Request for Information (RFI)

For

Air Force Life Cycle Management Center (AFLCMC)

Next Generation Airlift Program (NGAL)

02 JUL 2026

1.0 Description

1.1 The Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC), Air Force Life Cycle Management Center/Mobility Aircraft Directorate (AFLCMC/WL) seeks vendor capability information in support of market research. The Department of the Air Force (DAF) is in the early stages of identifying the requirements for the Next Generation Airlift (NGAL) platform. NGAL is envisioned as the USAF's next strategic airlift aircraft, intended to eventually supplement and replace legacy platforms such as the C-5M Super Galaxy and C-17A Globemaster III. This Request for Information (RFI) is an opportunity for Industry to provide information on their developed concepts and technological capabilities that could shape the future of strategic airlift for the nation.

1.2 THIS IS AN RFI ONLY. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes; it does not constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a promise to issue an RFP in the future. This RFI does not commit the Government to contract for any supply or service whatsoever. Further, the Air Force is not at this time seeking proposals and will not accept unsolicited proposals. Respondents are advised that the U.S. Government will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP, if any is issued.

2.0 Background

The United States Air Force (USAF) has a continuing need to maintain and enhance its global strategic airlift capabilities to support force projection, humanitarian relief, and special operations across the full spectrum of military operations. The NGAL program seeks to identify and mature the technologies and concepts necessary to field a platform that offers significant advancements in capacity, range, efficiency, connectivity, survivability, and operational flexibility over current systems. This RFI will be critical in shaping the USAF's acquisition strategy by providing insight into the current state of technology and innovative concepts from across the aerospace industry.

As critical design constraints for the next-generation airlift platform, the USAF stipulates that all proposed aircraft must possess a wingspan of strictly less than 223 feet and demonstrate the capability to carry a minimum payload of 160,000 pounds over a distance of at least 2,500 nautical miles unrefueled. The absolute dimensional limitation is dictated by the physical constraints of existing global airfield infrastructure—including taxiways, hangars, and parking ramps—ensuring seamless integration into current mobility

operations. Concurrently, the specified payload and range parameters are baseline mission imperatives for effective power projection and logistics support.

3.0 Requested Information

Interested parties are requested to respond to this RFI with a white paper that addresses the following questions. Please provide details on concepts for a Next Generation Airlift platform.

3.1 General Aircraft and Airlift Capabilities:
3.1.1 Describe your candidate aircraft concept(s). What is the status of development?
3.1.2 What are the overall dimensions and size of the aircraft concept? (Please include details relevant to hangar compatibility and estimating maximum on-ground capacity at airfields).
3.1.3 What is the proposed propulsion system for the concept aircraft? Please detail the quantity of engines, thrust class, and provide any additional detailed propulsion information available, including auxiliary power.
3.1.4 What is the projected payload-range capability of the aircraft? Please provide a notional chart showing payload (in tons) versus range (in nautical miles).
3.1.5 Does your candidate aircraft have main deck cargo-carrying capabilities, including integrated cargo doors/ramps? Is your cargo approach approved or designed for approval by the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) or a similar body?
3.1.6 What is the maximum cargo capacity (in volume, weight, and pallet positions) for your proposed design? Will your cargo design accommodate standard 463L pallets and a variety of military rolling stock, oversized, and outsized cargo? Does the cargo design include the ability to load loose cargo directly on the floor without shoring?
3.1.7 Is the cargo bay pressurized? Please detail how the pressurization design supports personnel transport and Aeromedical Evacuation (AE) missions.
3.1.8 How does your candidate aircraft's cargo solution allow for the main deck to be configurable for passenger, cargo, and AE missions? Describe the maximum capacity of each available configuration to include maximum power generation.
3.1.9 What is the estimated ground time for activities such as refueling, maintenance, and loading/unloading? How does the concept account for and minimize/reduce this turnaround ground time?
3.1.10 Describe the aircraft’s projected performance characteristics, including takeoff and landing distance, ability to operate from semi-prepared or austere runways, climb and descent rates, and fuel efficiency.

3.1.11 Describe the aircraft's airdrop and aerial delivery capabilities. What types of airdrop(s) (personnel, CDS, heavy equipment, JPADS, etc.) can the aircraft support, and what design features enable these operations?

