

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.1.1. Reference: RFP Section C1.1, line 27 – “took over 242,000 orders for consumer publications..” Is 242,000 a part of the 1.9 million calls and 20,000 email inquiries or it is additional?

A.1.1 The 242,000 is a part of the 1.9 million calls and 20,000 email inquiries.

Q.1.2. Reference: RFP Section C.2.1.4. Are all the languages listed i.e. English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, French, German, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese a requirement for the task order at launch? If yes, are they required for both voice and written responses?

A.1.2. The Government is likely to require English and Spanish in most task orders. Requirements for other languages will depend on the nature of the service and its clientele. The Contractors must be prepared to offer service in any language listed in Section C.2.1.4.

Q.1.3. Do you have transactional volume broken by languages?

A.1.3. This information is currently not available.

Q.1.4. How many Information Specialists (IS) does your existing NCC have in supporting the program? What are the seats that this project currently occupies?

A.1.4. The current NCC contract is a performance-based contract. The current contractor is required to provide sufficient staffing, including supervisory and quality assurance personnel, to meet workload and performance requirements. Current staffing levels are based on solution proprietary to the incumbent contractor and cannot be released by the Government.

Q.1.5. Do you have existing ratios for Managers to Supervisors, Supervisors to agents, QA specialist to agents?

A.1.5. See response provided in A.1.4.

Q.1.6. Do you have requirements around how many agents are full time and part time?

A.1.6. See response provided in A.1.4

Q.1.7. How many quality monitors per agent per week or month?

A.1.7. See response provided in A.1.4

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.1.8. Would FCIC train the contractor's trainers? If so how long do you anticipate this would take?

A.1.8. The contractor is responsible for providing training. The Government will make available program personnel to provide content knowledge training and/or conduct train-the-trainer style learning sessions with contractor trainers. The length of specific training will be dependent on the work to be performed.

Q.1.9. Reference: Section 3.5.5.3.3 – “the Contractor shall provide certified instructors to deliver all training.....” Please specify type of certification required.

A.1.9 Certification of instructors will be the responsibility of the contractor. The Contractor will determine the type of certification that is required for its instructors.

Q1.10. For the initial task order, what are the estimated training timelines for the Information Specialists (IS), Level 1 - 5? What are the estimated uptraining hours per week?

A.1.10. Training time and IS skill levels requirements are task dependent. It is the contractor’s responsibility to assess the task requirements and provide sufficient qualified personnel to perform the work. For the NCC task, the Government will make available program personnel for consultation to assist the contractor to develop training materials. The Government may also participate in the start-up training for the ISs. The duration of the start-up training and amount of uptraining is to be determined by the contractor.

Q.1.11. Section C3.5.9.3 - Can the contractor use the designated facility/site to service other clients, or it has to be 100% dedicated?

A.1.11. The contractor may serve other clients in the same facility as long as access to the facility, workstation, and program information meets the Government’s security requirements as defined in individual task orders.

Q.2.1. I would like to know if you would consider our proposal without the required 3 years of experience in multi-channel contact center services and technological support, as long as we partner with a subcontractor who has the experience. We have excellent references and 20 years federal contract experience, and are very interested in getting into call center contract work.

A.2.1. To be eligible for award, the offeror must demonstrate that they meet all of the experience requirements set forth in RFP Section L.7.2.1.3.1

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.3.1. In the background section (Section C.1.1) under the heading for USA Services, the RFP appears to describe a longer-term vision for establishing “a seamless citizen information network” and for providing “complete managed inquiry response and management solutions.” Can the GSA provide more detailed information on the nature of these requirements and the timeline for providing these types of services? Does the GSA want the contractor to assist in developing the longer-term vision for improving overall citizen service by focusing on integration and cooperation across other government agencies? What assumptions should the contractor make in terms of the scope of the longer-term vision?

A.3.1. These requirements are evolving along with the technologies used to support them. There is no timeline available. The Contractors’ work in and of itself will assist the Government to develop a longer term vision.

Q.3.2. It is not clear if there is a pricing table for start-up activities covering inquiry tracking, contact management, directory listing services, and reporting. Should these start-up activities be included in the overall pricing for Knowledge and Content Development (Section B.2.1.2.3 on Page B-7)? Similarly, should incremental pricing for these activities (inquiry tracking, contact management, directory listing services, and reporting) be included in the Information Management and Relationship Management sections of the pricing for Incremental Project Management Support (Section B.2.2.2 on Page B-8)?

A.3.2. The Government recognizes that support for start-up activities is task dependent. To provide for a more flexible pricing structure, Section B.1.1.4 – Project Implementation Support is amended as follows:

“This is the fixed fully burdened hourly charge for technical support needed to during project implementation. Project Implementation Support may consist of one or more of the following labor groups, as defined in Section C.3.5.2 thru C.3.5.5:

1. Program Management
2. Technology Management
3. Information Management
4. Relationship Management”

Incremental support for the reference activities may be included in the appropriate Incremental Support CLINs.

Q.3.3. In Section C.9 (Government-Furnished Property and Services), the RFP does list specific business process information that the government will provide to the contractor, including escalation procedures, existing methods, business rules, etc. for handling citizen requests. In terms of process automation vs. process improvement, which business processes does the GSA want to automated and which processes does the GSA want to redesign/improve – with particular focus on the following:

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

1. Cross-agency processes;
2. Processes for managing the fulfillment of requests; and
3. Follow-on activities related to citizen inquiries?

How important is process analysis and design to the GSA in terms of redesigning and improving these processes and activities (Business Process Reengineering)? If the GSA is looking for BPR services (both start-up and incremental), in which pricing tables should these services be included?

A.3.3. The Contractors are expected to create refinements in existing or initial procedures ordered by the Government in order to meet the needs of their employees, the evolution of available technology, and changes in customer demands. Also, since this is fixed price solicitation it will be in the contractor(s) best interest to contain cost.

Q.3.4. The sample call flows for the phone channel and the email channel appear to have some significant differences (Section C.2.1.5 – Sample Workflow). With the email channel, the contractor would be responsible for routing the emails (including misdirected emails) to appropriate agencies and following up to ensure resolution (“managing the disposition status of the misdirected inquiries” as described in Section C.2.1.5.2.2 on Page C-8). However, for the phone channel, the contractor will often simply complete a transfer with little or no follow-up (“the IS refers the caller to the appropriate Government agency personnel for completion” as described in Section C.2.1.5.1 on Page C-6). Would the GSA like to see very similar process flows across all channels (phone, web, email, etc.), including processes for the handling of misdirected citizen contacts?

A.3.4. GSA promotes consistency in workflow processes across all contact channels. However, GSA recognizes that workflow processes may vary from one program to another due to differences in program mission and objectives and differences in customer expectations. What works for one program may not work for others. The Contractor is required to develop the optimum workflow processes based on requirements and business rules as identified in individual task orders and industry practices as applicable. The Contractors will determine, based on task order requirements and contractor proposed solutions, the degree of similarity in the workflow processes across contact channels.

Q.3.5. The RFP makes several references to reducing the burden of misdirected calls. Should a public education campaign be addressed as part of the solution? If so, in which pricing table should this service be included?

A.3.5. No. The USA Services Program Management Office is heading the effort to work with agencies on the handling of misdirected calls. If the Government needs support from the Contractor to conduct an education campaign, such support will be requested, proposed, and ordered under a Task Order using the Incremental Project Management Support CLIN.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.3.6. The RFP makes several references to IVR solutions provided by long distance carriers who are already GSA contractors. It also appears that the NCC is currently using a network-based IVR solution from one of the long distance carriers (AT&T, MCI, and Sprint). Who is the incumbent long distance carrier(s) providing voice services and network-based IVR solutions for the NCC? Would the NCC be open to having the contractor provide IVR voice services from other third-party providers (non-telcos)?

A.3.6. MCI is the current long distance service provider for the NCC. The Government will consider all available alternatives for IVR services in support of the NCC if the alternative service is the optimum solution and serves the Government's needs.

Q.3.7. The RFP makes several references to the need for the contractor to conduct research to resolve citizen inquiries. The RFP also makes references to the need to forward some citizen inquiries to other government agencies. Can the GSA provide more clarification as to when the contractor would be expected to provide "research" services vs. providing "referral" services? To what extent will the contractor be responsible for coordinating and interacting with other government agencies when and responding to direct requests for those agencies?

A.3.7 The extent of performance of "research" and "referral" services and coordination and interaction with other agencies is task dependent and will be determined at a task order level. For the NCC's FedInfo service, the goal is to unite the inquirer with proper source of assistance or information. This task can be accomplished by accurate and specific referrals or by other means. If the Contractor's staff is not able to provide this assistance on the initial discussion with the inquirer, then the Contractor's staff will have to "research" the inquiry until they have been able to identify and appropriate point of contact. Agency customers with different requirements will clarify those requirements in task orders.

Q.3.8. The RFP mentions that complex requests may require one or more follow-up activities via email, mail, or phone. For phone requests, the assigned Information Specialist (IS) is responsible for follow-up. Would this be the same for email (suggesting the need for agent-specific email addresses vs. generic email addresses)?

A.3.8. The users of different channels have different expectations and different methods for resolving follow-up questions. Current technology allows for tracking numbers to assist e-mail inquirers in their follow-up. The Contractor and the Government will work together to implement any changes in technology that will allow for customer follow-up without compromising system security.

Q.3.9. Since multiple agencies are served by the NCC, will these various agencies be supported by a single email domain (generic for the NCC) or multiple domains (specific for each agency)?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.3.9. Agencies served by the NCC are currently served by the same e-mail domain with one or more unique mailboxes for each agency. The Government may add other domains if agency requirements warrant such additions.

Q.3.10. For the automated voice services, do all services need to be consistent across all of the languages listed? Does text-to-speech and voice recognition need to support all of the languages listed?

A.3.10. The degree of consistency between services offered in different languages will be task specific and will be specified in individual task orders. The technology supporting text-to-speech and voice recognition must support the languages listed.

Q.3.11. In Section C.3.1.8, is the centralized number for the Automated Telephone Appointment Service supposed to be an 800 (toll free) number? Will there be any other new inbound phone numbers for the NCC?

A.3.11. Access to the Automated Telephone Appointment Service can be via one or more toll-free numbers, commercial telephone numbers, or both. Other inbound telephone numbers may be added to the NCC to satisfy specific requirements.

Q3.12. In Section C.3.1.8, will all of the agencies that are going to be using the automated self-service appointment service be Internet enabled? Will there be a need to provide off-line update capabilities for any agencies? Do any agencies already use some type of appointment scheduling application that would have to be integrated with the NCC appointment service?

A.3.12. Yes, the Government anticipates all of the agencies that use this service will be Internet enabled. There will be no need for off-line updating. Some agencies are in the process of implementing this type of service.

Q.3.13. In Section C.3.1.10 (Hosted FAQ Server) under the Query Management section (Page C-20), please clarify the last requirement: "Allow knowledge managers to build in 'conditional routing' (if then) rules to allow frequently misdirected questions to be forwarded to other agencies." Does the Knowledge Management application need to have some kind of email interface?

A.3.13. The hosted FAQ service must have e-mail capability to allow for the routing of misdirected questions to other agencies.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.3.14. In Section C.3.2.6, the RFP mentions co-browsing, web chat, and instant messaging. The RFP does not mention which websites need this capability. Is www.FirstGov.gov the “official” web site of the NCC? If so, is the contractor responsible for building co-browsing, web chat, and instant messaging into www.FirstGov.gov? What other government web sites would need co-browsing, web chat, and IM? Lastly, who would be responsible for ensuring that the other government web sites are enabled to support co-browsing, web chat, and IM? There does to appear to be a pricing area for co-browsing, web chat, and IM. Should these activities be included in web callback? For what specifically would instant messaging be utilized (for example, another manner of text chat or for self-service access to information)?

A.3.14. Firstgov.gov is the official portal to the US Government’s web presence and is not the subject of his procurement. For pricing purposes, the Contractor shall assume that agencies will be responsible for building co-browsing, web chat, and instant messaging is at their web sites for access by the contractor.

Q.3.15. In Section C.3.2.2 (Outbound Calling Services), is there a requirement for automated outbound predictive dialing capabilities and/or preview outbound dialing? If so, there does not appear to be a pricing area specific for these capabilities.

A.3.15. Neither of these capabilities is a requirement; the Contractor may propose either of these in response to the call volume of a specific task order.

Q.3.16. In section C.2.1.5.4 (Postal Mail Inquiry Workflow), there does not appear to a reference for imaging capabilities. Should we assume this requirement? If so, where should start-up and incremental pricing be included?

A.3.16. Section C.2.1.5.4 is amended to delete the process associated with converting documents to electronic format in the sample workflow. The Government generally does not require imaging capabilities as part of normal support for postal mail inquiry. If imaging capabilities are specifically requested in a task order and the capabilities are not part of the core service offering, the offerors may price imaging support as part of Implementation Support and/or Incremental Project Management Support CLINs.

Q.3.17. In section B.2.1.2.2, IVR pricing is requested by number of workstations. Since IVR systems are typically priced by number of ports, should we assume that number of workstations refers to number of ports for the IVR pricing section?

A.3.17. The Contractor’s responsibility to provide sufficient IVR ports per Equivalent Work Station. The cost of IVR systems per Equivalent Workstation should be included in the CLIN for each service bundle.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.3.18. In section B.2.3.1 (Service Initiation Charges), the pricing is requested for low, average, and high speech recognition and text-to-speech. Can you provide a listing of IVR applications that would fall into each of these categories? Which back-end systems need to be integrated for each of the IVR applications?

A.3.18. The unit of measure for the Service Initiation Charge for both Voice/Speech Recognition and Text-to-Speech has been changed from “Each” to “Hour”. Section B.2.3.1 is amended to reflect this change for CLIN70001 and CLIN70002.

Q.3.19. Assuming CTI is critical to the GSA/NCC operation, which capabilities are required (call control at the desktop, screen pop, call data transfer within site, call data transfer between sites, integrated multi-channel reporting)? Should pricing for the CTI capabilities be included in pricing for both base and incremental Facility & Equipment pricing (Phone, IVR, TTY, etc.)?

A.3.19. Basic CTI support, as defined in RFP Section C.6.1, is required as part of the core service and should be included in Base and Incremental Facility & Equipment CLINs as deemed appropriate by the offeror.

Q.3.20. Does the contractor need to uniquely identify customers/callers (unique caller ID)? Does the contractor need to maintain complete customer contact history?

A.3.20. Automatic Number Identification (ANI), as defined in RFP Section C.6.1 is a contract requirement. It is not a general requirement that the contractor maintain a complete customer contact history for telephone inquiries.

Q.3.21. Can the GSA provide more detailed technical requirements on the hosted services for On-Line Ordering and E-Mail Web Forms? Are these functions intended for use solely on the GSA website or www.FirstGov.gov, or are these functions to be used and integrated into other web sites?

A.3.21. These functions are intended for use by any agency that requires the On-line Ordering and E-Mail Web Forms to be hosted on contractor’s facility in support of attended services provided under this contract. Access to the forms will be via a link from the agency’s website.

Q.3.22. For the FAQ Hosted Service, will the contractor only be responsible for building the capability (designing and building the technology solution), or will the contractor also be responsible for the ongoing collection and maintenance of FAQ content?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.3.22. The Contractor is responsible for designing, building, implementing, operating, and maintaining the technology solution for Hosted FAQ Service. The Contractor may be tasked to provide Hosted FAQ Service in conjunction with other attended services identified in Section C.3.2. Support for these attended services require ongoing collection and maintenance of FAQ content and other information.

Q.3.23. Can the GSA provide more detailed requirements for any data conversion from the AS-IS environment?

1. FAQs
2. Business Processes (Will the business processes be redesigned?)
3. Customer Information and Existing Contact Management Databases?

A.3.23. Data conversion requirements are task specific. Detailed requirements for any data conversion from AS-IS will be provided with each task order request.

Q.3.24. For fulfillment that must be handled by the contractor (outside the scope of the Consumer Publication Distribution Center at Pueblo, CO), please address the questions listed below.

1. Is the contractor responsible for inventory management (forecasting, ordering, etc.) of pre-printed fulfillment materials or will the agencies handle inventory management?
2. Will the contractor be responsible for handling, processing, and escalating returns?
3. Should the contractor implement software for address validation?
4. Is an automated interface required for fulfillment requests processed by Consumer Publication Distribution Center?

A.3.24. The contractor is responsible for inventory management. The contractor will not be responsible for handling, processing, and escalating returns. The contractor may implement software for address validation at its discretion as part of the solution. The contractor is expected to electronically transmit requests for fulfillment by the Consumer Publication Distribution Center for processing.

Q.3.25. Does the GSA have a preference for a single call center or multiple call centers to meet the overall RFP requirements?

A.3.25. The Contractor is required to provide a solution that is scalable to enable it to accommodate growth in work volumes. The solution shall also have adequate backup capability to maximize availability and reliability of all services and to meet contingencies.

Q.3.26. In Section C.3.5.4.4 (Customer Coordination Support), can the GSA provide more detail on the nature of the required coordination activities? To what extent will the contractor be responsible for interacting and responding to direct requests for other government agencies being served by the NCC?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.3.26. Customer coordination support activities are task specific. Detailed requirements for such support will be identified in individual task orders.

