

SCP-FSS-001-N INSTRUCTIONS APPLICABLE TO NEW OFFERORS (OCT 2015)

- (a) Read the entire solicitation document prior to preparation of your offer.
- (b) Electronic submission of offers via GSA's eOffer web-based application (<http://eOffer.gsa.gov>) is mandatory.
- (c) Offers must be current, concise, and complete, and demonstrate a thorough understanding of solicitation requirements. By submission of an offer, the offeror attests that there have been no exceptions taken to the terms and conditions of this solicitation unless otherwise explicitly identified as required in eOffer (see "Exceptions to Terms and Conditions" under the Standard Response module).
- (d) If the offeror was previously awarded a Schedule contract that was cancelled or allowed to expire due to low or no sales, a new offer for the same Schedule will not be considered unless a minimum of 12 months have passed since the effective date of the cancellation or the expiration date of the previous contract. Any offer submitted prior to the completion of this 12-month period will be rejected.
- (e) By submission of an offer, the offeror attests that it understands and agrees to comply with the requirements of clause 552.238-74 *Industrial Funding Fee and Sales Reporting*.
- (f) In addition to full compliance with the requirements of this provision (SCP-FSS-001-N), the offeror must also comply with the following provisions, as applicable. Failure to comply with an applicable provision will result in rejection of the offer.

Solicitation provisions and their applicability are detailed below:

- (1) SCP-FSS-002 *Specific Proposal Submission Instructions for Services* – Applies to all offers that propose services, with the exception of offers under Schedule 70.
- (2) SCP-FSS-003 *Specific Proposal Submission Instructions for Products* – Applies to all offers that propose products, with the exception of offers under Schedule 70.
- (3) SCP-FSS-004 *Specific Proposal Submission Instructions for Schedule 70* – Applies only to offers submitted under Schedule 70 - General Purpose Commercial Information Technology Equipment, Software, and Services.
- (4) SCP-FSS-005 *Special Proposal Instructions for Products for Schedule 751* – Applies only to offers submitted under Schedule 751 - Leasing of Automobiles and Light Trucks.
- (5) SCP-FSS-006 *Special Proposal Instructions for Products and Services for Schedule 23V* – Applies only to offers submitted under Schedule 23V - Automotive Superstore.

Offerors proposing both products and services must comply with the requirements of SCP-FSS-002 and SCP-FSS-003. Offers submitted under Schedule 70 are required to comply with SCP-FSS-004 only, regardless of whether products and/or services are offered.

- (g) The following documents must be submitted by all offerors and are detailed in paragraph (j). See SCP-FSS-002, 003, 004, 005, and 006, as applicable, for additional documents that are required based on specific product and service offerings.

The following documentation requirements are completed directly through the eOffer application:

- (1) *Pathway to Success* training completion verification,
- (2) Active System for Award Management (SAM) registration verification,
- (3) Small Business Subcontracting Plan (if applicable),

(4) Commercial Sales Practices (CSP) disclosure.

The offeror must complete and upload the following documents to the eOffer application:

- (1) Readiness Assessment for Prospective Offerors,
- (2) Financial Statements,
- (3) Previous FSS program cancellations and rejections, pending offers for other Schedule contracts, and awarded Schedule contracts,
- (4) Agent Authorization Letter (if applicable),
- (5) Technical Proposal,
- (6) Price Proposal Template,
- (7) Supporting Pricing Documentation,
- (8) Price Narrative,
- (9) Commercial Price List or Market Rate Sheet (if applicable).

(h) **Withdrawal of Offer:** The offeror may withdraw its offer from consideration at any time prior to award or rejection by withdrawing it in eOffer. If an offer is withdrawn, a new offer can be resubmitted at a later date. Information saved from the previous withdrawn offer can be copied over to the new offer, excluding uploaded documents.

(i) The proposal instructions in SCP-FSS-001-N are common to all solicitations. Some Schedules and SINs have additional requirements specific to that particular Schedule or SIN. Please review the solicitation attachments “Read Me First” and/or “Critical Information” for specific Schedule or SIN requirements.

