RFQ Readiness Simulation (RS) – Vendor Questions / Responses

Acquisition & Contracting

1. Three submission details appear inconsistent. First, the instruction directs the subject line "SSS WEBSITE MODERNIZATION PROJECT-CONTRACTOR NAME," which appears to reference a different requirement. Second, the Contract Specialist is identified as Cane Toussaint, CToussaint@sss.gov for questions, Cane Toussaint, Cane.Toussaint@ sss.gov on the Past Performance Questionnaire, and Shimere Cooper, Coooper@ sss.gov for quote submission. Third, the solicitation requires five separately submitted bound Volumes while imposing a 35 MB limit per e-mail. Will the Government confirm the correct subject line, the correct name and e-mail address of the Contract Specialist for each purpose, and whether vendors should transmit five separate e-mails or a single e-mail containing five files?

RESPONSE: The subject line is: "SSS READINESS SIMULATION (RS)-CONTRACTOR NAME".

The assigned Contract Specialist is Cane Toussaint. Either e-mail address can be used: cane.toussaint@sss.gov or CToussaint@sss.gov. Submissions should also be sent to the Contracting Officer at georgette.hendricksen@sss.gov

Vendors should transmit a single e-mail containing five (5) files.

2. Volume I requires vendors to complete FAR 52.204-24 "contained in this solicitation." The provision does not appear in the issued document. Will the Government provide the provision text or confirm that a vendor may submit the completed current version of the provision?

RESPONSE: Yes, a vendor may submit the completed current version of the provision.

3. Volume III requires one past performance reference of similar type, size, and complexity. Will the Government accept and evaluate a reference for work performed by a proposed subcontractor or teaming partner, and if so, will the Government confirm how such a reference is weighted relative to a prime-performed reference?

RESPONSE: Vendor should submit the appropriate reference from the prime or subcontractor if it meets the criteria stated in the RFQ of being relevant and recent.

4. Staffing instruction requires identification of key personnel with role, relevant experience, and certifications. Will the Government confirm whether personnel resumes are required or permitted, and whether resumes count against the 70-page limit for Volume II?

RESPONSE: Resumes will not be counted against the 70-page limit for Volume II.

5. For contractor personnel required to undergo Public Trust confirmation under this effort, is U.S. citizenship required, or are lawful permanent residents (green-card holders) eligible for the Public Trust suitability determination, subject to the applicable background investigation? If lawful permanent residents are eligible, are there any additional vetting requirements or minimum U.S.-residency periods that apply?

RESPONSE: See response # 31

6. Table 1 labels Volume V as "Factor 5 - Contract Documentation," but the Evaluation provision identifies only three factors (Technical Capability and Demonstration, Past Performance, Price). Please confirm there are three evaluation factors and that Volume V is administrative and not separately scored.

RESPONSE: There are (3) Evaluation Factors: Factor 1-Technical Approach/Capability and Demonstration,

Factor 2-Past Performance, and Factor 3-Price Proposal. Volume V Contract Documentation is administrative and not separately scored.

7. The instructions reference signing SF 1449 Block 17 under Volume I, while Volume V requires a signed copy of the solicitation and any amendments. Please confirm whether the signed SF 1449 belongs in Volume I, Volume V, or both.

RESPONSE: Vendors should sign the initial base SF1449 at the appropriate section and all released amendments and submit them with their final package.

8. The PWS references requirements defined "at the task order level," while the SF 1449 and CLIN structure indicate a single firm-fixed-price award. Please confirm whether this is a single firm-fixed-price contract or an indefinite-delivery vehicle under which task orders will be issued.

RESPONSE: This will be a single Firm-Fixed Price contract.

9. Please confirm that Attachment 3 Pricing should reflect firm-fixed-price amounts by CLIN (0001 through 0005 base, plus option 1001) and confirm the required level of labor-hour back-up detail given the firm-fixed-price milestone structure.