Q.3.27. As the NCC provides multi-channel call center services for other agencies, are there specific requirements for how citizen contacts should be prioritized across agencies, channels, inquiry types, etc.? Will some of agencies have higher priorities than other agencies? Will the contractor be responsible for different service levels by agency?

A.3.27. The Government may provide guidance to the NCC contractor on how calls should be prioritized across agencies, channels and inquiry types. Different programs served by the NCC may have different service level requirements.

Q.3.28. In addition to call volumes and peak hour information, can the GSA provide information for the current average handle time and average time in queue for the NCC?

A.3.28. See Section J.3.7. for average processing time for the NCC. The average speed of answer (ASA) for the NCC is program dependent. The current ASA ranges from 5 seconds for consumer publication requests to 20 seconds for general public inquiries.

Q.3.29. Is it the Government's intention to fund more than one offeror's start-up costs at the time of award? How will start-up costs be funded for additional awards (beyond the initial award) to other contractors?

A.3.29. All start-up costs will be proposed and provided at the task order level. There will be no start-up costs associated with the award of the IDIQ contract.

Q.3.30. Please confirm what time proposals are due on February 20, 2004? On page 1 of Section A, the time is listed as 3:00 PM EST, and on page 2 the time is listed as 4:00 PM EST.

A.3.30. Block 9 of the Standard Form 33 is being amended to reflect 3:00PM EST.

Q.3.31. In the Technical Proposal Index (Table J.2), there is an apparent mismatch between the RFP Reference numbers in the table and the actual requirements description in Section C (Statement of Work). In the index table, RFP reference descriptions for C.6.3 – C.6.8 do not match the corresponding descriptions in Section C (the numbering is off by one). Also, the index table does not list a reference for the FAQ System (C.6.3 in Section C). Should the index include a reference to the FAQ system? Lastly, Section C includes two paragraphs for C.6.9 (C.6.9 Service Monitoring and Quality Control, which does not match the index, and C.6.9 Training, which does match the index). Will the Technical Proposal Index be updated to correct any mismatches?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.3.31. Reference to Section C.6.3 is inadvertently left off Section J, Table J.2. Table J.2 is amended to add C.6.3 – FAQ System and renumbering of subsequent references. Also see response provided in A.8.9 regarding question re Section C.6.9 – Training.

Q.3.32. Paragraph J.3 in Section J defines a possible scope of work for the first task order (supporting the current operations of the FCIC NCC). If this scope of work does not change for the first task order, what would be the possible/likely scope of work for the second task order? Subsequent task orders?

A.3.32. It must be emphasized that the NCC requirements in Section J.3 are for informational purposes only. The information is intended to provide offerors with a model to show the type of service that will be ordered under the IDIQ contract(s). The actual NCC requirement, when solicited after award of the IDIQ contract(s), may, or may not reflect the requirements of the model. The size and scope of other tasks can not be determined at this time.

Q.3.33. Paragraph J.3.2.3 (Transition and Start-Up) describes the 90-day transition period. When will this transition period start? Will this period start 90 days before the end of the incumbent's contract or at the end of the incumbent's contract?

A.3.33. Transition will start after the award of the NCC task. The exact start date cannot be determined at this time.

Q.3.34. Does the GSA have a timeline for key decision dates once proposals are submitted (evaluation, oral presentations, selection, RFQ process, contract negotiation, transition, etc.)?

A.3.34. Yes, but the schedule is Source Selection Sensitive and as such can not be provided.

Q.4.1. Reference: RFP Section C.2.1.5.4, line 445. The RFP indicates that the contractor shall retain a copy of all responses for record-keeping. Is it required for the contractor to retain the original hard copy of the customer inquiry, or will the electronic record be adequate to meet his requirement?

A.4.1. Record retention requirements are task specific. Detailed requirements for record retention will be identified in individual task orders.

Q.4.2. Reference: RFP Section C.3.2.2, line 1003-1004, page C-23. Outbound Calling Services refers to outbound calls for sales and marketing purposes. Will the GSA please provide more detail on the nature of these outbound calls? Are the calls subject to Federal Telecommunications Do-Not-Call regulations?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.4.2. The term Outbound Calling Services, as used in this RFP, refers to outbound calling activities in response to an inbound inquiry or in response to an agency request to call a list of designated customers to conduct surveys and/or gather information. Also see response provided in A.15.12.

Q.4.3. Reference: RFP Section C.3.5.4.2, line 1428, page C-32. This section indicates a requirement to record all inquiries. Is it a requirement to record both the voice and data portions of each phone inquiry?

A.4.3. This section applies to the recording of data pertinent to the inquiry for inquiry tracking and management purposes, not to an actual voice recording of the inquiry itself.

Q.4.4. Reference: RFP Sections C.2.1.4 and C.4.3.4, lines 189-190 and 2303-2314, 1428, page C-32. Section C.2.1.4 states that the Contractor may provide foreign language support via “foreign language line” instead of on-site support if such is the most effective solution. Section C.4.3.4 states “At a minimum, the Contractor must have the capability to supply ISs who are proficient the following languages: English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, French, German, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese.” Please clarify if we must have support on-site to provide these languages or if we can use a foreign language line.

A.4.4. Language requirements are task specific. If onsite IS support for these languages is required as part of the task order, the contractor must be capable of supplying ISs who are proficient in the specified language.

Q.4.5. Reference: RFP Section C.2.1.5, lines 256-259, page C-6. Please define the workflow associated with outbound call follow-up telephone contacts.

A.4.5. This section refers to a call that would require additional research on the part of the IS in order to locate information or assistance for the caller. If the point of contact cannot be identified while the caller is on the phone – or if the caller has requested a call-back – then an IS will call the inquirer.

Q.4.6. Reference: RFP Sections C.2.1.5.3 and C.2.1.5.4, lines 404-406 and 437-438, pages C-6 and C-9. What is the “commonly used format” that the GSA plans to use for storing facsimile & postal mail inquiries?

A.4.6. The Contractor is responsible for determining the format used for storing electronic documents. The Government’s requirement is that a commonly used format, such as PDF, be used instead of a proprietary format.

Q.4.7. Please describe in detail the current GSA desktop and call-handling architecture.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.4.7. The desktop and call-handling architecture used to support the NCC operation is based on a proprietary solution provided by the incumbent contractor. As such, the Government cannot release the information requested.

Q.4.8. Reference: RFP Section C.1.2, line 98, page C-3. Please provide the GSA's anticipated schedule for migrating specific government agencies to the GSA solution.

A.4.8. The current NCC contract will expire in September 2004. It is the intent of the Government to issue a Request for Quotations (RFQ) utilizing the Service Ordering procedures set forth in Section G.2 of this solicitation. This RFQ will be provided to all contractors who receive a contract award under this IDIQ solicitation. The schedule for migrating other government agencies to solutions offered under this contract is currently not available; however, as they develop the same procedures will be used.

Q.4.9. Reference to RFP Section C.2.1.5, line 238, page C-6, is the GSA expecting to transfer calls to state or local government agencies – other than law enforcement agencies?

A.4.9. This section describes some sample workflow for various access methods. In general, the Government will refer calls to other government agencies as the need arises. This includes state and local government agencies. The transfer of calls, if necessary, will be arranged on a task-by-task basis.

Q.4.10. Reference: RFP Sections C.2.1.5 and C.2.1.5.2.2, lines 240 and 318, pages C-6 and C-8. Is the GSA planning on establishing standard email protocols for government agencies to use for transferring constituent calls/emails/white mail to and from the GSA?

A.4.10. Yes.

Q.4.11. Reference: RFP Section C.4.3.3., line 2257, page C-51. What specific Occupation Titles should be used for the 5 levels of IS staff?

A.4.11. As stated in RFP Section L.7.2.1.6.3 – Human Resources Management Plan, it is the responsibility of the offerors to identify the corresponding wage rate category, as defined by the Department of Labor's wage determinations, that will be used to compensate each level of contact center staff.

Q.5.1. Is there an incumbent?

A.5.1. The incumbent contractor for the current NCC contract is Aspen Systems Corporation.

Q.5.2. If so, who? Is it possible that we could be sharing work with them?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.5.2 See response provided in A.5.1. It is the intent of the Government to transition the NCC support to a single contractor after award this contract. This will be accomplished through the issuance of a Task Order utilizing the procedures set forth in Section G.2 of this solicitation.

Q.5.3. Will any training material be provided to us at all, or will be expected to develop completely new material?

A.5.3. The Contractor will be responsible for developing course materials based on relevant information and materials provided by the Government. The specific training materials to be provided to the contractor will be determined on an individual task order basis.

Q.5.4. Will the contractor fly out for train the trainer sessions or will the government visit the contractor? How often and for how long each time?

A.5.4. Specific training arrangements and the length of training will be determined on an individual task order basis.

Q5.5. What is the scope of Project Implementation Support? Would the contractor be billed that time for support on start up activities?

A.5.5 See RFP Section B.1.1.4 for a description of Project Implementation Support. The scope of Project Implementation Support varies with the complexity of task requirements. It is not the intent of the Government to bill the contractor for support provided by the Government during the implementation phase of the task order.

Q.5.6. Who will be responsible for long distance charges for both incoming and outgoing calls?

A.5.6. If the Government elects to provide long distance telecommunications services as Government Furnished Equipment in support of a task, the Government will be responsible for paying for them. Otherwise, the services will be ordered from the contractor and paid for as part of the task order.

Q.5.7. With types of specific work, what is meant by service inquiries?

A.5.7. A call to request certain services to be provided and/or performed.

Q.5.8. Can the language line be used just for translations or would they be required to be fully trained to answer inquiries?

A.5.8. Language line can be used just for translation as long as the IS who is interacting with the language line is fully trained to answer the inquiries. However, if the

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

task requires onsite support for the languages listed, the contractor must provide the support.

Q.5.9. With the possibility of a change order being issued, please define what you mean by equitable adjustment.

A.5.9. The Government assumes that the question relates to the language in Section C.2.1.5 of the solicitation. Reference to the Changes clause was included in this section in error and is being removed by amendment. The types of changes that the Government contemplates in work flow are procedural and do not rise to the level of a change as described in the Section I.1, 52.243-01 Changes Clause – Fixed Price. If the question is general in nature offerors can review the full text of the Changes Clause-Fixed Price by going to <http://www.arnet.gov/far>.

Q.5.10. When it comes to written communication, who will be responsible for the creation and maintenance of “canned responses”?

A.5.10. The Contractor is required to prepare the “canned responses” based on information provided and/or identified by the Government. The Contractor is responsible for keeping abreast of the information source and making any additions and/or changes to the response to keep the information current.

Q.5.11. IVR support is required for 9 languages. Does that mean that if a person is bounced out of the IVR that they would be required to go directly to an IS that speaks their language? If so, would this be required 24 x 7 x 365? If not 24 x 7 then what would be considered normal business hours?

A.5.11. The general requirements of this solicitation require access to IVR service on a 24 hour a day, seven days a week basis (24 x 7). However, access to live support from the IVR is generally limited to normal business hours as identified in individual task orders. During the off-hours, IVRs generally do not provide access to a live operator.

Q.5.12. Are there requirements in the frequency of continuation training for ISs, Leadership, and support personnel?

A.5.12. The frequency of continuation training for ISs, leadership, and support personnel will be determined by the contractor based on the performance requirements specified on individual task orders.

Q.5.13. How is a “certified instructor” defined?

A.5.13. See response provided in A.1.9.

Q.5.14. What is the student to instructor ratio class size limits?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.5.14. The Contractor is responsible for determining the maximum training class size and optimum student to instructor ratio.

Q.5.15. In new hire training will they require students to pass written tests with a minimal % score? If so, how do they envision that entire process?

A.5.15 The Contractor is responsible for training new hires and setting test score criteria for passing.

Q.5.16. In the event of an external operational assessment, would we be required to share information with a government selected consultant in which we directly compete?

A.5.16. The GSA will not require the sharing of such information; however, the information is still subject to all Federal statutory and regulatory requirements, such as the Freedom of Information Act.

Q.5.17. Will all 5 levels of employees be required to be available 24 hours a day?

A.5.17. The Contractor must have the capability to provide qualified employees at the required skill levels to meet the availability requirements specified in individual task orders. If the task order requires 24 x 7 live support at these skill levels, the contractor must provide it as part of the solution.

Q.5.18. What are the workstation system requirements?

A.5.18 As stated in RFP Section C.6, the Contractor is responsible for providing and maintaining all contact center system hardware, software, and accessories to meet task order requirements.

Q.5.19. Are there monitor size requirements?

A.5.19. No.

Q.5.20. In section C 5.4 statement 5, does that mean ISs are not permitted to share desks even in a 24 x 7 operation?

A.5.20. There is no restriction on sharing of workstations by ISs within a specific task.

Q.5.21. In section H.8 would receiving instruction fall under continuation training classes?

A.5.21. Yes.

Q.5.22. In section H.10, does this mean that the contractor is to recognize these days as a holiday with their employees?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.5.22. It means that days designated in H.10 are to be observed as Federal holidays in the performance of work under each task order.

Q.5.23. Section H.10, Would the contractor still be available for customer contacts on these days?

A.5.23. If the task requires live support to be available during the holidays, yes. If not, no.

Q.5.24. Under section H.15 contingencies, what would be considered a reasonable amount of time to resume business at a new location in the event the current location was not functional?

A.5.24. Contingency requirements are task dependent. Specific time requirement for resuming service in case of a service and/or location outage will be determined on a task by task basis.

Q.5.25. Can the GSA provide more details concerning its intention to issue task orders to the one or more successful offerors?

A.5.25. GSA will award a minimum of one (1) and a maximum of five (5) Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts as a result of this solicitation. After award of the IDIQ contract(s), task orders will be competed among the IDIQ contract holders through the process described in RFP Section G.2.1 – Fair Consideration Process.

Q.5.26. For instance, is it the GSA's intention to have different contractors specialize in different aspects of the overall work effort?

A.5.26 See response provided in A.5.25.

Q.5.27. Or will the GSA issue task orders and solicit RFQ responses from more than one contractor?

A.5.27. See response provided in A.5.25.

Q.5.28. Does the GSA expect multiple contractors to coordinate their performance of task orders, or will all coordination occur through the GSA Administrative Contracting Officer?

A.5.28. Coordination of task order performance among multiple contractors, if necessary, will be done through the GSA Administrative Contracting Officer.

Q.5.29. Can the GSA provide examples of approximate size, complexity, or value of anticipated task orders? Can the GSA provide an estimate of the total number of task

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

orders expected to be issued each year? It would be useful to know how many task orders we will need to process (so that we can estimate how many resources we will need to commit to this).

A.5.29. The Government anticipates the NCC task to be awarded as the initial task. The current NCC requirements are provided in Section J-3. The information in Section J-3 does not however guarantee the size or complexity of the next NCC requirement. Examples of other tasks to be awarded under this contract and an estimate of the total number of task orders expected to be issued each year are not available at this time.

Q.6.1. Of the 1.9Million telephone calls, could you provide a further breakdown to what percentage are handled by Information Specialists and what percentage is handled through the IVRs?

A.6.1. See RFP Section J.3.7 – Projected Work Volume Data.

Q.6.2. What IVR and other systems are currently in use?

A.6.2. For the NCC task, the Government uses a network-based IVR solution provided by MCI through the FTS2001 contract and a premise-based IVR solution proprietary to the incumbent NCC contractor.

Q.6.3. What is the email technology currently being used?

A.6.3. The email technology solution being used to support the NCC is proprietary to the incumbent NCC contractor. The Government cannot provide this information.

Q.6.4. How much call center data will need to be converted?

A.6.4. See response provided in A.3.23.

Q.6.5. In reference to RFP Section C6.2, Line 2578, could you please list all Government-wide email systems?

A.6.5. This information is currently not available.

Q.6.6. Does GSA require all language capabilities on day-one?

A.6.6. See response provided in A.1.2.

Q.6.7. What existing systems need to be integrated?

A.6.7. Systems integration requirements are task specific and are defined in individual task orders.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.6.8 Who will own the technology?

A.6.8. The Contractor is responsible for providing the technology.

Q.6.9. In reference to RFP Section C.3.1.10, Line 839, how are the FAQs currently being stored?

A.6.9. FAQs are currently stored in various ways depending on the agency systems. Some are stored in databases, others are stored as individual web pages or multiple entries on the same web page.

Q.6.10. To gain a first-hand understanding of the existing call center, may the bidding contractors visit the National Contact Center?

A.6.10. Access to the National Contact Center can be granted by the incumbent contractor. To request permission offerors should contact Aspen Systems Corporation, 2277 Research Blvd, Rockville, MD 20850.

Q.6.11. Is the contractor to provide and own the network operation center for the infrastructure?

A.6.11. The Contractor shall provide all contact center system hardware, software, and accessories to meet task order requirements.

Q.7.1. Reference: RFP Section C.3.1.10, Hosted FAQ Service - Line 823, Item 4 - Interfaces for Information Specialists, Knowledge Manager and Administrators. Accommodates Multiple browsers, including MS Internet Explorer 5.0 and Netscape 4.7. These Browsers are older technology and for software to be state-of-the-art we must utilize the most current browser technology and limit older browsers. Are you okay with a system that works on MS Explorer 6.0 or higher only? NOTE: The User Console for Customers is Browser independent.