(j) All offerors must comply with the following:

(1) Section I – Administrative/Contract Data

i. A designated Authorized Negotiator who is also a company officer (i.e., President, CEO, CFO, etc.) must complete (or have completed within one year of the date of offer submission) the *Pathway to Success* training. This free, web-based self-assessment is available through the Vendor Education Center (VEC), which can be accessed directly at <https://gsafas.secure.force.com/MASTrainingHome> or through the Vendor Support Center (<http://vsc.gsa.gov>) by selecting the “Education” tab and then “Pathway to Success.” The training session is less than two hours total and covers the major factors vendors should consider prior to submitting an offer to GSA. eOffer will verify the name of the person that completed the *Pathway to Success* training and the date of completion.

ii. The offeror must complete and submit the *Readiness Assessment for Prospective Offerors*. This free, web-based self-assessment is available through the Vendor Education Center (VEC), which can be accessed directly at <https://gsafas.secure.force.com/MASTrainingHome> or through the Vendor Support Center (<http://vsc.gsa.gov>) by selecting the “Education” tab and then “Vendor Toolbox (Readiness Assessment).” The Readiness Assessment must be completed by a company officer (i.e., President, CEO, CFO, etc.) and completed/dated within the past one-year period. This tool is designed to assist vendors in determining whether they are ready to pursue a Schedule contract and prepares them to navigate the Schedule proposal process.

iii. The offeror must be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM) at <http://www.sam.gov>. The information provided must be current, accurate, and complete, and reflect the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) code(s) for this solicitation and the SINs proposed. SAM consolidates the information previously contained in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR), Excluded Parties List System (EPLS), and Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA) databases.

iv. The offeror must provide the following, as applicable:

(A) A copy of any cancellation letters received within the preceding two-year period for previously awarded Schedule contracts,

(B) A copy of any rejection notices received within the preceding two-year period for previously submitted Schedule offers,

(C) If a contract was previously awarded under THIS Schedule, and it was subsequently cancelled or allowed to expire due to low sales, a detailed description of the steps the offeror plans to take to generate sales through a new contract that includes the following:

- 1) A copy of the cancellation letter or notification of determination not to exercise an option,
- 2) Current Federal sales in excess of \$25,000, as evidenced by copies of contractual documents that identify the Federal entity and the date and value of the product or services provided,
- 3) Demonstration that there is a reasonable expectation that any future award will comply with clause I-FSS-639 *Contract Sales Criteria*,
- 4) A marketing plan detailing the steps you plan to take to generate sales through a new GSA Schedule contract.

(D) Information regarding any pending offers under other Schedules, to include the name and phone number of the assigned GSA contract specialist,

(E) Information regarding any currently awarded GSA Schedule contracts, to include the awarded contract number and price list.

v. The offeror must provide financial statements for the previous two-year period (audited, if available). At a minimum, each financial statement must consist of a balance sheet and income statement. GSA will use this information to determine financial responsibility. Provide an explanation for any negative financial information disclosed, including negative equity or income. Offerors may be required to provide letters of credit or other documentation to demonstrate that adequate financial resources are available. In accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 9.103(a), contracts will only be awarded to responsible prospective contractors. To be determined responsible, an offeror must have adequate financial resources to perform the contract or the ability to obtain them. Note that 1.) submission of a GSA Form 527 does not meet the aforementioned requirements, and 2.) offerors are NOT to submit tax returns.

vi. The offeror must prepare and submit a Small Business Subcontracting Plan, if applicable. The offeror is to complete the Small Business Subcontracting Plan module in eOffer if, pursuant to the applicable NAICS codes and size standards, the offeror is determined to be other than a small business concern for purposes of this solicitation. Large businesses, nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions are advised of the requirement to submit a Small Business Subcontracting Plan as detailed in clause 552.219-72 *Preparation, Submission, and Negotiation of Subcontracting Plans*, incorporated by reference. The Government will review each plan to ensure it is consistent with the provisions of this clause. Subcontracting plans are subject to negotiation, along with the terms and conditions of any contract resulting from this solicitation. The offeror's subcontracting plan must be approved by the contracting officer prior to award. Failure to submit a Small Business Subcontracting Plan when required will result in the rejection of your offer.

Note: GSA's subcontracting goals can be found at the following website:

<https://www.sba.gov/contracting/contracting-officials/goaling>.

vii. Unless otherwise requested, the offeror shall not submit brochures, newsletters, or other marketing materials.

viii. An Agent Authorization Letter must be completed and submitted as part of the offer if a consultant or third-party agent assisted in the preparation of the offer, will be involved in any part of the negotiation of the offer, or will be involved in any post-award actions. The template for the Agent Authorization Letter can be found as an attachment to the solicitation. The Agent Authorization Letter has both pre- and post-award delegations. For any resultant contract, the contractor is responsible for initiating a modification to ensure all authorized negotiators and delegations are up-to-date (e.g., removing an authorized negotiator that only has pre-award delegations).