RESPONSE: Vendors should submit their updated pricing sheet (Reference Amendment 2) and follow the instructions provided. The pricing sheet requests back-up documentation for pricing for vendors to demonstrate what constitutes the substance for the pricing amounts.

10. Please confirm whether Option CLIN 1001 and the FAR 52.217-8 Option to Extend Services must each be separately priced and confirm both are included in the Option-Price Evaluation.

RESPONSE: CLIN 1001 should be priced. FAR 52.217-8 assumes that if the Government elects to exercise this clause the pricing will be pro-rated based on either the base or the CLIN 1001 option. For example if exercising the 52.217-8 at the base level for up to 6 months, the price would be 6 months of the annual price quoted for the base.

11. The requirement is for one Past Performance reference of similar size, scope, and complexity. Please confirm whether a vendor may submit more than one reference.

RESPONSE: Only one reference is required and the Government will only review one reference.

12. PWS Section 1.2, Task Order Strategy, describes Discovery, Design/Implementation, Documentation, and Security/Compliance as potential structured "requests" under the awarded contract. Will the initial award cover the full RS delivery as a single scope, or will the awarded contract serve as a vehicle for separately-issued future task orders? PWS Section 1.2 PWS Pg. 2-3

RESPONSE: The awarded contract will cover the full Readiness Simulation (RS) delivery as a single scoped requirement.

13. PWS Section 9.0 states work may be performed "at Government facilities, Contractor facilities, or approved remote locations," without specifying a United PWS Section 9.0, Period and Place of Performance PWS9 States only requirement, while the security requirements (FISMA Moderate, NIST SP 800-53, and the FAR supply-chain clauses referenced elsewhere in the package) indicate a security-sensitive environment. Please confirm whether non-United-States-resident contractor personnel may perform any portion of the work, for example non-boundary-touching architecture, documentation, or open-source tool research involving no Government-furnished information, no personally identifiable information, and no access to the SSS cloud environment, or whether all contractor personnel and all work must be United States based.

RESPONSE: See Response #31. A non-resident must have at least 3 years of residency in the US in order to be eligible for a Public Trust process.

14. The CLIN 0001 description bundles "security onboarding and Public Trust confirmation" together with "stakeholder interviews across all six MEFs" and "GFI data inventory and parameter review" in the same milestone paragraph, without clarifying whether Public Trust confirmation is a precondition for all of those activities or only for those requiring direct access to the SSS cloud environment or Government-furnished information systems. Please confirm whether Public Trust screening must clear before any CLIN 0001 activity begins, or whether stakeholder interviews and data inventory work may proceed in parallel with screening for personnel who will later access the SSS cloud environment directly.

RESPONSE: See Response #31

15. The instructions state "The Vendor shall sign SF1449 in Block 17." On the Standard Form 1449 included with the solicitation, Block 17a, "CONTRACTOR/OFFEROR," is an identification field (company name and code, facility code, and telephone number) and carries no signature line, while the form's printed offeror signature block is 30a, "SIGNATURE OF OFFEROR/CONTRACTOR," paired with 30b (printed name and title) and 30c (date signed). To ensure our offer is executed exactly as the Government intends, please confirm the vendor should sign at Block 30a and complete Block 17a as the identification field. Absent a different instruction before submission, we will execute the SF1449 at Block 30a and complete Block 17a as an identification field, consistent with the form's printed structure.

RESPONSE: Vendors should sign the initial base SF1449 at the appropriate section and all released amendments and submit them with their final package.

16. FAR 52.217-9 limits the total duration of this contract, including the exercise of options, to 12 months. PWS Section 9.0 anticipates 6 to 12 months for initial delivery, and CLIN 1001 includes 90 days of post-acceptance support. Will the Government clarify how the base and option periods are intended to fit within the 12-month ceiling?

RESPONSE: The base is for 12 months / the option if exercised is a follow-on and should be priced based on the described level of effort. Vendors should also indicate in their submission how long a process this would entail based on their proposed price.