A.7.1. To accommodate the variety of browsers used by Federal agencies, the Government prefers a solution that can accommodate multiple browsers, including those stated in the above section.

Q.7.2. Reference: Section C.3.1.10 Hosted FAQ Service - Line 944. "The hosted FAQ service may be ordered with other Attended Services described in Section C.3.2 of this SOW or as a stand-alone service." Our company provides full technology for a Multi-channel Contact Center, including Hosted FAQs, Email Management and Tracking, Live Chat and Outbound Communications. In addition to Hosted FAQs will you order other modules as stand-alone service?

A.7.2. The Government may order other automated services on a stand-alone basis if such is in the best interest of the government.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.7.3. What languages do you want the FAQs to be published in? It only states multiple languages (line 796).

A.7.3. The specific languages that FAQs will be published will be defined in individual task orders.

Q.7.4. Will the government be publishing a list of Prime Contractor Bidders to partner with for this solicitation?

A.7.4. No.

Q.8.1. RFP Section C, Statement of Work, defines 68 pages of single-spaced requirements. RFP Paragraph L.7.2, Technical Proposal Submission Requirements, states that there is a 150 page-limit to the Technical Proposal volume (double-spaced). This includes responses to all of Section C, Executive Summary, Experience, Management, etc. Please consider raising the Technical Proposal page-limit to 200-250 pages (single-spaced) to ensure that vendors may be able to adequately detail and explain their proposed solutions.

A.8.1. See response provided in A.14.67.

Q.8.2. Reference: RFP Section C.1.1 – Background. If/When the GSA transitions the National Contact Center (NCC) from its current provider/vendor to a new provider, what, if any, existing application software will be transferred for use by new vendor and as such can be leveraged by the IS Agents within the new Call Center?

A.8.2. The NCC is currently being operated based on a proprietary solution provided by the incumbent contractor. The technology involved is provided and owned by that contractor. No hardware or application software will be conveyed to the new contractor.

Q.8.3. Reference: RFP Section C, C.3.2.2 – Outbound Calling Services. If using a shared outbound dialer, would you permit the telecom to be owned by the Contractor, with any/all transferred calls being directed to any of the Government's intercity telecommunication services. We seek this clarification for those tasks that may require heavy outbound volume that would benefit from the use of an outbound dialer, the request for Contractor owned Telecom would not apply to low volume outbound calling or inbound follow up calls?

A.8.3. If such is the most optimum solution for Outbound Calling Services, yes.

Q.8.4. Reference: RFP Section C3.3.1 – Fulfillment Services. Does the GSA have any printer hardware standards for the in-house printed materials that the NCC vendor may perform?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.8.4. No. The Contractor is responsible for providing the solution to support this function, in accordance with requirements specified in the task order.

Q.8.5. Reference: RFP Section C.3.3.2 – Transcription Services. What is your anticipated Voice Transcription turnaround requirement, i.e., 48 hours or 24 hours or will these service levels be negotiated on a task order by task order basis?

A.8.5. Service levels for all services will be negotiated on a task or by task order basis.

Q.8.6. Reference: RFP Section C, C.3.5.7.2. For Compliment, Complaint Management, and transfers of high complexity or escalations of voice or other communication channels, does GSA have any business requirements that must have closed loop tracking of information back for the various Agencies to validate the case is closed and actions/remedies taken?

A.8.6. Yes.

Q.8.7. Reference: RFP Section C.3.5.8.6. Can GSA provide some examples, or complexity detail, of your reporting requirements, so vendor has a good expectation of your 12 Ad-Hoc reporting request per year. Ad-Hoc report requests can vary significantly in the man-hours of programming time required to fulfill requests of the Ad-Hoc reports, will GSA accept from vendor a pre-determined, not to exceed, level of effort for the 12 annual ad-hoc requests, with those over and above the pre-determined limit being an additional task?

A.8.7. The Government does not now have examples of the ad hoc reports that will be requested. The Government anticipates that these reports will be based on data that the Contractor is already collecting and will generally be similar to standard contact center operational reports. Ad hoc reports that require an extensive effort may be priced under the Incremental Project Management CLIN.

Q.8.8. Reference: RFP Section C.6.9 - Service Monitoring and Quality Control. Please provide additional information regarding the number and/or % of calls to be recorded. Is the requirement, on a task order basis, to record/capture both voice and data from 100% of all incoming calls?

A.8.8. The Government will decide the Monitoring and Quality Control frequency and % of calls to be recorded on a task order by task order basis.

Q.8.9. Reference: RFP Section C.6.9 and rest of paragraphs – There appears to be redundant paragraphs at C.6.9 – Service Monitoring and Quality Control and C.6.9 Training. Can vendor assume that Training should correctly be assigned paragraph C.6.10 and all subsequent paragraphs be incremented by one C.6.11 through C.6.14?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.8.9 Yes. The correct section number for Training is C.6.10. The RFP is amended to reflect the changes as suggested above.

Q.8.10. Reference: RFP Section L, L..2.1.3.1 – Minimum Required Experience – Do the requirements for past experience as detailed within this section apply to (i) the prime contractor only, (ii) the composite team that provides a bid for review and evaluation (i.e. The prime contractor and all of its subcontractors, or (iii) each member of the team must meet the minimum eligibility requirements to be considered for award?

A.8.10 The minimum required experience requirements specified in Section L.7.2.1.3.1 apply to the prime contractor who will be responsible for the performance of the contract.

Q.9.1. Proposal time deadline: cover letter indicates 3:00 PM EST, but the SF33, block 9, reflects 4:00PM - which is correct?

A.9.1. See response provided in A.3.30

Q.9.2. Is each Task Order Fixed Price or T&M?

A.9.2. All task orders issued under the IDIQ contract(s) will be Fixed Price.

Q.9.3. Reference: page C-13, line 579-587 - develop and maintain call flow and scripts. Will this be a separate priced Task Order?

A.9.3. No.

Q.9.4. Reference: page C-36?, line 1564, training instructors, what certifications should the instructors have?

A.9.4. See response provided in A.1.9.

Q.9.5. Reference: page C-61, line 2671 – Training. Is this training related to contractor staff only?

A.9.5. Yes.

Q.9.6. Reference: page C-63, line 2775 – Performance Management. Is this a performance-based contract?

A.9.6. All task orders issued will be performance based.

Q.10.1 How many users/agencies do you anticipate will use this schedule?

A.10.1 This information is currently not available.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.10.2. Can you provide a list of agencies or users who have expressed and intent or interest in using the schedule?

A.10.2. This information is part of the Government's market analysis, and, as such is Source Selection Sensitive.

Q.10.3. What is the anticipated dollar value of individual orders or the total dollar value anticipated under this vehicle?

A.10.3. This information is part of the Government's independent government cost estimate, and, as such, is Source Selection Sensitive.

Q.10.4. Is this vehicle tied to any GSA schedule, or is it a full and open multiple award schedule?

A.10.4. This contract is not tied to any other GSA schedule. The resultant contract will be awarded through a full and open competition process.

Q.10.5. How many companies do you envision receiving an award?

A.10.5. See RFP Section M-1.

Q.10.6. On what contract type basis will the task orders be awarded? i.e. FFP or T&M, etc.

A.10.6. See response provided in A.9.2.

Q.10.7. How is maintenance of the system provided and what CLIN is the pricing for this included? i.e. Moves/Adds/Changes

A.10.7. The contractor is responsible for providing and maintaining the contact center system to meet task order requirements. The Contractor may distribute the costs for such support between the Core Project Management CLIN and IS Hourly Rate CLIN.

Q.10.8. When a call center must interface with other Federal agencies, will there be a common platform available or will each contractor be required to develop their own call and data handling interfaces?

A.10.8. To the extent possible, common interface and protocols will be used to interface with other federal agencies. However, program and system requirements may require interfaces that have to be developed on a case-by-case basis.

Q.10.9. Will there be a common customer data repository for all call centers or will each selected vendor keep their own customer histories?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.10.9 Each vendor will keep its own customer histories.

Q.11.1. Cover letter identifies a proposal delivery time of 3:00 p.m. EST on February 20, 2004, however, Form 33, Block 9 indicates a time of 4:00 p.m. EST. Please clarify the expected time of submission.

A.11.1. See response provided in A.3.30.

Q.11.2. What is the existing operational model? (i.e., are workgroups set up per the volumes given or are there sub groups of ISs?).

A.11.2. The current operation model used to support the NCC operation is based on a proprietary solution provided by the incumbent contractor. As such, the Government cannot release the information requested.

Q.11.3. What are today's challenges to providing quality services in the existing environment?

A.11.3. The Government currently has hundreds of contact centers, most of which are operated and managed at a program level using metrics and customer service standards that are program specific. This fragmented environment often results in inconsistent citizen service from program to program. One of the challenges that the USA Services initiative faces is how to improve the consistency of citizen service across agencies. Examples of other challenges that the Government is facing today include: meeting customer expectations in a declining budget environment; providing timely and consistent customer service across all communications channels; increasing customer satisfaction; meeting contingency and emergency response requirements in a cost effective manner; and gaining and retaining access to technology and best practices.

Q.11.4. What languages are supported via IVR?

A.11.4. The languages to be support via IVR are listed in RFP Section C.3.1.1.

Q.11.5. Are calls accepted from foreign countries toll free?

A.11.5. Yes. The contact center may be required to accept toll-free calls from all of the countries in the North American Numbering Plan.

Q.11.6. What is the length of initial training for new hires for each of the 5 levels?

A.11.6. The length of training for ISs for each skill level is task specific.

Q.11.7. What is the length of ongoing training for each of the 5 levels?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.11.7 The length of ongoing training for ISs for each skill level is task specific.

Q.11.8 Please identify current Contact Management Desktop Applications, E-Mail Applications, Reservation Systems, Fax-on-Demand systems, Order Taking systems, reporting systems, knowledge management systems or other applications currently being utilized. Please identify all system interfaces currently being deployed.

A.11.8 The current applications and systems used to support the NCC operation are based on a proprietary solution provided by the incumbent contractor. As such, the Government cannot release the information requested.

Q.11.9 In RFP Section C.1.1, the GSA indicated their intent to continue to use the Distribution Center in Pueblo, CO for GPO printing. Please describe the current electronic flow process for submitting publications to the GPO provider in response to calls. Please identify any system interfaces that may exist between the GPO and the current NCC contractor. Also, please identify any fulfillment operations to be performed by the Offeror.

A.11.9 Currently, NCC respond to calls for consumer publications and records the caller and publication information in a database. The database file (in Fox Pro database format) is then transmitted to the Pueblo GPO via FTP on a periodic basis for fulfillment. In FY2003, the NCC processed approximately 700 fulfillment requests. These requests are most commonly for individual Government forms, which are sent out in 9x12" size envelopes using first class mail.

Q.12.1 Reference: RFP Section B.1.1.1, page B-1. In general what is the fixed based component vs. the incremental component given that this is an IDIQ vehicle with no specific task to be priced at this time?

A.12.1 See response provided in A.12.4.

Q.12.2 Reference: RFP Section B.2.1.1, page B-3, line 95. Under Section B.2.1.1, Base Facility and Equipment, it is our understanding that the "Workstation" requirements are defined under Section C.6.1 Inquiry Processing Technology and Services, Section H.11, System Requirements and H.16 Compliance With Section 508. Please clarify the definition of a "Workstation" and how the definition relates to the four project levels of complexity.

A.12.2 Sections C.6.1, H.11, and H.16 identified general requirements for "workstations". Section B.2.1.1 provides the CLINs for pricing the workstations based on its capability to support specific services (phone, fax, email, chat, etc.). From a pricing standpoint, there is no relationship between "workstation" and project complexity level.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.12.3. Reference: RFP Section B.2.1.1, page B-3, line 95. For Base Facility and Equipment, the unit of measure is stated as “each”. Please clarify the term “each” as a unit of measure. We assume this is each equivalent workstation.

A.12.3. The “Base Facility and Equipment” CLIN covers fixed costs associated with all facility, equipment, supplies and services needed to support task requirement for a specified maximum number of equivalent workstations. Applying “each” as a unit of measure is therefore appropriate.

Q.12.4. Reference: RFP Section: B.2.1.1, page B-3, line 95. Under Section B.2.1, Project Start-Up, please clarify the differential between the terms “Base Facility and Equipment” and “Incremental Facility and Equipment.” We assume that “base” refers to initial start up costs for specific client or implementation under a task and that “incremental” CLINs would be invoked when a Task Order is expanded in scope, volume, or complexity. Is this correct?

A.12.4. The assumption stated above is incorrect. The “Base Facility and Equipment” CLIN covers fixed costs associated with all facility, equipment, supplies and services needed to support task requirement for a specified maximum number of equivalent workstations. The “Incremental Facility and Equipment” CLIN is an additional charge added to cover the cost of each equivalent workstation required for the task.

Q.12.5. Reference: RFP Section B.2.1.2, pages B-4 and B-6, Lines 102 and 108. Section B.2.1.2, is utilized twice, once as B.2.1.2, Incremental Facility and Equipment and a second time as B.2.1.2, Initial Training. Was this intentional?

A.12.5. Initial Training should be B.2.2. Section B.2 is amended to reflect numbering changes for all sections after B.2.2.

Q.12.6. Reference: RFP Section B.2.2.2, page B-8, line 132. It is our assumption that CLIN 61003, Relationship Management, Under Section B, Schedule Of Supplies Or Services, requirements are defined under Section C.3.5.5, Human Resources Management which includes Training and Training Facilities as subsections to C.3.5.5. However, training is covered under separate CLINs (30000 series and 31000 series). Thus we request that the government clarify the definition of and scope of work for Relationship Management as in reference to CLIN 61003.

A.12.6. The training referenced in CLINs 30000 series and 31000 series is intended for project start-up. CLIN 61003 is for ongoing incremental project support for Relationship Management function that may be needed to supplement Core Project Management support after the startup phase. See RFP Section C.3.5.1.1 for description of Incremental Support.

Q.12.7. Reference: RFP Section B.2.3, line 134. Under Section B.2.3.1, Service Initiation Charges, CLIN 70000, Interactive Voice Response Service, this item is

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

included in the Base Facility and Equipment and Incremental Facility and Equipment charge. At what complexity (e.g., Low, Average, or High) should the contractor assume.

A.12.7. The contractor shall price the Service Initiation Charge for Interactive Voice Response Service to support all complexity levels.

Q.12.8. Reference: RFP Section B.2.3.2, page B-10, line 140. Under Section B.2.3.2, Recurring Charges for Automated and Other Support services, please clarify the Unit of Measure for CLIN 80012, "Each Database or Group of Databases per Month."

A.12.8. An implementation of Hosted FAQ Service may involve one database or a group of databases that have been implemented separately. For example, an agency may have 5 different divisions, each implementing its own FAQ database. The agency may want to implement a FAQ gateway that provides access to all 5 databases. In this case, each division will pay a monthly fee for its database and the FAQ gateway will also pay a monthly fee for accessing the group of 5 databases.

Q.12.9. Reference: RFP Section B.2.4, pages B-12-13, Line 143. It is our understanding that the B.2.4-1, Information Specialist, IS rate is a blended rate of IS and all relevant support personnel as defined Under Section B.2.4 (Attended Services-IS Hourly Rate) and Section C.4 (Staff To Be Provided). Please clarify this assumption and the assumption the IS Skill Levels are defined under C.4.3.3 Skills Categories.

A.12.9 Both of the above assumptions are correct.

Q.12.10. Reference: RFP Section B.2.4, pages B-12-13, line 143. Under Section B.2.4-1, Information Specialist Hourly Rate, IS Skill Levels are defined at five levels. The definition of Level 4 and Level 5 as defined under C.4.3.3 Skills Categories appear to be the same labor classification definition. Please clarify and differentiate between the two labor categories.

A.12.10. Skill level 5 requires advanced degree or equivalent versus a bachelor's degree or equivalent for skill level 4.

Q.12.13. Reference: RFP Section C.4.1, page C-48. What criteria will the Government use to determine whether assignment of a Program Manager is warranted at the Task Order level? Moreover, the language appears more relevant for the Project and Site Manager(s) – roles that are Task-specific – rather than the Program Manager who has overall responsibility for the contract requirement. If this clause is only relevant for Task Order staff, we recommend that the government strike the above sentence, as approval of key personnel (e.g., the Program Manager) is addressed elsewhere in the solicitation, and approval of Task Order staff is addressed in Lines 2120-2122 and Lines 2140-2142.

A.12.13. Complexity and sensitivity of the task will likely determine whether a Program Manager position is needed at the task order level. This will be determined by

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

the requesting agency. The inclusion of a Program Manager position as a key personnel will give the Government more flexibility from a project management standpoint.

Q.12.14. Reference: RFP Section G.2.1, page G-4. Can we assume at least e-mail notification when a contractor holder is awarded a TO?

A.12.14. If requested, the name of the awardee and the awarded amount will be provided to contract holder(s) who provided an unsuccessful offer.

Q.12.15. Reference: RFP Section: G.2.5, page G-8. How long after change direction will a Task Order (TO) modification be issued (for example, five working days, 10 working days, etc.).

A.12.15. That will depend on the circumstances and the complexity of the change.