3.2 Systems, Survivability, Technology, and Logistics:
3.2.1 How does your aircraft support a federated mission-systems architecture that allows the Government to install a permanent mission-equipment rack with interchangeable ABMS/C3BM LRUs, while ensuring data access without touching safety-of-flight systems?
3.2.2 What maintenance and reliability capabilities does your candidate aircraft concept possess? Does it incorporate on-board prognostic, diagnostic, or predictive maintenance features (Condition Based Maintenance+, etc.)?
3.2.3 How does your concept address overall logistics and long-term supportability? Please describe your approach to securing supply chains for parts, the ability for maintainers to easily access, work on, and replace components in the field, and your overall sustainment strategy.
3.2.4 Does the aircraft design use modern digital engineering (e.g., Digital Twins)/Model Based Systems Engineering (MBSE)? Would these digital models be made available to the Government for long-term support of the aircraft?
3.2.5 What defensive systems does your candidate aircraft currently have, or are there plans for future installs/upgrades?
3.2.6 How is your candidate aircraft designed to prevent, mitigate, and/or recover from a cyber-attack?
3.2.7 Does your aircraft comply with the Open Mission System (OMS) specification?
3.2.8 How does your candidate aircraft design and associated ground-handling concept reduce or mitigate reliance on Materiel Handling Equipment (MHE) at forward or austere locations? Please describe any features that enable rapid loading/unloading, self-sufficiency, or operations where MHE availability is limited or nonexistent.

4.0 Responses

4.1 Interested parties are requested to respond to this RFI with a white paper.

4.2 White papers in Microsoft Word compatible format are due no later than **17 July 2026, 1700 EDT.** Responses shall be limited to 30 pages of text (including pictures and graphs) and submitted via e-mail only to a point of contact to be specified upon the official posting on SAM.gov.

4.3 Proprietary information should be minimized and MUST BE CLEARLY MARKED. To aid the Government, please segregate proprietary information within your response.

Please be advised that all submissions become Government property and will not be returned. Submissions will be reviewed by Government personnel and their designated Advisory and Assistance Services (A&AS) support contractors. If a respondent does not have a pre-existing Proprietary Data Protection Agreement (PDPA) with the relevant support contractors, one will be provided for signature to permit the review of submitted materials.

4.4 Responses shall include the following administrative information:

- Company Name
- Address
- Point of Contact
- CAGE/DUNS Code
- Phone Number
- E-mail Address
- Web Page URL
- The facility security clearance of the offeror.

4.5 If your company is interested in submitting information related to this RFI, please note the following timeline and instructions:

Estimated Timeline:
RFI Release: **12 June 2026**
Industry Questions deadline: **26 June 2026**
Industry Q&A posting to SAM.gov: **02 July 2026**
RFI Whitepaper Packages Due: **17 July 2026, 1700 EDT**

4.6 Submission Instructions

Interested companies* shall submit formal RFI whitepapers as follows:

a. *Unclassified/CUI* formal RFI white paper package responses via email or DoD SAFE to Lindsey Swain, lindsey.swain.2@us.af.mil and Steve Ritter stephen.ritter.5@us.af.mil
b. *Collateral SECRET* responses to Lt Sap DSutta, saptarshi.duta.mil@smil.mil
c. *TS/SCI* responses, pre-coordinate with Lt Col Alex H. Gwin, alexander.gwin.1@us.af.mil prior to submitting a classified response via JWICS.
d. *Secret//SAR or Top Secret//SAR* responses, pre-coordinate with Ryan M. McGraw, ryan.mcgraw.3@us.af.mil to arrange appropriate submittal procedures.

*All interested contractors must be registered in SAM.gov to be eligible for award of Government contracts

5.0 Industry Discussions

The designated Point of Contact (POC) for this RFI, as identified in SAM.gov, may or may not choose to meet with potential respondents. Any such discussions would be solely for the purpose of obtaining clarification regarding potential capabilities to meet the requirements.

6.0 Questions

All questions regarding this announcement must be submitted in writing via email to Lindsey Swain (lindsey.swain.2@us.af.mil) and Steve Ritter (stephen.ritter.5@us.af.mil). Verbal questions will NOT be accepted. To ensure fairness, questions and answers deemed general in nature may be anonymized and shared with all responders via an update to the SAM.gov posting. Therefore, questions shall NOT contain proprietary or classified information. The Government does not guarantee that questions received after the deadline specified in Section 4.5 will be answered.

7.0 Summary

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY to identify sources that can provide concepts and capabilities for a Next Generation Airlift aircraft. The information provided in this RFI is subject to change and is not binding on the Government. The Air Force has not made a commitment to procure any of the items discussed, and the release of this RFI should not be construed as such a commitment or as authorization to incur cost for which reimbursement would be required or sought. All submissions become Government property and will not be returned.