(2) Section II – Technical Proposal

The offeror must address the three technical proposal factors below.

i. Factor One - Corporate Experience: The offeror must submit a narrative description of its corporate experience. This narrative cannot exceed two pages and must address the following:

(A) The number of years of corporate experience in providing the products/services described under this Schedule, regardless of the specific products/services being proposed – a minimum of two (2) years of corporate experience is required,

(B) Organization's number of employees, experience in the field, and resources available to enable it to fulfill requirements,

(C) Brief history of the offeror's activities contributing to the development of expertise and capabilities related to this requirement,

(D) Information that demonstrates the offeror's organizational and accounting controls,

(E) A description of the resources presently in-house or the ability to acquire the type and kinds of personnel/products proposed,

(F) A description of how the offeror intends to market the proposed products/services to Federal clients,

(G) A discussion regarding the intended use of subcontractors.

ii. Factor Two - Past Performance: The offeror must order and obtain a Past Performance Evaluation from Open Ratings, Inc. (ORI). Offerors are responsible for payment to ORI for the Past Performance Evaluation.

(A) Past Performance Evaluations are valid for a period of one year from the date of issuance by ORI. If the evaluation was issued more than one year prior to the date of proposal submission via eOffer, the proposal will be rejected.

(B) The order form must be completed with a minimum of six (6) customer references submitted. A "customer reference" is defined as a person or company that has purchased relevant products/services from the offeror. The offeror is advised to use references from projects involving products/services related to this solicitation and/or those performed under NAICS code(s) applicable to proposed products/services.

(C) The offeror must submit one (1) copy of the completed Past Performance Evaluation and one (1) copy of the order form with its proposal. Failure to submit the completed evaluation and order form will result in rejection of the proposal.

(D) The offeror must address any negative feedback for each of the feedback categories contained in the ORI report, to include actions taken to minimize the

problems that resulted in negative feedback.

iii. Factor Three - Quality Control: The offeror is to submit a single narrative for this factor, regardless of the number of products/services offered. This narrative cannot exceed two (2) pages and must address the following:

- (A) A description of internal review procedures that facilitate high-quality standards,
- (B) Identification of individuals responsible for ensuring quality control,
- (C) Whether or not subcontractors are used and, if so, the quality control measures used to ensure acceptable subcontractor performance,
- (D) How potential problem areas and solutions are handled,
- (E) The procedures for ensuring quality performance when meeting urgent requirements,
- (F) How quality control will be managed when completing multiple projects for multiple agencies simultaneously.

(3) Section III – Price Proposal

i. GSA's pricing goal is to obtain equal to or better than the offeror's Most Favored Customer (MFC) pricing under the same or similar terms and conditions. GSA seeks to obtain the offeror's best price based on its evaluation of discounts, terms, conditions, and concessions offered to commercial customers. However, offers that propose Most Favored Customer pricing but are not highly competitive will not be determined fair and reasonable and will not be accepted. The U.S. Government Accountability Office has specifically recommended that "the price analysis GSA does to establish the Government's MAS negotiation objective should start with the best discount given to any of the vendor's customers."

ii. Submit proposed pricing using the attached Price Proposal Template. The Price Proposal Template MUST be submitted in Microsoft Office Excel format. The proposed pricing structure must be consistent with the offeror's commercial practices. Pricing must be clearly identified as based either on a "Commercial Price List" or a "Commercial Market Price," as defined in FAR 2.101 (see "Catalog Price" and "Market Prices" under the definition of "Commercial Item").

(A) If the MFC is a Federal agency, but sales exist to commercial customers, identify which, if any, of the commercial customers receive the offeror's best price. This will allow the Government to establish a "basis of award" customer in accordance with paragraph (a) of clause 552.238-75 *Price Reductions*.