Q.12.16. Reference: RFP Section H.1, page H-1. When does the government anticipate the first Task Order to be competed under this contract?

A.12.16. The Government anticipates the issuance of the NCC task order request immediately after contract award or shortly thereafter.

Q.12.17. Reference: RFP Section I.3, pages I-4-5. Under Section I, Contract Clauses, the government includes Clause No. 52.222-41, Service Contract Act of 1965, As Amended May 1989. Therefore, it is our understanding that GSA is utilizing wage determination guidelines. What is the vehicle to request wage determination labor rates for the locations/regions utilized in our proposal?

A.12.17. Information on wage determinations is contained in FAR clause 52.222-49, Service Contract Act – Place of Performance Unknown located in Section I.1 of the solicitation. For a full text copy of the clause offerors can go to of the following website <http://www.arnet.gov/far>.

Q.12.18. Reference: RFP Section J.1, page J-1, Lines 9-14.

- a. The instruction in Section J.1 to have each client address the minimum experience factors seems to indicate that offerors must meet all factors for each project vs. meeting these criteria overall as part of corporate experience (i.e., over many projects). Please clarify as the former interpretation would put an undo burden on small business participants who meet all the minimum requirements but not in multiple projects.
- b. The past performance template only pertains to service providers. How will systems integrators' past performance and other business partners' experience be factored in to the evaluation process?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

- c. Please clarify that offerors fill out the top part of the past performance survey (Lines 16-18) and that we send this to our clients to fill out the remainder of the evaluation.
- d. Line 21 – “Provide a brief narrative to support any rating above or below 3.” This requirement may impose a significant burden on clients wishing to provide high ratings to an offeror and may have the adverse affect of motivating clients to give a three. We recommend that this requirement be removed and that clients are allowed the flexibility to determine when comments are needed.

A.12.18.

- a. Offerors do not need to meet all minimum experience requirements specified in Section L.7.2.1.3.1 for each project selected. However, the aggregate experience requirements for all selected projects must meet the minimum experience requirements. Work volumes of individual projects cannot be aggregated to meet minimum experience requirements.
- b. Past performance will be based on criteria provided in Section M and the Source Selection Plan. Any specialized expertise and/or capabilities, including those offered by teaming partners and/or subcontractor, that may enhance the offeror’s ability to meet or exceed project requirements, are evaluated as part of the experience factor, but cannot substitute for minimum experience requirements.
- c. The only portion of the Past Performance Survey Questionnaire to be filled out by the offeror is Name of Vendor (which is the offeror) and customer contact information down to and including company’s E-Mail address.
- d. The Government does not believe that such a requirement is overly burdensome on the respondent.

Q.12.19. Reference: RFP Section J.3, page J-6, lines 54-64.

- a. Can the Government provide any detail about the intervening events or potentially dramatic changes in scope referenced in Lines 54-64? As the NCC has been in existence for many years, does this statement pertain to any plans within GSA to procure the NCC services under another vehicle or as a stand-alone RFP? When will any such decision be made?
- b. Can the Government clarify – particularly with regard to the B tables – when offerors are to use Sample Task data to assist in the preparation of proposals?

A.12.19.

- a. See response provided in A.3.32.
- b. The NCC sample task is provided to give offerors a snapshot of the size and scope of the current NCC requirements. The sample task data is not to be used for pricing purposes as it is not necessarily an indication of any task order to be placed under the resulting contract(s). The details are for illustrative purposes only.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Section J-3 is provided as a sample of a task that could be performed under this contract.

Q.12.20 Reference: RFP Section E.2.2, pages J-33 & E-1. Section E.2.2 refers to a Performance Requirements Summary (see Lines 34 and 35). The only Performance Requirements Summary included in the RFP appears to be what was presented in RFP Section J.3.13 Performance Metrics. We assume that this Summary will be part of each Task versus at the IDIQ contract level. Please confirm. If this is the case, we recommend the following minor modification to Section E, Lines 32-35: “The quality control program shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. A monitoring and inspection system covering all the services listed in the Performance Requirements Summary to be defined for each Task Order.”

A.12.20. Section E.2.2 is amended to reflect the suggested change.

Q.12.21. Reference: RFP Section H.22.2, page H-10. The language in paragraph H.22.2 indicates unlimited risk to the parties. Therefore, [REDACTED] would like it removed in its entirety, or in the alternative, [REDACTED] requests that the standard of liability be raised for both gross negligence or willful misconduct.

A.12.21. On the contrary, risk to the contractor declines in direct proportion to the extent the contractor properly trains and supervises his/her employees.

Q.12.22. Reference: RFP Section H.23, Page H-10. [REDACTED] would requests that the Government add language immediately after the last sentence of this clause “. . . .of the contractor or its subcontractors”:

“The contractor's indemnity obligation under this contract shall be capped and shall not exceed \$ 500,000_for each single incident or occurrence. The contractor's total indemnity obligation under this contract shall be capped and in total shall not cumulatively exceed \$ 1M.”

A.12.22. No – See response provided in A.12.21.

Q.13.1. Reference: RFP Section B.1.2.2, page B-2 - Incremental Project Management Support. The RFP does not list incremental labor categories to include general or specialized skills for technical development (e.g., system integration). The specific requirements of task orders could include an extensive collection of system integration skill sets that cannot be reasonably projected at this time. Does the Government have an expectation for system integration ceilings to be set in this response? If so, what labor categories should offerors submit in which CLINs listed in Section B.2?

A.13.1 Section B.1.2.2 identifies four labor groups: Program Management; Technology Management, Information Management, and Relationship Management. Specific tasks to be performed by these labor groups are described in Sections C.3.5.2

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

thru C.3.5.5. The offeror shall submit a blended, fully burdened hourly rate for each of these labor group. The specific labor categories to be included in each of the labor groups are to be determined by the Offerors. Also see response provided in A.3.2.

Q.13.2. Reference: RFP Section B.1.2.2, page B-2 - Incremental Project Management Support. The RFP does not list incremental labor categories to include general or specialized skills for technical development (e.g., system integration). The specific requirements of task orders could include an extensive collection of system integration skill sets that cannot be reasonably projected at this time. Does the Government have an expectation for system integration ceilings to be set in this response? If so, what labor categories should offerors submit in which CLINs listed in Section B.2?

A.13.2. See response provided in A.3.2 and A.13.1.

Q.13.3. Reference: RFP Section B.2.1, page B-3 - Project Start-Up. The RFP requests a large amount of COTS software to support the new NCC and future task orders. Does the Government expect the costs for these investments to be part of Project Start-Up (Section B.2.1.1), or be listed as a line item somewhere else in price tables? Additionally, the Initiation Charges (B.2.3.1.) and Recurring Charges (B.2.3.2) do not include all COTS categories, such as CTI and Desk Top Automation. Please advise on the allocation of these costs.

A.13.3 Costs of all non-recurring facility and equipment, supplies and services, including all COTS software are to be included in the Base and Incremental Facility and Equipment CLINs. Also see response provided in A.3.19.

Q.13.4. Reference: RFP Section B.2.3.1, page B-8 - Service Initiation Charges. Does the Government intend for a fixed initiation charge to include system integration?

A.13.4. The Service Initiation Charges are one time charges associated with implementation of Automated and Other Support Services, including system integration if any.

Q.13.5. Reference: RFP Section 2.1.1, page C-4 - Contact Center Location. The ability to use offshore contact center locations can provide a significant change to the CLIN prices for bundled services and labor rates. Should offerors assume that the location is to be within the 48 contiguous states for pricing the applicable CLINs, and that deviations would be addressed in specific future task orders?

A.13.5. Yes, provided it is in the best interest of the Government and that it conforms with all of the laws and regulations governing the Federal procurement process. However, the adjusted prices for the CLINs for such an arrangement shall not exceed the contract ceiling rate for the applicable CLINs.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.13.6. Reference: RFP Section C.2.1.2, page C-4 -Hours of Operation. “The Contractor shall provide [IVR] options that allow the Government to select the automated service from either the Contractor or from any service providers...” (lines 158-160). In pricing Section B.2.1.1, Base Facility and Equipment, and in Section B.2.1.2, Incremental Facility and Equipment, IVR is listed as a bundled service and is not separated for pricing comparison. Please explain.

A.13.6. The Base and Incremental Facility and Equipment CLINs represent the contract ceiling prices for facility and equipment for various service bundles. The cost of IVR shall be included in the ceiling prices. In response to a specific task order, the Contractor may propose lower rates to account for the Government furnishing its own IVR service. Also see response provided in A.3.17.

Q.13.7. Reference: RFP Section C.3.3.1, page C-26 - Fulfillment Services. Please give specification parameters for potential and existing fulfillment requirements. Can the Government further define this unit of measurement, e.g., a mailed piece of no more than 32 ounces, to include one insertion?

A.13.7. Hourly costs and the complete cost of postage are covered in the pricing tables. For purposes of bid estimates, offerors should assume a 9x12” kraft envelope with one enclosure and that the total mailing will weigh no more than 2 ounces..

Q.13.8. Reference: RFP Section C.3.3.2, page C-27 - Transcription Service. Please further define the unit of measurement for Transcription Services.

A.13.8. The unit of measure for Transcription Service is each hour. Transcription time is equal to the aggregate time of voice mail and/or recorded messages rounded up to the nearest hour.

Q.13.9. Reference: RFP Section C.3.5.7.1, Page C-38, lines 1649-1656 - Monitoring System,. Is it the Government’s intent that the Contractor will provide the software needed to support all agents on the task and independent remote monitoring to the Government? If so, please provide general guidelines for pricing such services (e.g., all agents workstations and X remote licenses per 50 agent workstations).

A.13.9. The solution that each offeror proposes must be adequate to perform the task, i.e., to monitor enough work to assure the oversight required under the task order.

Q.13.10. Reference: RFP Section C.7.2, Page C-62 - Intercity Telecommunications Services. Final paragraph (lines-2739 to 2741) states that, “The Contractor shall price telecommunications services separately in Section B to enable the Government to select the optimum solution.” Is this referring to completing Section B CLINs 70016, 70017, 80016, and 80017?

A.13.10. Yes.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.13.11. Reference: Section G.2, Page G-4, Lines 142-145 - Service Ordering. The Government states, "...this contract will be used by the government to support the Federal Citizen Information Center (FCIC) National Contact Center (NCC) operations, and to provide complete managed multi-channel inquiry response and management solutions to support the USA Services project" Does the Government intend to release an additional task order after the award of the IDIQ contract, or will it award the FCIC NCC operations at the same time? Should offerors assume they are responding to both the IDIQ and the sample task order or just the IDIQ?

A.13.11. The Government will issue an NCC proposal request after award of the IDIQ contract(s). It must be emphasized that the NCC requirements in Section J.3 are for informational purposes only. The information is intended to provide offerors with a model to show the type of service that may be ordered under the IDIQ contract(s). Section B of the solicitation only addresses the IDIQ award(s).

This is not a solicitation for the NCC Task Order, nor does the Government guarantee the NCC Task Order, if awarded under a resulting contract, will have the same scope of magnitude as the illustration provided in Section J.3.

Q.13.12. Reference: Section H.8, Page H-4 - Information Specialists Hourly Rate. In the definition of a "worked hour" that can be billed, there is exclusion of new hire training time as it relates to program growth or replacement due to attrition. Is it the expectation of GSA that the Contractor will absorb these costs?

Additionally, the calculation for blended hours does not include any general parameters for typical contact center shrinkage factors such as idle time waiting for calls, after call work, etc. Does the contract assume the hourly rate is inclusive of these factors?

A.13.12. Training time as it relates to normal project program growth should be included as part of the initial training. Training time for replacement due to attrition shall be absorbed by the contractor. Reasonable idle time waiting for calls and after call work time are inclusive in the hourly rate.

Q.13.13. We have created an electronic version of the Past Performance Survey Questionnaire (form J.1) so that our referenced clients can have the choice of completing it online or printing it out and completing it in hardcopy. Would it be acceptable to you to receive the completed questionnaires via e-mail attachment, fax, or mail? Form J.1 is attached for review.

A.13.13. No. The Government requires the Past Performance Survey Questionnaire to be signed by the individual who is completing the survey questionnaire.

Q.13.14. RFP page L-8, lines 339-342, requires information on "no more than five (5) contact center projects performed within the past five years. . . ." May the five include

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

projects performed by offerors' proposed subcontractor partners as well as the prime offeror?

A.13.14. Section L.7.2.1.4 is requesting past performance information only for the prime offeror, not subcontractors.

Q.14.1. Reference: Cover letter. Please clarify due time of proposal.

A.14.1. See response provided in A.9.1.

Q.14.2. Reference: page B-1, line 22 – Knowledge & Content Development. Can the government provide any data that bidders can use to calculate level of effort?

A.14.2. The unit of measure for Knowledge & Content Development has been changed from “Each” to “Hour” to enable contractors to provide pricing based on specific task requirements. Section B, Table 2.1.2.3 is amended to reflect this change.

Q.14.3. Reference: page B-1, lines 28-31 - One-time charge for facility, equipment; associated tables indicate Phone, IVR, TTY, Fax, & email services. Should cost of workstations be included here, or in information specialists costs?

A.14.3. Cost of workstations should be included in the price tables for Base and Incremental Facility and Equipment in Sections B.2.1.1 and B.2.1.2.

Q.14.4. Reference: RFP Section B.1.1.3, page B-1, line 40 - Knowledge and content development. This section cites the inclusion of “knowledge and content development” labor and supplies as a project start up cost. Does this citation indicate that no incumbent knowledge management system or database will become available to contract awardee(s)?

A.14.4. The contractor is responsible for providing the knowledge management system. The Government will provide information content for use by the contractor. If available, the Government will provide the information content in electronic format.

Q.14.5. Reference: pages B-1 and B-13 - IS levels & blended rate. For tasks that require multiple levels of IS, a formula is provided to derive a blended rate. However, the table requires rates by level. Where is the blended rate shown? If once the contract is awarded, a task requires multiple levels of IS, wouldn't the actual number of hours for each skill level be invoiced since that is how the pricing charts are set up?

A.14.5. The blended rate is not intended to be shown in the Section B price tables. The formula is provided to show how contractors can provide a blended rate in response to a specific task order using the contract rates for the various skill levels.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.14.6 Reference: pages B-8, line 137 - CLIN 7000 IVR service. Do these prices only apply to service initiation at project startup, or any time an IVR script must be created or changed during the project?

A.14.6. The Service Initiation Charge for IVR is the one-time charge that applies at project startup for implementing IVR service. There is no separate charge for creating or changing script during the project. This function is part of Project Management Support described in RFP Section C.3.5.4.3 – Automated Voice Response Development and Maintenance.

Q.14.7. Reference: page B-13, line 157 - Supervisory and QA Personnel multiplier. Please give example scenarios when these might apply.

A.14.7. The Government assumes that contractor hourly rates for Information Specialists are based on certain assumptions of IS to Supervisor and IS to QA Personnel ratios. There may be tasks that require higher or lower ratios for optimum performance. This multiplier enables the contractor to adjust the IS hourly rates to compensate for the higher or lower ratios of the proposed solution in response to a specific task requirement.

Q.14.8. Reference: page B-14 - Higher & lower supervisory & QA rates. You indicate an effective IS Hourly Rate would be calculated for tasks that require higher or lower supervisory and QA and/or night time, weekend, and holiday support.

- a Doesn't Table B.2.5.1 with Table B.2.4-1 address the higher/lower supervisory/QA ratio?
- b Doesn't this formula only apply to night time, weekends, and holidays making this an "and" and not "and/or"?
- c Why is a blended IS rate used and not the rates in Tables B.2.4-1&2 times the multiplication factor in B.2.5.1 times Table B.2.5.2?

A.14.8.

- a. The application of the multiplier in Table B.2.5.1 to the specific IS Hourly Rate contained in Tables B.2.4-1 and B.2.4-2 will result in an IS Hourly Rate that compensates for the higher/lower ratio.
- b. This formula applies to services provided for normal hours, night time/weekends/holidays, or both.
- c. The blended rate is used to account for a blending of different IS skill levels that may be required for a specific task requirement.

Q.14.9. Reference: page C-2 – USA Services. What is USA Services in terms of workload for the NCC? Please describe possible e-Gov initiatives that the Contractor might be required to provide under this service.

A.14.9. The information contained in section J.3 represents the most current workload requirements of the NCC. The actual NCC task requirements, when released, may

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

contain updated requirements that may be different than and/or in addition to those contained in this section.

Q.14.10. Reference: page C-2 – Multiple contracts. It is unclear whether the GSA plans to award multiple contracts for Task 1, Operation of the NCC. If there will be more than one contact center for the NCC, will there be one centralized database? Will current services be awarded to multiple vendors or just one?

A.14.10. The Government intends to award the NCC task to one contractor.

Q.14.11. Reference: page C-2, line 73 – IDIQ Contract, multiple contractors. Multiple contracts. Section M says evaluation team will not consider proposals that do not show minimum experience equal to or greater than current levels; will all contractors on IDIQ have to meet these experience/size requirements?

A.14.11. Yes.

Q.14.12. Reference: page C-2 - Section C.1.2 (Scope) describes the scope of services provided by the NCC to include responding to inquiries from the following constituencies and sources: General Public; Congressional Offices; Business and Professional Communities; Academia; Government Offices; Electronic and Print Media; Calls Originating in Foreign Countries. What percentage of current inquiry volume (listed in the RFP as approximately 1.8 million calls annually and 60,000 emails annually) comprises each of the cited constituencies and sources?