17. Each of CLINs 0001 through 0004 states an estimated Government review window of 10 business days. Will the Government confirm (a) whether these review periods are included within the overall period of performance; (b) whether the Contractor is expected to maintain staffing during Government review; and (c) whether the 10-business day window is a target or a binding obligation for purposes of schedule relief should it be exceeded?

RESPONSE: The review periods are included within the overall period of performance.

18. Volume III requires one past performance reference. Will the Government accept a reference for work performed by a proposed subcontractor or teaming partner, and will the Government accept more than one reference where additional relevant and recent references are available?

RESPONSE: The Government only requires 1 reference that is recent and relevant. This can be provided from a proposed subcontractor or team partner.

19. Please confirm whether the Compliance Matrix required under Volume II, Factor 1, item 2 counts toward the 70-page Volume II limitation, or whether it may be submitted as a separate Microsoft Excel attachment excluded from the page count, given its tabular and reference nature.

RESPONSE: It can be submitted as a Microsoft Excel attachment and will not be counted toward the 70-pg Volume II limitation.

20. Past performance (Factor 2): For a small business that may not have a single prior contract of directly comparable size and complexity, how will the Government treat past performance - e.g., will a neutral rating be assigned consistent with FAR 15.305(a)(2)(iv), and may relevant efforts of the proposed key personnel be considered?

RESPONSE: Please follow the instructions for past performance – if no past performance is available the vendor should state that and a neutral rating will be assigned. Relevant and recent efforts of proposed key personnel on a current or previous contract fitting the past performance criteria may be considered.

21. Attachment 2 is a Past Performance Questionnaire for completion by references. Given the neutral-rating provision under Factor 2, would the Government confirm that a vendor submitting no completed PPQs, together with a statement that it has no relevant prior contracts, remains eligible for award with a neutral past performance assessment, and that Volume Ill may consist solely of that statement?

RESPONSE: Under the situation described above the Government would render a neutral rating.

22. Please identify which contractor personnel or roles will require Public Trust determinations and provide the anticipated clearance and onboarding timeframe.

RESPONSE:

The Government will bear the cost of required background investigations and suitability processing for contractor personnel. Public Trust suitability will be required only for contractor personnel whose assigned duties and level of access require a PIV credential or access to Government facilities, systems, networks, or information subject to the applicable suitability requirements.

Contractor personnel who do not require a PIV credential or access to Government internal systems may perform authorized activities without Public Trust suitability, subject to applicable Government security requirements and access controls.

Accordingly, contractor personnel may perform appropriate discovery, planning, development, configuration, or other authorized work in environments that do not require Public Trust suitability or restricted Government system access. Any access to Government systems, facilities, or information requiring additional security or suitability requirements will be contingent upon completion of the applicable Government processes and authorization.

Our vetting process stipulates that contractors have at least three years residency in the United States.

23. The Period of Performance start and end date fields for the CLINs in Schedule are blank. Can the Government share the anticipated award date and period-of-performance start date for the base CLINs, for scheduling and pricing purposes given the 6-12 month anticipated initial delivery window in PWS Section 9.0?

RESPONSE: September 2026 – September 2027

24 The Volume I instructions require a filled-out FAR 52.204-24 representation "contained in this solicitation"; however, we were unable to locate the text of the provision within the RFQ document. Can the Government confirm that vendors should submit the standard FAR 52.204-24 provision (Representation Regarding Certain Telecommunications and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment) completed, or provide the provision via amendment?

RESPONSE: The updated provision is provided via Amendment 2.

25. The submission instructions state that electronic files shall be in Microsoft Word or Excel formats, with PDF allowed for executed documents such as a cover letter. Can the Government confirm that the Volume II Technical Narrative and Volume Ill Past Performance volumes shall be submitted as Microsoft Word files, and that signed forms (e.g., SF1449, amendments) may be submitted as PDF?

RESPONSE: Volumes II and III may be submitted as Word of PDF files. It is recommended that signed forms be provided as PDF forms.