality from CWINRS to RES. The technical requirements of moving cases between the legacy system and RES is complex, as CWINRS is an older system that few understand. As such, GCIO is the only vendor who can deliver this requirement within the required timeline as they possess critical knowledge and expertise about these existing systems, both CWINRS and RES, and the current requirements, technical milestones, and updated aggressive schedule that VA must meet. GCIO is the only vendor able to meet this requirement by the June 12, 2027 deadline which will save the Government from the costs of running and maintaining dual systems for an additional two (2) years, including security and compliance updates, legal mandates and other requirements that would require investment in both CWINRS and RES. To maximize Veteran benefits and avoid duplication of effort and cost, and to meet the new required schedule, a sole source modification to the current VR&E PSES TO to increase the NTE ceiling for Optional Task 1 in order for GCIO to provide Additional Sustainment Teams is necessary.

6. Efforts to Obtain Competition: Market research was conducted, as detailed in the Market Research section of this document. This effort did not identify any additional sources capable of providing the additional support necessary to accelerate VRE's rollout of CWINRS functionality in RES nationwide, the data migration and sunsetting of this functionality in the CWINRS legacy system, and enterprise-wide integration with RES, all of which are required for completion during Option Period 4 of the current TO. Therefore, no competition is anticipated for this acquisition. In accordance with FAR Overhaul VA Deviation 16.507-6(f)(1), the justification will be made publicly available on the Contracting Opportunities Page within 14 days of award.

7. Actions to Increase Competition: No barriers to future competition are anticipated. There are no additional option years on the PSES contract, so future support will be included on a new competitively-bid PSES2 contract that will be developed over the next several months to ensure there is ample time to review, select, award, onboard and transition services before the end of the current contract.

8. Market Research: Market research was completed by Government technical experts in April 2026 which included assessing the ability of companies that are providing, or previously have provided, sustainment and enhancement support for VA's IT benefits systems, including Booz Allen Hamilton Inc., Accenture Federal Services LLC, Client First Technologies Inc., Sierra7 LLC, and Veterans EZ Info Inc. While these companies have the high-level capabilities to provide services such as .Net development or cloud security, they all lack the necessary knowledge and expertise to meet the required 12-month timeline for the migration of all functionality to RES and decommissioning of CWINRS. Transitioning the sustainment and enhancement work necessary to rollout Chapter 18, 35 and 36 functionality in RES nationwide, train field users in the use of RES, and migrate CWINRS data to RES, to any of these vendors would not be feasible within the required timeline to meet the accelerated schedule for CWINRS retirement. GCIO is the only vendor with the capabilities necessary to deliver VBA's critical initiative

for the deployment of RES within the required schedule, which will provide benefits to both Veterans and the Government as discussed in Section 5. Given the current phase of RES deployment, training, migration and transition for over 210,000 active VRE beneficiaries, continuity of service is critical. Increasing the Optional Task NTE ceiling for the current VR&E PSES TO in order to receive additional support from GCIO is the only way to meet the new schedule requirements to complete the transition from CWINRS to RES, which is vital to Veterans' access to education, employment, and independent living support, and vital to avoiding the costs and resources required to maintain dual systems for two (2) additional years.

9. Other Facts: N/A

## Technical/Requirements Certification

I certify that the supporting data under my cognizance, which are included in this justification, are accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

[redacted] _____ 06/04/2026
Program Manager Date

## Fair and Reasonable Cost Determination

I hereby determine that the anticipated price to the Government for this contract action will be fair and reasonable as the FFP unit prices for the optional Additional Sustainment Teams for Option Period 4 performance were incorporated into the TO at award. These prices are not subject to change due to the increase in the NTE ceiling and were previously determined fair and reasonable at time of TO award.

[redacted] _____ 06/04/2026
Contracting Officer Date

## Contracting Officer Certification

I certify that this justification is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

[redacted] _____ 06/04/2026
Contracting Officer Date

## Office of General Counsel (OGC) Review

I have reviewed this document and find it legally sufficient, based on the representations set forth in the documents and, if any, attachments. The Competition Advocate's approval is an independently supported decision not wholly reliant on the legal sufficiency determination.

[redacted] _____ _____

[redacted]
Date

Office of General Counsel

## Advocate for Competition Approval

In my role as procuring activity Advocate for Competition, based on the foregoing justification, I hereby approve the acquisition of a FFP modification to be issued under T4NG Contract VA118-16-D-1003/36C10B21N10030033 to increase the Optional Task 1 NTE ceiling to provide additional sustainment teams on an other than fair opportunity basis pursuant to the authority cited in Section 4 above, subject to availability of funds, and provided that the property and services herein described have otherwise been authorized for acquisition.

[redacted] _____ 06/04/2026
[redacted]
Date

Advocate for Competition
Technology Acquisition Center
Office of Procurement, Acquisition, and Logistics
Department of Veterans Affairs