In relation to these constituencies and sources, does the current NCC provide any specialized, distinctive, or otherwise exceptional procedures in answering inquiries for any of the constituencies?

A.14.12. The Government does not have data showing the breakdown of the various constituencies.

Q.14.13. Reference: page C-2, line 91 - Section C.1.2 indicates, “where appropriate the Government may allow centers to be located outside [the contiguous 48 states.]”. Under what circumstances will locating a contact center in non-contiguous US states or territories be considered “appropriate”? Please provide examples.

A.14.13. An example of an scenario in which the Government may allow a center to be located outside the contiguous 48 states is when an agency specifically allows for such a location in the task order; and that the location does not interfere with the performance and management of the task; and that it will result in cost and/or performance benefits to the Government. In other words, it becomes a likely scenario when the requirements of the client agency can be best met or most efficiently met by siting the office outside the contiguous States.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.14.14. Reference: page C-4 - IVR service. If the government opts to obtain IVR service from someone other than the contractor, will the government assume the cost for the service or will the contractor operating the contact center assume the cost?

A.14.14. If the government opts to obtain IVR service from someone other than the contractor, the government will assume the cost for the service.

Q.14.15. Reference: page C-4, line 159 - Contractor shall provide IVR options. Does the government require birth-to-death tracking of all calls, when routed from GSA's IVR service provider to Contractor's live agent?

A.14.15. Generally no.

Q.14.16. Reference: page C-4, line 160 – GSA-provided IVR service. Currently, there are high volumes of IVR calls. Are these now provided by Contractor, or through GSA's other phone service contracts?

A.14.16. For the current NCC, GSA uses both network-based IVR solution provided by MCI through the FTS2001 contract and a premise-based IVR solution provided by the incumbent NCC contractor.

Q.14.17. Reference: page C-4 - C.2.1.3 Work types (list). Please indicate what proportion or number of each work type the current NCC conducts annually.

A.14.17. See work volume data of the current NCC provided in Section J-3.

Q.14.18. Reference: page C-5, line 210 - Changes in call flows to be done through a change order with possibility of equitable adjustment. How will pricing structure in Section B be used for change orders?

A.14.18. See response provided in A.5.9.

Q.14.19. Reference: page C-5, line 204 - Call Tracking Number. Does a inquiry tracking number have to be created and disseminated to the caller similar to the tracking number provided to the inquirer in the e-mail workflow and if so should this be done for all of the communication channels workflows?

A.14.19. Generally, no. However, there may be instances when the Contractor may need to assign some form of tracking number or other identifier to enable the caller to call back to resolve an inquiry. Details of such requirements will be identified in individual task orders, if applicable.

Q.14.20. Reference: page C-6, line 244 - After-call wrap-up procedures. What is the average after-call wrap up time?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.14.20. Average after-call wrap up time is task specific. The average after-call wrap up time, if applicable, will be provided in individual task orders.

Q.14.21. Reference: page C-8, line 317 - Misdirected emails from other agencies. Does GSA want the Contractor to track the origination and destination Agencies, for billing or any other reason?

A.14.21. Yes.

Q.14.22. Reference: page C-8, line 317 – Email workflow. What does GSA want the Contractor to do with attachments to incoming emails? Are there any storage/tracking requirements?

A.14.22. Generally, attachments included in emails are restricted from entering the e-mail processing system.

Q.14.23. Reference: pages C-9-10 - Facsimile Inquiry Workflow. Once a fax or postal inquiry is converted to electronic form, must the original hard copy be kept or can it be shredded?

A.14.23. Directions for the disposition of the original hard copy will be provided in individual task orders.

Q.14.24. Reference: pages C-13, lines 557-65 - IVR languages. Must callers using these language services be able to opt out of the IVR to a live agent with the same language skills? How is that done now?

A.14.24. During designated business hours when live assistance is provided, yes. It is the responsibility of the contractor to provide an appropriate in response to such a requirement. The current NCC Contractor uses skills-based routing to allow Spanish-language callers to speak to Spanish-proficient ISSs.

Q.14.25. Reference: page C-13, line 554 - Speech Recognition & text-to-speech technologies. What percentage of NCC calls currently uses speech recognition and text-to-speech automated voice response technologies and in what languages?

A.14.25. The NCC currently does not use speech recognition or text-to-speech technologies.

Q.14.26. Reference: page C-16 - Internal RFP reference. C.3.1.6 refers to C.3.2.7. There is no C.3.2.7. Please clarify.

A.14.26. The intended reference is RFP Section C.3.3.1. Section C.3.1.6 is amended to reflect this change.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.14.27. Reference: page C-17, line 701 - Agency location schedule. Will the agencies and their locations use the contractor appointment schedule service so to avoid appointment conflicts and double booking situations?

A.14.27. Yes.

Q.14.28. Reference: pages C-16-17, lines 701 and 750 - Automated Telephone Appointment Service Web-based appointment svc. To what level of Agency division must this be able to schedule and report (Division, Office, Person, etc.)? Is this service being provided now? If so, what agencies are using it?

A.14.28. The level of the agency for which the service is being provided will be defined in the task order in order to meet the needs of the client agency. This service is not now being provided.

Q.14.29. Reference: page C-22 - Internal RFP reference. C.3.2 refers to work types listed in C.2.1.4. Should this be C.2.1.3?

A.14.29. Yes. Section C.3.2 is amended to reflect this change.

Q.14.30. Reference: pages C-17-22, lines 757-956 - Hosted FAQ service. Does this refer to the FAQs available on FCIC's <http://www.info.gov> website, or on <http://www.Firstgov.gov>, or both, or other? Using the search function on info.gov apparently queries a server at the incumbent's (Aspen) facility. Is that the FAQ system that you are referring to here? Will this or any existing hosted FAQ service convey to the new contractor? If so, will you facilitate an electronic data migration between the incumbent and the new contractor?

A.14.30. No. The Hosted FAQ solution that the Government is seeking is a technology solution that provides all of the features and functionalities described in RFP Section C.3.1.10. The Government currently does not have such a solution on either the <http://www.info.gov> or <http://www.Firstgov.gov> websites.

Q.14.31. Reference: page C-22, line 976 - Capturing and tracking caller information. Will the new contractor be required to continue tracking unfinished calls from the previous contractor? Will it be necessary to migrate any caller/inquiry data from the previous contractor to the new one? Please describe.

A.14.31. No, the new contractor will not be required to continue tracking unfinished calls from the previous contractor or to migrate any caller/inquiry data from the previous contractor. The previous Contractor's transition responsibilities will include the completion of all inquiries in their system.

Q.14.32. Reference: page C-27 - C.3.3.1 Fulfillment Services. Please describe current and expected volume of fulfillment items, and give an example of "retrieving the

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

document from appropriate sources and, if necessary, printing the document for distribution.”

A.14.32. Fulfillment requirements are task specific and will be identified in individual task orders. An example of the above scenario is a caller requests a government form or publication to be mailed to him. The form/publication is not stored at the contractor location but is available from the agency’s website. The contractor answers the call, records the form/publication requested and mailing information, accesses the website to download the form/publication, prints the form/publication, and mails the requested form/publication to the caller.

Q.14.33. Reference: page C-31, line 1367 - Knowledge Management. Does this system already exist? Please describe, including ownership. Will it convey to the new contractor? If so, how? If not, must data be migrated to a new system?

A.14.33 The knowledge management system in place now is proprietary and provides a step-by-step guide for an IS call flow to aid in responding to commonly asked inquiries. The content of the database belongs to the Government and will convey to the new Contractor.

Q.14.34. Reference: page C-31, line 1367 - Current NCC Knowledge Management System. Can the contractor receive a demonstration of the current NCC knowledge management system to assist its system analysis and design effort?

A.14.34. No. The current NCC knowledge management system is based on a proprietary technology solution provided by the NCC incumbent contractor.

Q.14.35. Reference: page C-31, line 1368 - Section C.3.5.4.1 states “the contractor shall develop... the required knowledge management system.” This statement appears to preclude the use by a contractor of applying a commercial, off-the-shelf knowledge management solution to the management of electronic information. Does GSA intend to require a custom-built knowledge management solution? Please indicate what knowledge management solution is currently in use in the NCC. Please indicate what additional knowledge management solutions have been evaluated by GSA for use in the NCC and please report the results of these evaluations.

A.14.35. To the contrary, RFP Section H.11 - SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS, requires the contractor to provide a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solution that meets the government requirements with the least amount of customization required. GSA has not evaluated any knowledge management solutions for use at the NCC. Also see response provided in A.14.34.

Q.14.36. Reference: page C-32, line 1413 - Section C.3.5.4.2 states “the contractor shall develop... the required inquiry tracking system.” This statement appears to preclude the use by a contractor of applying a commercial, off-the-shelf inquiry tracking

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

solution to the management of customer interaction. Does GSA intend to require a custom-built inquiry tracking solution? Please indicate what inquiry tracking solution is currently in use in the NCC. Please indicate what additional inquiry tracking solutions have been evaluated by GSA for use in the NCC and please report the results of these evaluations.

A.14.36. See response provided in A.14.35. The current NCC inquiry tracking system is based on a proprietary technology solution provided by the NCC incumbent contractor. GSA has not evaluated any inquiry tracking solutions for use at the NCC.

Q.14.37. Reference: page C-33, line 1464 - Section C.3.5.4.4 discusses customer/public relations management. Please provide examples of potential multimedia outreach activities GSA foresees the NCC undertaking during the course of this contract. Please provide examples of multimedia outreach activities the current NCC has conducted.

A.14.37. Section C.3.5.4.4 describes tasks needed for Customer Coordination Support, not Customer/public relations management.

Q.14.38. Reference: page C-34, line 1482 - Allow Government oversight of...employee (but not individual) performance. Please explain difference between "employee" and "individual"

A.14.38. The word "employee," as used in this sentence, is a plural attributive noun, similar to "staff."

Q.14.39. Reference: page C-35, line 1522 - Training curriculum. Please discuss the role that GSA representatives will take during training.

A.14.39. The contractor is responsible for providing training. The Government will make available program personnel to provide content knowledge training and/or conduct train-the trainer style learning sessions with contractor trainers.

Q.14.40. Reference: page C-35 - C.3.5.5.3.3 refers to certified instructors. Please define certified instructors. What types of certification would meet this requirement?

A.14.40. See response provided in A.1.9.

Q14.41. Reference: page C-42, line 1826 – Ad Hoc Reports. Would the government be interested in using an ad hoc reporting tool to create its own ad hoc without the need to request technical support from the contractor?

A.14.41. The contractor may propose such a solution for providing ad hoc reports in response to individual task requirements, but not in lieu of the contractor providing the ad hoc reports if such reporting method is specifically requested in the task order.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.14.42. Reference: page C-42 - C.3.5.10.2, Network routing. What would be the minimum length of an outage before the government would require that calls be rerouted to an alternate facility?

A.14.42. The length of the outage is not the only determinant in deciding whether to reroute calls. Other issues, such as anticipated duration of the outage, the strategic importance of the service, and the reason for the outage may affect the decision. Specific task orders will discuss the amount of deviation from 100% service to be allowed.

Q.14.43. Reference: page C-50, line 2195 - Inquiry tracking. Please tell what fields need to be tracked; what fields are tracked now? Will a new contractor have to have access to call data from the previous contract?

A.14.43. The Government will specify in the task orders what fields need to be tracked in order to fulfill reporting requirements. The fields that are tracked now include data that allows for the Contractor and the Government to know the percentage of calls abandoned, average length of calls, and other standard reports likely to be generated in call centers. The Government will provide access to all non-proprietary data in its possession, some of which have come from the incumbent Contractor.

Q.14.44. Reference: page C-51, line 2257 - Skills Categories. Will you specify what labor categories from the wage determinations we should use for each of these levels?

A.14.44. No. See response provided in A.4.11.

Q.14.45. Reference: page C-51, line 2257 - Skills Categories. How do the contact volumes in Section J break down by information specialist skill level? (i.e. 75% of total "live" volume assisted by level 1 information specialists; 10% by level 2, etc.)?

A.14.45. This information is currently not available.

Q.14.46. Reference: page C-52, line 2301 - Multi-language Support. Please give the number of contacts processed in each of these languages in the past year.

A.14.46. Language support requirements are task specific and are to be identified in individual task orders. In a recent month, about 2% of the calls processed by the NCC were in Spanish. This percentage is subject to great fluctuation based on factors external to the NCC program and should not be used to predict the volume of such calls.

Q.14.47. Reference: page C-52 - C.4.3.4, Languages. Can a language line be used to meet this requirement, or does the Offeror have to have staff on hand for it?

A.14.47. See response provided in A.5.8

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.14.48. Reference: page C-59 - Interoperability (email). Please list the Government email systems.

A.14.48. This information is currently not available.

Q.14.49. Reference: page C-64 - #19 Mailing. This indicates that envelopes and mailing supplies are government furnished; however, page C-27, line 1187 states that the contractor will be responsible for supplying all ...mailing supplies, including envelopes and postage,.... Please clarify.

A.14.49. The Contractor will provide the supplies required to mail material to customers and will be reimbursed by the Government for these supplies as an ODC. Section C.9 is amended to delete postage and supplies as government furnished materials.

Q.14.50. Reference: page G-8, line 330 - CLINs for overtime. Does this refer to Table B.2.5.2 on page B-14? (That table refers to off-hour coverage, not necessarily "overtime" in excess of 40 hrs per week)

A.14.50. See response provide in A.16.25.

Q.14.51. Reference: page H-3, line 126 - UNICOR and NIB/NISH hiring. The Federal Government is also committed to using services provided by Service-Disabled Veteran firms. May we substitute such a firm for a UNICOR or NIB/NISH firm?

A.14.51. No.

Q.14.52. Reference: page I-5, lines 181-197 - Equivalent rates for Federal hires. Please show this list in terms of wage determination categories, rather than only GS levels.

A.14.52. The Government does not have access to the information that will be part of the proprietary information submitted by the Offerors in their bids. Please also see the response provide in A.4.11.

Q.14.53. Reference: page J-1 - Past Performance Survey Questionnaire. Must all information in the questionnaire be filled out by the customer, or is the Offeror to enter certain descriptive information, such as in rows for "Project Description" and "Annual Work Volume"?

A.14.53. The only information that can be filled out by the offeror is "Name of Vendor" which refers to them, the offeror. From that point on, the information should be filled in by the reference firm.

Q.14.54. Reference: page J-7, line 81 - Recorded info available through a network-based IVR service currently provided by the Government. If the currently high level of IVR service is being provided by a network-based service (rather than by the incumbent

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

NCC contractor), then must Offerors show that they have performed the full level of IVR response to meet the minimum experience evaluation criteria in Section M and L.7.2.1.3.1? We are concerned that requiring a minimum experience of handling 1.4 – 1.7 million IVR-only calls per year will unnecessarily omit qualified Offerors.

A.14.54. See response provided in A.2.1.

Q.14.55. Reference: page J-13, line 268 - IVR service furnished either by contractor or government. Will new contractor receive existing IVR scripts? If so, in what form?

A.14.55. Yes. The most current IVR scripts will be provided in electronic format.

Q.14.56. Reference: page J-19 - Table J.3.4. The footnote to the table indicates that the Government is considering expanding service for selected programs. What programs and what are the anticipated volumes during the expanded hours of operation?

A.14.56. The programs under consideration for expanded hour coverage are the general public inquiries and consumer publication inquiries. Work volume data for the expanded time coverage period will be provided in the NCC task order.

Q.14.57. Reference: page J-21, line 544 - Access to knowledge management systems? Will the contractor also have access to other government knowledge management systems via the Internet?

A.14.57. Access to other government knowledge systems will be task specific and will be identified in individual task orders where applicable.

Q.14.58. Reference: page J-21, line 538 - Availability of NCC database structure and data elements on www.info.gov/rfp/. This doesn't appear to be available (checked on 1/11/04). Please advise. Will proposal due date be amended to account for the length of time that this information is not available to Offerors?

A.14.58. The information has been posted.

Q.14.59. Reference: page J-21, line 539 - Government will provide a copy of the database. In what form? Will Government facilitate an electronic migration of data between incumbent and new contractors?

A.14.59. The Government will coordinate the transfer of the data in an electronic format acceptable to both the incumbent and new Contractors.

Q.14.60. Reference: page J-21, line 562 - Project Manager and Site Manager are designated as Key personnel. Elsewhere, the RFP indicates a Program Manager also as key personnel. Please clarify.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.14.60. See response provided in A.12.13.

Q.14.61. Reference: page J-29, line 624 - FAQ service on firstgov. Doesn't this already exist? Please clarify.

A.14.61. The firstgov.gov web site currently has web pages containing frequently asked questions (FAQs). However, it does not have a solution that provides the functionalities specified in RFP Section C.3.1.10 – Hosted FAQ Service.

Q.14.62. Reference: page L-7, line 276 - 3 years general experience... equal to or greater than in terms of monthly work volumes, to the requirements of the FCIC NCC as described in Sections C and J. Is the Offeror required to show that it has equaled or exceeded the monthly volumes in each and every category listed in Section J? Does this include IVR, for which GSA is currently providing network based service in part?