(B) Proposed prices must include the 0.75% Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) (see contract clause 552.238-74 *Industrial Funding Fee and Sales Reporting*). This fee will be included in the awarded prices and reflected in the total amount charged to ordering activities.

iii. Provide supporting documentation for EACH proposed product/service price. Supporting pricing documentation may consist of published and publicly-available commercial catalogs/price lists, copies of invoices, contracts, quote sheets, etc., and must be submitted with the offer. There must be a clear and relevant relationship between the supporting document and the proposed price it is meant to substantiate. Each supporting document must be clearly labeled with the name of the corresponding proposed product/service.

iv. The offeror must submit a detailed price narrative containing sufficient information for each of the products/services offered to enable the contracting officer to determine that offered prices are fair and reasonable. For example, if a price offered to GSA is not equal

to or better than the price offered to the offeror's designated Most Favored Customer, the narrative must explain the rationale for proposing such a price in a manner sufficient to enable the contracting officer to determine that the rate is fair and reasonable. Any deviation from the offeror's commercial sales practices must be explained, including the specific circumstances and frequency of the deviations.

The offeror must also propose a mechanism for future price adjustments, as detailed below:

(A) If pricing proposed in the Price Proposal Template is based on a commercial price list, submit a copy of the company's current, dated price list, catalog, or standard rate sheet (note that this must be an existing, standalone document, and not prepared for purposes of this solicitation). Future price adjustments for pricing based on a commercial price list are subject to clause 552.216-70 *Economic Price Adjustment – Multiple Award Schedule Contracts*.

OR

(B) If pricing proposed in the Price Proposal Template is based on commercial market prices, future price adjustments are subject to clause I-FSS-969 *Economic Price Adjustment – FSS Multiple Award Schedule*. The offeror must either propose a fixed annual escalation rate or identify a relevant market indicator (e.g., the Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Cost Index).

v. Travel will be handled in accordance with clause C-FSS-370 *Contractor Tasks/Special Requirements*. Costs for transportation, lodging, meals and incidental expenses are allowable subject to the limitations contained in the Federal Travel Regulations and/or Joint Travel Regulations. These costs should not be included in proposed prices, as they are to be coordinated at the order level.

vi. Complete the Commercial Sales Practices Format (CSP-1) in eOffer in accordance with instructions provided. Provide a rationale for the given estimate of GSA contract annual sales.

(k) Raising the Bar

In an effort to raise standards under the FSS program, the following requirements have been highlighted in all solicitations and are relevant to this Schedule, as applicable:

(1) AbilityOne Program Products

The AbilityOne Program is a Federal procurement program that generates jobs for individuals who are blind or have another significant disability. In order to distribute AbilityOne products, a vendor must be an authorized AbilityOne Program distributor as designated by the U.S. AbilityOne Commission.

Certain commercial products are considered “essentially the same” (ETS) as AbilityOne products. Because AbilityOne products are mandatory purchases for Federal customers, the offeror is required to remove any ETS items from its FSS proposal. This applies only to the following Schedules: 73 - Food Service, Hospitality, Cleaning Equipment and Supplies, Chemicals and Services; 75 - Office Products/Supplies and Services and New Products/Technology; 51V - Hardware Superstore; and 70 - General Purpose Commercial Information Technology Equipment, Software, and Services.

For more information on the AbilityOne Program, ETS products, and becoming an authorized AbilityOne distributor, please visit www.abilityone.gov, or contact Mr. Eric Beale at ebeale@abilityone.gov/ (703) 603-2119.

(2) Manufacturer Part Number and Universal Product Code Data

Manufacturer Part Number (MPN) data must be submitted for all products. The offeror must ensure that the MPN for each proposed product reflects the actual number assigned. Universal

Product Code Type A (UPC-A) data must also be submitted for all products for which this information is commercially available. If MPN (and UPC-A data, if commercially available) is submitted incorrectly or not submitted, the associated product may not be awarded.

(3) Frustrated Freight (applicable only to overseas delivery)

The offeror must maintain an order tracking system that permits ordering agencies to track the location of an order at any time, from the moment the order is shipped, to the point of delivery and acceptance. The offeror must also demonstrate understanding of orders bound for an international end-point delivery by providing a sample electronic version of a label appropriately marked in accordance with the FED-STD-123 and MIL-STD-129 edition in effect as of the date of solicitation issuance. An offer for OCONUS delivery will not be accepted if the offer does not demonstrate a proper tracking system and provide a sample packaging label for international delivery.

(4) Full-Product and Broad-Service Offerings

The offeror must provide a full and broad array of proposed products/services. An offer will not be accepted with limited product/service offerings unless it represents a total solution for the proposed SINS.

(5) Fair and Reasonable Pricing

To determine fair and reasonable pricing, the GSA contracting officer may consider many factors, including pricing on competitor contracts, historical pricing, and currently available pricing in other venues. Offers that propose Most Favored Customer pricing but are not highly competitive will not be determined fair and reasonable and will not be accepted.