A.14.62. Yes.

Q.14.63. Reference: page L-9, line 383 - Provide sample report package for the project. How are these to be included in the proposal, especially with respect to page limits and formatting?

A.14.63. Sample report package should be provided as an addendum, which will not be counted against the 150 page limit.

Q.14.64. Reference: page L-8 - Past performance project profiles. Must each of these be equal to or greater than the current NCC in scope and size, as indicated in the minimum experience evaluation factors?

A.14.64. No, but at least one project must relate to services equal to or greater than the current NCC in scope and size.

Q.14.65. Reference: page L-15 – Section L.7.3.2. First sentence indicates “**If** (emphasis added) required, the offeror shall furnish the basis for its prices,The second sentence states that supporting documentation is required “to enable the Government to perform price analysis...” Is supporting documentation required as backup to the pricing tables?

A.14.65. It may be if adequate price competition does not exist. It should not be submitted with the initial proposals.

Q.14.66 Reference: Section L - 150-page, double spaced limit for technical proposal. The RFP requires “detailed” responses to extensive RFP requirements that include detailed experience and past performance requirements, 35 single-spaced pages of technical requirements in Section C.3, detailed management plan that includes several sample Plans (service level management, QA, etc.), detailed requirements for facilities

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

and infrastructure (Sections C.5,6), and other items. Can you give us any more guidance as to the level of detail you want in the technical proposal for us to cover these voluminous requirements in what amounts to 75 single spaced pages in the technical proposal?

A.14.66. Section L.7.2 of the RFP is amended to reflect 150-page, single spaced limit.

Q.14.67. Reference: page M-1 - Minimum experience evaluation, pass/fail – meeting all of the experience qualifications in Section L.2.1.3.1. First, please affirm that this actually refers to Section L.7.2.1.3.1. Please clarify exactly how this pass/fail decision will be made. Do you intend to fail an Offeror simply because it does not “equal or exceed” each and every volume level listed in Section J? This would seem to disqualify many worthy non-incumbents, especially in terms of self-service IVR, which in some portion has been provided by GSA through network based services in the current contract, according to the RFP. Also, it is unclear whether the minimum experience pass/fail decision will be made only on general experience, which Offerors may meet by combining numbers from multiple contracts, or on the basis of specific past performance, where each program profile submitted must equal or exceed volume requirements, which would unduly restrict the field of competition. Please clarify.

A.14.67. The correct reference is Section L.7.2.1.3.1. The pass/fail evaluation process regarding minimum experience requirements is described in Section M.2. Offerors not meeting the minimum experience requirements will not be eligible for award. Offerors may meet the minimum experience requirements through work performed on multiple projects. However, the work volumes on individual projects cannot be aggregated to meet the minimum experience requirements.

Q.14.68. Reference: page M-1 - Minimum experience requirements. Must the Offeror be able to equal or exceed volume levels on its own, or can it include experience of teammates?

A.14.68. The Offeror is responsible for meeting the requirements in the solicitation.

Q.14.69. The RFP says there will be a 90-day implementation period, but when will work begin? (When do you expect to award a contract, and when is the expected go-live date?)

A.14.69. These dates are not known at this time.

Q.14.70. Reference: RFP section C.3.1.8 - Automated Telephone Appointment Service. 1) Will it be required that this application interface to other government applications, or will this be considered a stand-alone application? 2) If it must interface to other applications, what protocol is to be used?

A.14.70. The need for interoperability of appointment services will be discussed in the specific task orders.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.15.1. Does agency expect Advanced Speech Recognition and text to speech service for any language other than English?

A.15.1. The technology supporting text-to-speech and voice recognition must be capable of supporting the languages listed in C.3.3.1.

Q.15.2. The solicitation lists fax - back as a requirement yet there is no stats for fax requests on the IVR and/or inbound fax requests. Can you confirm that (1) this is a requirement and (2) provide historical data so pricing can be generated?

A.15.2. Yes Fax-on-Demand is a RFP requirement. The NCC has recently implemented Fax-on-Demand service to support consumer publication inquiries. The NCC is currently collecting usage data on such a service. Specific requirements will be identified in the NCC task order when released.

Q.15.3. Will vendor be responsible for intelligence call routing or Agency?

A.15.3. If the intelligent call routing feature is part of the telecommunications services provided by the Government, the Government will be responsible for the service. If intelligent call routing is provided by the contractor as part of its solution, the contractor is responsible for providing the service.

Q.15.4. Does the Agency have historical data on TTY usage?

A.15.4. Historical data on TTY usage, if available, will be provided in individual task orders. See Section J, Table.3.7-1 for TTY usage data specific to the NCC. Please note however historical data is no guarantee of future usage.

Q.15.5. Can a subcontractor handle fulfillment?

A.15.5. Yes.

Q.15.6. Solicitation states that first 3-month period will be used to project page views; will a similar period be in effect for attended services?

A.15.6. Generally, there will be a ramp-up period following completion of startup activities to gauge work volumes and fine tune processes. The duration of the ramp-up period is task dependent and will be determined by the Government in individual task orders.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.15.7. Original RFI discussed walk-up services. Can you confirm that this is no longer a requirement?

A.15.7. Walk-In Support has been eliminated as a required service.

Q.15.8. Does the agency have screen samples from the contact management application being used currently by the vendor running the FCIC? Can we have them?

A.15.8. No. The current contact management application is part of a proprietary solution provided by the incumbent NCC contractor.

Q.15.9. Is the appointment application that is used in conjunction with attended services the same as, or an extension of the web-based, or voice-enabled version?

A.15.9. Section C.3.1.8, Automated Telephone Appointment Service, requires an option for callers to access an IS for assistance in scheduling appointments. Two pricing options were requested by the Government, standard and a service using voice recognition technology. Section C.3.1.9, Web-Based Appointment Service, states the Government may request that the Contractor augment the telephone appointment service with a web-based appointment service that provides similar functionalities. This means that the web-based service will either augment the standard telephone appointment service or the service using voice recognition technology, not both.

Q.15.10. Are there any screen layouts on associated application for this project which the agency believes to be so well designed that they should be used as "templates"

A.15.10. No.

Q.15.11. Does Agency need to store inbound postal mail documents? Should this be done electronically?

A.15.11. The Contractor is required to maintain files of incoming mail. Electronic storage will be at the discretion of the contractor as long as it complies with the requirements of the task orders..

Q.15.12. Please confirm that vendor DOES NOT have to adhere to Do Not Call rules for any of the outbound calls listed within this solicitation.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.15.12. When performing work under this contract, the Contractor will be acting on behalf of the Government. It will be the Government's responsibility to ensure that any activities performed under the contract are in compliance with laws and regulations governing the National Do Not Call Registry.

Q.15.13. The solicitation lists training requirements as possible more than 40 hours. Depending on the size of the Task Order this would impact the ability to ramp with 60 days, if the program is large. Can you provide more detail about training requirements

A.15.13. Training requirements are task dependent. The Contractor will determine the length of specific training based on task requirements identified in individual task orders.

Q.15.14. Must vendor be certified and accredited on OMB Circular A-130 compliance in order to compete on this solicitation?

A.15.14. The contractor's information systems has to be certified and accredited by the agency Designated Approving Authorities in accordance with OMC Circular A-130 prior to placing the contractor system in service. See Section 3.5.9 – Security.

Q.15.15. Plans listed on page C-66 and C-77 can be very voluminous. Please confirm that these plans are NOT constrained by the page count limits on either the technical proposal or the pricing document.

A.15.15. The page count limit imposed on the technical proposal is intended for information to be provided, including sample plans, based on the proposal submission requirements detailed in Section L of the RFP. It will be the responsibility of the offerors to extract key information to be included in these sample plans to conform to the page count limit. The actual plan documentations are not intended to be included as part of the vendors proposal. There is no page count limit set for the price proposal.

Q.15.16. Can you list examples of the kinds of work within the context of the MCCC, which would be an exception ft the Fair Consideration Process described on Page g-4?

A.15.16. See examples provided in Table G-1 on page G-5.

Q.15.17. Does the agency of a breakdown of call volume by the Popular General Public Inquiry Topics listed on page j-9?

A.15.17. The Government currently does not track NCC call volume by topics.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.15.18. Table J.3.4 on page j-19 it is stated that we are to provide the required emergency support within three hours of notification. What is the detail of these services and emergencies?

A.15.18. An example of a situation requiring emergency support is an international crisis that generates inquiries from Americans from around the world seeking specific information about the crisis. The Contractor is required to provide live assistance to respond to these inquiries within 3 hours of notification by the Government.

Q.16.1.a Reference: RFP Section B – general Comment. In the CLIN structure, please define “Month” as a unit of measure. We assume this is an average calendar month (28-31 days) vs. 22 business days. Is this correct?

A.16.1.a Yes, month is a calendar month.

Q.16.1.b Reference: RFP Section B – general Comment. In the CLIN structure, please define “Hour” as a unit of measure. We assume this pertains to an hour worked, and that any non-productive time (vacation, holiday, sick, etc.) must be incorporated into each offeror’s hourly rate. Please confirm.

A.16.1.b Hour is a unit of measure. For the purposes of this contract it will represent an Hour of productive work. It will not include non-productive hours. The contractor shall incorporate non-productive time into the hourly rate.

Q.16.1.c Reference: RFP Section B – general Comment. In the solicitation overall, are days to be interpreted as work days, as specified in each Task?

A.16.1.c Yes, days are to be interpreted as work days as specified in each Task.

Q.16.2. Reference: RFP Section: B.1.2.1 Core Project Management Support and B.1.2.2 Incremental Project Management Support, Page B-2. Given that this is an IDIQ vehicle with only a Sample Task supplied for information purposes, please define the difference between “Core” and “Incremental” Project support. The CLINs under B.2.2.1 are calling for a fixed monthly fee, which would connote support geared to a specific task and associated level of effort. Although the Levels 1-4 definition provide some guidance, there is still some ambiguity surrounding what would be considered core and incremental for a given task.

A.16.2. “Core” Project Management Support is the minimum resource level that the contractor has to allocate in order to perform all of the project management functions identified in Section C.3.5 for each project complexity level. Section B.1.2.1 is amended to include this description. “Incremental” Support is for augmenting the core resources to accommodate specialized and unique requirements of individual tasks, or new requirements added subsequent to task implementation.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.16.3. Reference: RFP Section: B Tables, page B-8. Please provide a baseline definition for “Low,” “Average,” and “High” complexity as it relates to the Voice/Speech Recognition and Text-to-Speech CLINs. What is the relationship between these complexity levels, project complexity levels, and the low/average/high criterion used for the Supervisory and QA Multiplier?

A.16.3. The unit of measure for service initiation for Voice/Speech Recognition and Text-to-Speech CLINs has been changed from “Each” to “Hour”. The reference to three levels of complexity has been eliminated.

Q.16.4. Reference: Section B, Table B.2.3.1 - Service Initiation Charges for Automated and Other Support Services, RFP Page B-9. For each CLIN, please define the unit of measure “Each.” Is this to be defined as each implementation/Task? If so, how will task variability be taken into consideration given that these implementations may vary greatly in size, scope, and complexity. For example, for Hosted FAQ Service (CLIN 70012), there could be one or multiple databases and technologies involved, with varying costs, from simple FAQs to the implementation of self-learning technologies. Please clarify how Task variability is to be taken into account in the current CLIN structure for the 70000 CLINs.

A.16.4. The unit of measure “Each” is for each service implementation. Certain CLINs in this section have been changed to reflected task variability. Also see response provided in A.3.18.

Q.16.5. Reference: RFP Section B, Table B.3.3.2 - Recurring Charges for Automated and Other Support Services, RFP Pages B-10-11. CLIN 80005 Automated Callback – Because volumes may vary greatly from month to month or Task to Task, we recommend that this unit of measure be changed to “Each Transaction” or that the Government provide a range of estimated monthly volumes for costing purposes (or allow offerors to do the same).

CLIN 80006 Web Callback – Because volumes may vary greatly from month to month or Task to Task, we recommend that this unit of measure be changed to “Each Transaction” or that the Government provide a range of estimated volumes for costing purposes (or allow offerors to do the same).

CLIN 80007 On-Line Ordering – Please clarify the unit of measure “Each Form per Month.” Is this each order? As this CLIN pertains to recurring charges vs. service initiation, we assume that this CLIN does not cover the cost of developing a new online *form*.

A.16.5. The unit of measure for CLINs 80005, 80006, and 80007 have been changed to “Each Transaction”. Section B, Table B.2.3.2 is amended to reflected these changes.

Q.16.6. Reference: RFP Section B, Table B.3.3.2 - Recurring Charges for Automated and Other Support Services RFP Page B-12. The unit of measure for CLIN 80014, Fulfillment Services, is “Hour.” We recommend that the Government consider changing

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

this to “Each Piece.” Given the relatively low volumes, this would be a more cost-effective strategy for the Government.

The unit of measure for CLIN 80015, Language Translation Service, is “Hour.” Does this CLIN pertain to the “Foreign language line” alternative called out in Section C.2.1.4? If so, we recommend that the unit of measure be changed to “Minute” to reflect typical industry practices.

A.16.6. The Government believes using “Hour” as a unit of measure will provide the most flexibility in handling fulfillments of different size and weight requirements. Table B.3.3.2 is amended to require the contractor to bill time expended for Fulfillment Services in 15 minute increments rounded up to the next 15 minute increment.

Q.16.7. Reference: RFP Sections C.1.2 & C.5.3, pages C-2-3. Under what circumstances would centers outside the contiguous states (OCONUS) be deemed appropriate? We assume that all bidders on the IDIQ should use CONUS rates only. Please confirm.

A.16.7. See response provide in A.14.13.

Q.16.8. Reference: RFP Section C.2.1.5.2.1, page C-6. Will the contractor need to have an approved “.gov” email address for return responses to email inquiries? Use of a “.gov” website would make responses transparent to the customer.

A.16.8. Yes a “.gov” email address will be used for responding to e-mail inquiries.

Q.16.9. Reference: RFP Section C.2.1.5.1, page C-6. Each transfer method carries unique costs. How does the Government anticipate this difference to be reflected in the CLIN structure given a standard per minute charge for all telecommunications?

A.16.9. If the Government elects to use telecommunications services provided by the Contractor, other charges incurred in providing the transfer, such as “take back and transfer”, that are over and above the standard telecommunications charges may be billed to the Government as Other Direct Charges. This will be handled on an individual task order basis.

Q.16.10. Reference: RFP Section C, RFP pages C-6 & C-8. These two sections appeared to be numbered the same in error.

A.16.10. Section numbering for C.2.1.5.2.1 appearing on C-8 should be C.2.1.5.2.2.1. Section C of the RFP is amended to reflect this change.

Q.16.11. Reference: RFP Sections C.2.1.5.1 and B.2.3.1, pages C-6 and B-8. The Government has requested automated voice response services for 9 languages. The volumes and level of effort required for each language could vary significantly, and

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

impact pricing. Will the Government consider creating sub CLINS for English only, Bilingual, and Multilingual automated voice response services or another means to differentiate between a low complexity VRU implementation and a higher cost/higher complexity implementation?

A.16.11. Support for Automated Voice Response Development and Maintenance, as define in RFP Section C.3.5.4.3, is a required project management function. The Government believes the current CLIN structure for Core Project Management and Incremental Project Management Support provides sufficient flexibility for the contractor to account for different levels of project complexity.

Q.16.12. Reference: RFP Section C.2.1.6, page C-11. Does the government require the contractor to personalize customer responses in form letters?

A.16.12. If “personalization” refers to identifying the inquirer’s name in the response, generally no. However, some customization of the response, including personalization, may be needed to address the nature and/or subject of the inquiry and to meet agency response protocols for certain types of inquiries (e.g., congressional inquiries). The degree of customization will be specified by the Government in individual task orders.

Q.16.13. Reference: RFP Section C.3.1.8 #7, page C-17, lines 739-742. Is there a requirement to create interfaces to above said agencies? If so, please provide information needed to assess the interface requirements.

A.16.13. No.

Q16.14. Reference: RFP Section C.3.1.10, page C-19, lines 831-832. The requirement articulated on Lines 831-832 appears to be a function of the inquiry tracking systems vs. the FAQ system. Please clarify this as it relates to FAQs vs. responses to inquiries.

A.16.14. The functionality required is for the Hosted FAQ Service.

Q.16.15. Reference: RFP Section C.3.2.6 Interactive Web-Based Services, page C-26. Please clarify the reference to C.3.2.1 – C.3.2.5. Does this reference reflect a general preference to use Web-based services when processing inquiries rather than a requirement to use browser-based technology for every inquiry type?

A.16.15. This section merely references the various tasks that the contractor will need to perform in support of Interactive Web-Based Services (e.g., responding to inquiries, capturing information, conducting research), if such services are ordered by the Government.

Q.16.16. Reference: RFP Section C.3.5, page C-28. The descriptions for Core Project Management Support link the number of employees to be trained to the complexity of the task and the amount of development time required. What if headcount is low and

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

complexity is high for Level 1? Or the complexity is low, but the volume is high for Levels 3 and 4? Headcount and complexity are not necessarily parallel. Low headcount does not necessarily mean low complexity, nor does high headcount mean high complexity. We recommend that headcount be removed from the description for each level.

A.16.16. Reference to head count has been removed from Section C.3.6.1 as suggested. Section C.3.6.1 is amended to reflect this change.

Q.16.17. Reference: RFP Section C.3.5.4.4, page C-33. This section has been changed from a public relations/outreach function to a coordination function. Is the Government still expecting Contractors to provide public relations and outreach activities as part of the contract vehicle, or will it be handled under a future task order?

A.16.17. No, the Government is not expecting the contractors to provide public relations and outreach activities with this contract vehicle.

Q.16.18. Reference: RFP Section C.3.5.5.3.3, RFP page C-36. Please clarify the definition of “certified.” We understand this to mean contractor-certified. Is this correct?

A.16.18. Yes. Also see response provided in A.1.9.

Q.16.19. Reference: RFP Section C.3.5.9.1, page C-43. Is there a requirement that all employees working on the program pass a security clearance conducted by the Federal Government? If so, what is the level of government security clearance required and is there a requirement that the employee must receive the government clearance before the employee can actively work on the program?

A.16.19. No. The Government will specify security clearance requirements for contractor personnel on a task order by task order basis.

Q.16.20. Reference: RFP Section C.3.5.10, page C-45. What are the system availability requirements?

A.16.20. The minimum system availability requirement is 99.9%. Section H.11. is amended to reflect this requirement.

Q.16.21. Reference: RFP Section C.3.5.9.3, page C-45. Can the contractor use other methods such as badge readers to physically restrict access to data and telecommunications centers instead of key-codes?

A.16.21. Badge readers may be used as long as entrance is granted only to those requiring access to this area to perform their normal job functions or who are escorted as in the case of visitors or technicians.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.16.22. Reference: RFP Section C.5.4, page C-55. Can this project be housed with multiple government projects as long as it is housed in a secure facility, or must the project have its own physically separate, secured space?

A.16.22. The contractor-provided project housing may contain multiple Government agencies as long as the project is able to be segregated and secured, depending on the requirements of the task order.

Q.16.23. Reference: RFP Section C.6.1, page C-56, lines 2479-2485. Is there an alternative tracking value to be used if the caller has ID blocking?

A.16.23. If caller ID is blocked, the contractor will not be required to capture this information. On an individual task order basis, the Contractor may be required to capture other identification information as a means to identify the caller.

Q.16.24. Reference: RFP Section G, page G-7. Was Paragraph G.2.3 intentionally omitted by the Government?

A.16.24. No it was not intentionally left out. It is a formatting error. Section G of the RFP is amended to add "G.2.3 - Reserved" to account for the omission.

Q.16.25. Reference: RFP Section G.3.3, Page G-8. The Government indicates that overtime will only be approved, in writing, by the ACO to meet task order requirements on a bona fide exigency basis. However, the CLIN structure in Section B (see in particular Table B.2.5.2 – Night Time, Saturday and Sunday, and Holiday Premium) seems to pertain to shift work vs. overtime work. We recommend that the referenced clause be modified or removed as the CLIN structure takes into account both normal (e.g., first shift) and premium (e.g., nighttime, weekend, holiday work) work periods.

A.16.25. Section G.3.3 is amended to read as follows: "...Section B of this contract contacted Contract Line Item Numbers (CLINs) for work performed outside the normal business hours. Such CLINs will only be in effect when approved, in writing, by the ACO to meet task order requirement. The Government will not authorize the use of these CLINs to compensate for shortcomings in contractor performance...."

Q.16.26. Reference: RFP Section I-1, pages I-1-12. Clause 52.246-6 Inspection-Time and Material and Labor-Hour was omitted. We recommend adding FAR Clause 52.246-6 Inspection-Time and Material and Labor-Hour, as there are no clauses that cover the inspection and acceptance requirements of Time & Material Task Orders.

A.16.26. These clauses will not be required. All tasks will be issued on a fixed price basis.

Q.16.27. Reference: RFP Section J.3.13-1, page J-34. The Government requires first call resolution of between 95 – 98%. According to the RFP's definition and sample

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

calculations, first call resolution is defined as “the total number of calls handled minus the number of calls requiring further contact divided by the total number of calls handled. Transferred and escalated calls are defined as “the total number of calls handled minus the number of calls requiring escalation and/or transfer in order to complete the response divided by the total number of calls handled.” We therefore understand that transferred and escalated calls, by definition, directly reduce the first call resolution percentage. Given the current transfer and escalation environment for each program and the corresponding goals in the 5 – 25% range, we assume that transferred calls provide a positive contribution to the first call resolution rate. Is this correct? This would be consistent with Purdue University’s Dr. Jon Anton definition: The percentage of calls that do not require an additional call to the center, or return calls by the agent in order to resolve the issue in the original call, This allows for transferred callers.” How do misdirected calls affect first call resolution?

In his 2003 “Government & Non-Profit Industry Benchmark Report, Best-in-Class Call Center Performance Dr, Anton further indicates that while their Best in Government & Non-Profit industry average was 49.1%, the best practices objective is to exceed 85%. For this reason, we recommend that the Government consider revising the first call resolution goal to the 85% best practices benchmark level.

A.16.27. For calculating first call resolution rate for the NCC, transferred and escalated calls are considered successfully completed calls. The Government expects misdirected calls to reach the NCC via the same toll-free telephone number. These calls will be handled in the same manner as general public inquiries and will be included as part of the calculation. The Government does not expect the misdirected calls will significantly affect the first call resolution rate.

The Government does not plan to change the NCC first call resolution rate to 85% since doing so would result in a reduction in service level the Government is currently experiencing.

Q.16.28. Reference: RFP Sections L.7.2 & L.7.2.1.4, pages L-5 & L-8. Are the 5 past performance profiles part of the 150-page count? We propose that these be excluded from the page count, given that the proposals are to be double-spaced.

A.16.28. The 5 performance profiles are part of the 150 single spaced page count limit. See response provided in A.14.66 concerning revision from double spaced to single spaced page format.

Q.17.1. Reference: RFP Section C.3.5.4.4. This section has been re-titled, changing it from a public relations/outreach function to a coordination function. Is the government still expecting awardees of this contract to provide public relations and outreach activities as part of the contract vehicle or will it be handled under a future task order?

A.17.1. See response provided in A.16.17.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.17.2. Reference: RFP Section M - The implementing clause 52.219-213. If a SDB submits as the prime contractor and has subcontractors who are not SDBs, how is the ten percent adjustment handled? For instance, will the SDB prime receive the adjustment on their entire bid, or only the portions of the bid that are applicable to SDB concerns? If a non SDB contractor submits as the prime contractor on the bid, do any SDBs who are members of that team receive the ten percent adjustment? Does the non SDB prime receive any reduction for SDB subcontractors who participate on their team? We recommend that the Government remove this adjustment in order to keep the price evaluation on an even basis.

A.17.2 The clause meets the applicability requirements in FAR 19.1102, and can not be removed. The procedures for use are set forth in the clause, 52.219-23. This can be found in full text at <http://www.arnet.gov/far>.

Q.17.3. Reference: RFP Section G.1.4. The Government requires that all key personnel be accessible to the Government 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We recommend that alternate personnel be included as part of that contact process to cover vacations, holidays, illness, etc., as long as those alternate personnel are approved by the Government in advance to cover these periods.

A.17.3. Section G.1.4 is amended to include all key personnel and designated alternate personnel to be accessible to the Government 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Q.17.4. Reference: RFP Section: J.3.1. The NCC provides 24 X 7 coverage for American citizens around the world within 3 hours of receiving notification. In what languages is this support provided?

A.17.4. Support is currently provided in English only.

Q.17.5. Reference: RFP Section C.3.5.8.6 -Ad Hoc Reports. Twelve ad hoc reports are to be provided at no extra cost. Depending on the scope, one request could create significant work. Can the Government please define and expected level of effort required in hours, number of data fields, frequency, or other parameters so that Contractors can improve the quality of staffing and cost estimates?

A.17.5. Specific Ad Hoc reporting requirements cannot be defined at this time. Ad Hoc report requirements will be specified in individual task orders.

Q.17.6. Reference: RFP Section C.2.1.6. Does the government require the contractor to personalize the response back to the customer (i.e., thank you “Jane Doe” for your inquiry”).

A.17.6. See response provided in A.16.12.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.17.7. Reference: RFP Section C. Are employees working on the contract required to be U.S. citizens or legal resident aliens?

A.17.7. U.S. Citizenship is not a general requirement of this contract. However, the Government may require contractor employees to be U.S. Citizens for the performance of certain tasks. This will be specified by the Government in individual task orders. The Contractor is responsible for assuring that all of its employees have legal status to work in the U.S.

Q.17.8. Reference: RFP Section: C.3.5.5.3. Please clarify the definition of “certified.” We understand this to mean contractor-certified. Is this correct?

A.17.8. Yes. See response provided in A.1.9.

Q.18.1. Reference: RFP Section C.1.1, page 2. How are consumer publications orders forwarded? Where and how is the product catalog of publications maintained?

A.18.1. Publication orders are currently sent in batches via FTP (see response provided in A.11.19). The publication catalog is maintained by GPO in Pueblo, CO. GPO regularly updates the catalog file and place it, in DBF format, at a GPO FTP site for download by the NCC contractor.

Q.18.2. Reference: RFP Sections C.2.1.2 and C.2.1.5.1, pages C-4-5. Section C.2.1.2 states “due to the diversity of agency requirements, the Contractor must have the capability to provide attended (live) service on a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (24 x 7) basis”. Section C.2.1.5.1 states that “if the call is received after normal business hours, the caller is informed of the business hours and asked to call back during those hours on the next business day or leave a message for a return call”. Please clarify the Call Center hours.

A.18.2. Actual call center operating hours are to be specified by the Government in individual task orders.

Q.18.3. Reference: RFP Section C.2.1.5.1, page C-6 – “The IS retrieves data from a knowledge base”. What is the source of this knowledge base? Does it exist today and, if so, in what format?

A.18.3. The call flow description provided in Section C.2.1.5.1 is a sample only. The “knowledge base” as used in the context of the call flow is to be provided by the contractor using information provided by the Government. The format on how the information will be provided will be described in individual task orders.

Q.18.4. Reference: RFP Section C.2.1.5.1, page C-6. This sections states “If information requested is beyond the scope of Contractor’s agreed to level

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

of service as specified in the task order, the IS refers the caller to the appropriate Government agency personnel for completion”. How is the appropriate agency determined? Are the business rules well defined?

A.18.4. The "appropriate agency personnel" and business rules are to be defined by the Government in individual task orders.

Q.18.5. Reference: RFP Section C.3.2.4, page C-24. How long must data concerning contact and request be maintained?

A.18.5. See response provided in A.4.1.

Q.18.6. Reference: RFP Section C.3.1.10.8, page C-21. This section states “Service must be implementable within 45 calendar days from the date of service request of the hosted FAQ service”. Please clarify what must be implemented within 45 days and what constitutes the “service request”.

A.18.6. The hosted FAQ service must be implemented within 45 days of the task order(s) award. Service request is the same as task order.

Q.18.7. What data, if any, must be migrated?

A.18.7. Data migration will be determined by the task order(s) solution.

Q.18.8. Reference: RFP Section J.3.7. - Project Work Volume Data. This presents the historical view of data volumes. What are the expected growth rates?

A.18.8. See Work Volume Impact in Section J.3.7.3.

Q.18.9. Will knowledge base information be stored in multiple languages or will all responses, other than voice, be in English?

A.18.9. This will be determined on a task order by task order basis.

Q.18.10. What are the current staffing levels of the NCC?

A.18.10. See response provided in A.1.4.

Q.18.11. Reference: Cover Letter. The first page states that the proposals are due February 20th at 3:00, but the second page state February 20th at 4:00. What time are proposals due?

A.18.11. See response provided in A.3.30.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.18.12. Can GSA provide pricing information for the current NCC contract?

A.18.12. The pricing information for the current NCC is available, but must be requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

Q.18.13. Reference: RFP Section C.3.1.10, Hosted FAQ Service - Line 823, Item 4 - Interfaces for Information Specialists, Knowledge Manager and Administrators. - Accommodates Multiple browsers, including MS Internet Explorer 5.0 and Netscape 4.7. These Browsers are older technology and for software to be state-of-the-art we must utilize the most current browser technology and limit older browsers. Are you okay with a system that works on MS Explorer 6.0 or higher only? NOTE: The User Console for Customers is Browser independent.

A.18.13. See response provided in A.7.1.

Q.18.14. Reference: Section C.3.1.10 Hosted FAQ Service - Line 944. “The hosted FAQ service may be ordered with other Attended Services described in Section C.3.2 of this SOW or as a stand-alone service.” Our company provides full technology for a Multi-channel Contact Center, including Hosted FAQs, Email Management and Tracking, Live Chat and Outbound Communications. In addition to Hosted FAQs will you order other modules as stand-alone service?

A.18.14. See response provided in A.7.2.

Q.18.15. Will the government be publishing a list of Prime Contractor Bidders to partner with for this solicitation?

A.18.15. No.

Q.19.1. Reference: RFP Section J.3.7 - Projected Work Volume Data. These tables have no information concerning “after call work time” that is generally needed to complete the documentation concerning the calls. Is there any data concerning “after call work time” that can be provided?

A.19.1. “After call work time” is included in the work volume data provided in Section J.3.7.

Q.19.2. Reference: RFP Section J.3.5.1. This paragraph provides a URL for a web site for information on the current NCC database structure and associated data elements. We could not access the database information using that URL. Would you verify that the URL is correct and that the information about the NCC database can be found using that URL?

A.19.2. This information has been posted.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.20.1. Reference: RFP Section H.11 - System Requirements: Is COTS Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software required to fulfill the system requirements outlined in H.11?

A.20.1. Yes.

Q.20.2. Reference: RFP Section B.1.1 - Project Start-Up. Will COTS technology purchase and implementation charges (software, hardware, and accessories) be reimbursed in the Project Start-Up charges?

A.20.2. Yes. The charges are to be included in the appropriate price tables in Section B.2.

Q20.3. Reference: RFP Section B.2. Pricing Tables. What CLINs should be used for both the start-up and recurring charges associated with the Knowledge Management System, Contact Management System, and Workforce Management System?

A.20.3. Charges for equipment, including software, shall be listed in the appropriate Equipment and Facility CLINs. Implementation and ongoing support associated with Knowledge Management, Contact Management, and Workforce Management Systems shall be listed in the appropriate Project Implementation Support and Project Management CLINs.

Q.20.4. Reference: RFP Section C.6.: Is COTS software required for the systems outlined in Section C.6?

Knowledge Management System (C.6.4)

Contact Management System (C.6.5):

Workforce Management System (C.6.6)

A.20.4. See RFP Section H.11 - SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS.

Q.20.5. Reference: RFP Section J.3.9.1 Contact Management System Design: Is there an expectation regarding the level of software customization necessary to meet these requirements?

A.20.5. For the NCC task, the Government requires the information identified in this section to be tracked by the contact management system. The level of software customization needed to meet this requirement is the responsibility of the contractor.

Q.21.1.a Reference: RFP Section B.1.1, page B-1, lines 14-15 - Cost incurred to prepare the site and systems. Under which CLIN would monthly facility and equipment costs be included, e.g., rent, utilities, and equipment maintenance?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.21.1.a One-time facility and equipment cost shall be included in the Base and Incremental Facility and Equipment CLINs. Recurring facility, equipment, and maintenance shall be included in the fully-burdened IS Hourly Rate CLINs.

Q.21.1.b Reference: RFP Section B.1.1, page B-1, lines 14-15 - Cost incurred to prepare the site and systems. Do the Project-Start up CLINS include the cost of the equipment or just the site preparation expense (e.g., labor, travel, etc.)? If the equipment costs are not included in the project-start up CLINS, should they be included in the fully burdened IS Labor Rate, and the other Service CLINS.

A.21.1.b. See response provided in A.21.1.a.

Q.21.2. Reference: RFP Section B.1.1, page B-1, lines 18-20 – “(note that this does not include any training...”. For a replacement IS person after initial training/setup can their hours be billed under the 9000 CLINS? If no, how should the cost for this attrition training be charged to the Government?

A.21.2. Attrition training is the responsibility of the contractor and shall not be billed separately to the Government.

Q.21.3. Reference: RFP Section B.1.1.1, page B-1, lines 30-31 – “The charge includes a fixed base component...” Please further explain the use of 'incremental component' during project start-up.

A.21.3. See response provided in A.12.4.

Q.21.4. Reference: RFP Section B. Table B.2.1.2-1, page B-4, line 103 – “CLIN 20000 Phone, IVR, & TTY Services...” Please explain why "Each Equivalent Workstation" is the unit of measure for this table.

A.21.4. See responses provided in A.12.3 and A.12.4.

Q21.5 Reference: RFP Section B. Table B.3.3.2, page B-11, line 140 – “CLIN 80012a Hosted FAQ Services...” CLIN 80012a and CLIN 80012b have the same descriptions, please explain the difference between these two CLINS.

A.21.5. Table 3.3.2 should be numbered Table 2.3.2. CLIN 80012b is a duplication of CLIN 80012a in error. The renumbered Table B.2.3.2 is amended to delete CLIN 80012b.

Q.21.6 Reference: RFP Section B. Table B.3.3.2, page B-12, line 140 – “CLIN 80016 Toll Free Telephone Service”. What quantity of minutes or enhanced toll-free services would be required for CLIN 80016 Toll-Free Service?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.21.6. The quantity of minutes of toll-free services, if required to be provided by the contractor, will be identified on task order by task order basis.

Q.21.7 Reference: RFP Section C-1.1, page C-1, line 140 – “The NCC has provided twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week (24 x7) coverage to provide inquiry response support for special applications.” What are considered special applications and how often do they occur?

A.21.7. Response to disaster and international crisis are examples of applications which may require 24 x 7 support. The Government cannot accurately predict the occurrence of these events.

Q.21.8 Reference: RFP Section C-1.2, page C-2, line 73 – "...award multiple indefinite quantity, indefinite delivery (IDIQ) type contracts..." How is the Government anticipating the work breakdown for this contract? For the NCC requirement, does the Government envision tasking multiple contractors to perform the work?

A.21.8. If the Government awards multiple contracts under this solicitation, each task requirement will be competed using the service ordering process described in G.2. The Government anticipates awarding the NCC task to a single contractor.

Q.21.9 Reference: RFP Section C-1.3, page C-3, line 124 – " Objective 3 - Reduce other agencies' burden of handling misdirected inquiries." Please provide any statistics available providing metrics for misdirected calls?

A.21.9 The requested information is currently not available.

Q.21.10 Reference: RFP Section C-2.1.3, page C-4, lines 169 -183 – “Work Type”. Please provide any statistics available for the frequency / volume of each work type and the sources of each? For example, are referrals accepted from multiple sources?

A.21.10 The Government currently does not have a breakdown of the frequency and volume of each work type or the sources of each. “Referrals” in the list cited, applies to the response to an inquiry received

Q.21.11 Reference: RFP Section C-2.1.3, page C-4, lines 175 – “7 - Emergency inquiries”. What is considered an emergency inquiry?

A.21.11. Examples of emergency inquiries might be: Disaster response, international crisis, or national threat instances.

Q.21.12 Reference: RFP Section C-2.1.3, page C-5, lines 183 – “14 – Transcription Services”. Is this regarding the transcribing of all messages?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.21.12. Transcription Services refer to the transcription of recorded and/or voice mail messages.

Q.21.13. Reference: RFP Section C-2.1.5.1, page C-5, line 226 - "If the call is of an emergency nature, the caller is provided with directions to call a designated telephone number for assistance." Is this dedicated phone number the responsibility of the contractor?

A.21.13. Generally, designated telephone numbers for handling emergency calls are operated by the Government. If there is a requirement for the contractor to provide this support, it will be specified in the task order.

Q.21.14. Reference: RFP Section C-2.1.5.4, page C-10, line 445 - "Contractor shall retain a copy of all responses for record keeping". How long shall these responses be kept?

A.21.14. See response provided in A.4.1.

Q.21.15. Reference: RFP Section C-3.1.1.2, page C-14, line 606 - "Voice/Speech Recognition Service." Are all languages included in the requirement for Speech Recognition?

A.21.15. The technology supporting text-to-speech and voice recognition must, at a minimum, be capable of supporting the languages listed in the above section.

Q.21.16. Reference: RFP Section C-3.1.1.2, page C-14, line 606 - "Voice/Speech Recognition Service." Is the understanding for speech recognition including natural language integration or prompted speech recognition?

A.21.16. The Government is not specifying the technology to be used for Voice/Speech Recognition Service. The contractor may propose a solution incorporating natural language integration or prompted speech recognition if the use of such technology will enhance the service.

Q.21.17. Reference: RFP Section C-3.1.8, page C-16, line 701 - "Automated Telephone Appointment Service." What is this service, please elaborate. Who are we setting appointments for, what system will be used?

A.21.17. Automated Telephone Appointment Service is intended for callers to call to schedule an appointment with an agency at a prescribed time to obtain information and/or services. This service is intended for agency programs that need to interact with their constituents in person and needs a 24 x 7 unattended service that can handle the appointment scheduling process automatically. The contractor is responsible for providing a solution to meet this requirement.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q21.18. Reference: RFP Section C-3.1.1.10, page C-17, line 863 – “Uses “Self-learning” technology to analyze, organize, and present information in ways that enhance the user’s satisfaction.” Please elaborate or define by what is meant by "Self-learning" technology and how it applies to the Knowledge Base.

A.21.18. The term “Self learning” in this instance is the ability of the application to automatically weight responses and or usage and reorder the data as a result of the responses and or usage.

Q21.19. Reference: RFP Section C-3.1.10.1, page C-22, lines 945-946 – "If the contractor is tasked to develop and administer the FAQ service, the contractor shall conform to the following FAQ implementation guidelines." Is there a base set of FAQs that are already created or will the FAQs be created from scratch?

A.21.19 FAQs requirements will be defined on a task order by task order basis.

Q.21.20. Reference: RFP Section C-3.3.2, page C-27, line 1196 – “The Contractor shall provide qualified staff and equipment to transcribe messages recorded on voice mail and other recorded services.” Please clarify what is meant by "other recorded services?"

A.21.20. The term “other recorded services” refers to any services that the contractor provides to record information provided by the callers, i.e., customer feedback, complaints/compliments, survey answers, etc.

Q.21.21. Reference: RFP Section C-3.5.9.3, page C-42, line 1835 – “Security.” Could project start-up prices be increased on a Task Order basis, if facility security requirements differ significantly from those outlined in Section 3.5.9 of the Statement of Work?

A.21.21. Yes.

Q.21.22. Reference: RFP Section C-4.3.3, page C-52, line 2272 – “Level 2.” How is "general knowledge" of government programs defined / measured?

A.21.22 “General knowledge” suggests that the Information Specialist (IS) has overall awareness of the nature and scope of government program(s). The IS has sufficient knowledge of these programs to comprehend, analyze, and respond to inquiries using scripted responses, or to probe callers for specific information prior to rendering a response. The level of “general knowledge” is measured by the IS’s ability to respond to inquiries that are moderate in complexity.

Q.21.23. Reference: RFP Section C-4.3.3, page C-52, line 2280 – “Level 3.” How is "specialized knowledge" of government programs defined / measured?

A.21.23. “Specialized knowledge” suggests that the Information Specialist (IS) has specific knowledge of government program(s)/subject matters. The IS has sufficient knowledge of these programs/subject matters to comprehend and analyze the inquiries,

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

and probe callers for specific information prior to providing a response. The level of “specialized knowledge” is measured by the IS’s ability to respond to inquiries that are high in complexity.

Q.21.24. Reference: RFP Section H.10, page H-5, line 195 – “NOTE: Additional days are sometimes given, but these are regional in nature.” Will the Government modify the note to include days designated as holidays by executive order?

A.21.24. RFP Section H.10 is amended to include days designate by executive order as holidays.

Q.21.25. Reference: RFP Section I.1, page I-1, line 18 - Date of "APR 1985". Should the date be "April 1984"?

A.21.25. APR 1984 is correct. Section I will be amended to reflect that date.

Q.21.26. Reference: RFP Section I-2, page I-2, line 47 - Date of "OCT 2000". Should the date be "Sept 2000"?

A.21.26. SEP 1984 is correct. Section I will be amended to reflect that date.

Q.21.27. Reference: RFP Section I.1, page I-2, line 59 – “blank clause number”. Should a clause number of "52.222-47" be added?

A.21.27. 52.222-47 is correct. Section I will be amended to reflect that clause

Q.21.28. Reference: RFP Section I.1, page I-2, line 64 - Date of "JUN 2003". Should the date be "Aug 2003"?

A.21.28. AUG 2003 is correct. Section I will be amended to reflect that date

Q.21.29. Reference: RFP Section I.1, page I-2, line 80 - Date of "MAY 1999". Should the date be "Oct 2003"?

A.21.29. OCT 2003 is correct. Section I will be amended to reflect that date

Q.21.30. Reference: RFP Section I.2, page I-2, line 116 – “It has submitted a completed application to the Small Business Administration...” Would the government accept a proposal from a company that has applied for certification under the appropriate HUBZone rules as long as the HUBZone certification is provided prior to actual award of the contract?"

A.21.30. No. Small Disadvantaged Business Concerns and HUBZone are different Federal Small Business programs and they are not interchangeable.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.21.31. Reference: RFP Section J.3.1, page J-8, line 122 - "The NCC intends to maintain the current relationship with GPO for processing and distribution of consumer publications." Under this contract, what literature and publications is the contractor expected to do fulfillment for? Will GPO & the contractor both be working together on fulfillment?

A.21.31. See response provided in A.11.9. For consumer publications, the Government expects the contractor to transmit publication orders to GPO regularly and for GPO to furnish the latest publication catalog to the contractor. The Government does not anticipate that GPO and the contractor will be performing the same fulfillment function.

Q.21.32. Reference: RFP Section J.3.10.1, page J-31, line 697 – "Intercity Telecommunication Services." We understand that task orders from other Government agencies may require the contractor to provide Primary Rate Interface (PRI) lines. Does the Government expect the contractor to provide Primary Rate Interface (PRI) lines to support the initial GSA FCIC NCC requirement or will these be Government provided?

A.21.32. If the Government requests the contractor to provide telecommunications services as part of the NCC task, then the contractor is expected to provide the necessary services. Otherwise, the Government will furnish the telecommunications services for use by the contractor.

Q.21.33. Reference: RFP Section M.3, page M-4, line 167-172 – "To evaluate total price, the government..." How will the Government evaluate a total evaluated price, when the prices being submitted are ceiling prices and do not reflect potential significant cost savings based upon volume discounts and the location of the call center project?

A.21.33. The Government will evaluate the total price based on the proposed ceiling prices submitted for each of the CLINs.

Q.21.34. Reference: RFP Section M.3, page M-4, line 167-172 – "To evaluate total price, the government..." Will the Government provide the estimated quantities that will be used for determining the Total Evaluated Price?

A.21.34. No. The estimated quantities are part of the Government's pricing model and as such are Source Selection Sensitive. It should be noted that all proposals will be evaluated using the same pricing model information.

Q.21.35. Will a joint venture under an SBA approved Mentor-Protégé agreement, between a small disadvantaged business and a large business, fulfill the certification requirements for a small business, provided the small disadvantaged business meets the NAICS size requirements, for this acquisition?

A.21.35. Yes, if such an agreement forms a legally binding, fiduciary relationship between the two firms in the form of a Joint Venture, and meets the requirements of FAR Part 9.6

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.21.36. Where an SBA approved joint venture exists between a large mentor and a small disadvantaged protégé, will the government accept the experience and/or past performance qualifications of the large mentor as meeting this acquisition's experience and past performance requirements?

A.21.36. Yes, but see response in A.21.35.

Q.22.1. Will Agencies other than GSA be permitted to use this contract directly [e.g., as with the Federal Supply Service Multiple Award Schedule (FSS MAS)]?

A.22.1. GSA currently does not plan to allow agencies to use this contract directly. GSA will issue all task orders.

Q.22.2. If other Agencies are allowed to use this contract vehicle, will GSA charge those agencies a contract access/use fee similar to that of the FSS MAS? What fee will be charged?

A.22.2. See response provided in A.22.1.

Q.22.3. In providing services under this contract, will the Federal Citizen Information Center (FCIC) use any funds in addition to the FCIC fund (specifically, GSA's General Supply Fund and/or the Information Technology Fund)?

A.22.3. GSA may consider using other funds in addition to the FCIC funds to provide the service.

Q.22.4. In providing services under this contract to other Federal agencies, will the FCIC charge a fee for the services of FCIC? Does the FCIC have its own contracting offices that will issue task orders for other agencies or will the FCIC rely on other organizations within GSA?

A.22.4. FCIC is expected to charge a nominal administration fee to cover the cost of providing the service. Contracting support will be provided by another GSA organization.

Q.22.5. Are other organizations within GSA (e.g., the Federal Technology Service) expected to use this contract to serve its clients for call-center services? Will Regional Offices be authorized to use the contract to serve their clients for call-center services?

A.22.5. Other GSA organizations may obtain services through this contract to serve their customers. However, services must be obtained through the FCIC Program Management Office and the ACO.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

Q.22.6. Will the FCIC market this contract to other agencies? If so, will the FCIC have Government personnel fully dedicated to the marketing effort? Does the FCIC plan to have a marketing campaign?

A.22.6. Yes. GSA has established a USA Services Program Management Office to market contact center services to other federal agencies.

Q.22.7. Will the Government consider increasing the contract's period of performance to a contract term greater than five years?

A.22.7. No. FAR Part 17.104(a) states that multi-year contracts can not exceed five (5) years unless authorized by statute. This program does not come under any authorizing statute.

Q.22.8. How was the \$150 million contract ceiling determined? Is there a Government market survey available to Contractors that describes the expected level of contract use?

A.22.8. The \$150 million contract ceiling was the Government's best estimate on the potential value of this contract. The ceiling was determined based on the following: Government's knowledge of the Federal contact center community and the trend towards outsourcing contact center support; procurement history of similar contact center services conducted by Federal agencies in the past several years; current related procurement activities of several agencies; general interest expressed by agencies in obtaining contact center services through the USA Services initiative.

Q.22.9 Will this contract be a multi-agency contract? Or a GWAC?

A.22.9. No. See response provided in A.22.1.

Q.22.10. Reference: RFP Section C.1.2, line 95. this section states, "Initially, the Contractor will assume the inquiry functions currently performed by the existing NCC." However, RFP Paragraph J.3 contains phrases such as, "Nothing in this section should be construed as a commitment from the government to actually procure this type of task order."

These RFP paragraphs seem to contradict each other and make it ambiguous as to whether the NCC requirement will be provided for as a task order under this contract. Please clarify.

A.22.10. The NCC will be procured under this IDIQ contract(s). Also, please see response provided in A.3.32.

Q.22.11. Reference: RFP Section C.3.5.1, Core Project Management Support. This section defines Level 1 through Level 4 support. Please clarify the Government's intent for the definitions provided for these four levels of support.

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.22.11 A project management staff (e.g., Contractor's Project Manager, site manager(s), technical personnel, human resource personnel, administrative personnel, content specialists) and support services will be required to meet task requirements. The level of support required will be dependent on complexity of task requirements. The complexity level definitions are provided for this purpose.

Q.22.12. Reference: RFP Section K.10, Preparation, Submission and Negotiation of Subcontracting Plans, states that, “..the offeror’s subcontracting plan will reflect a commitment to assuring that small HUBZone, small disadvantaged, and woman-owned small business concerns are provided the maximum practical opportunity..” Are there specific subcontracting goals (e.g., percentages), by small business category, required by the Government for this solicitation? Please clarify the Government’s intent.

A.22.12. No, but in each solicitation issued the Government attempts to support the overall goals of the agency.

Q.22.13. Reference: RFP Section L.4 - Single or Multiple Awards. This section, states that the Government may make more than one award. What is the minimum number of awards that the Government intends to make? Why is five the maximum number of awards?

A.22.13. The minimum number of awards will depend on the quality of the proposals that we receive. A maximum of five (5) awards provides the Government with the flexibility to adequately manage the overall program.

Q.22.14. Reference: RFP Paragraph L.7.2 - Technical Proposal Submission Requirements. This section states that there is a 150 page limit, “..when printed double-spaced..” Is double-spacing a firm requirement for the Technical Proposal volume?

A.22.14. See response provided in A.14.66.

Q.22.15. Reference: RFP Section L.7.2. Section C of the RFP defines 68 pages of single-spaced requirements. RFP Paragraph L.7.2, Technical Proposal Submission Requirements, states that there is a 150 page-limit to the Technical Proposal volume (double-spaced). This includes responses to all of Section C, Executive Summary, Experience, Management, etc. Please consider raising the Technical Proposal page-limit to 150 pages single-spaced.

A.22.15. See response provided in A.14.66.

Q.22.16. RFP Paragraphs L.7.2.1.3.1, L.7.2.1.3.2, and L.7.2.1.4 refer to experience requirements that “The Offeror shall provide..” Our interpretation for these requirements is that the referenced “offeror” experience includes experience from any/all team members (prime, partner, and/or subcontractor experience). Is this interpretation correct?

Questions and Answers
Request for Proposal TQD-RC-03-0001

A.22.16. This interpretation is incorrect. See response provided in A.14.68.

Q.23.1. If a small business has the capability to provide all services but lacks the technical requirement of experience handling 2 million calls will they be considered for and have a realistic chance of being awarded a contract?

A.23.1. See RFP Section M.2 – Evaluation Process.

Q.23.2. If the answer to Q.24.1. is no.1, how will small businesses be able to participate in future awards? Will there be small business and minority subcontracting goals with awards?

A.23.2. See response in A.22.13.

Q.23.3. Will you release the list of interested parties bidding on this solicitation?

A.23.3. No, that information is Source Selection Sensitive.

Q.24.1 Does the GSA currently have a single contractor performing all the requirements as set forth in this RFP?

A.24.1 No.

Q.25.1 If any of the prime vendors decided to use UNICOR resources, can they do so through a subcontractor that has a current contract relationship with UNICOR and still fulfill the requirements of the GSA RFP?

A.25.1 Yes, as long as UNICOR resources are, in fact, being utilized.