# Acquisition and Grants Office Corporate Services Acquisition Division (AGO CSAD)

**NOAA**

June 2022

## NOAA Small Business Industry Day - Responding to Government Requests

Focus Areas: RFI vs Sources Sought, Reading Solicitations, Responding, NOAA CSAD IT Services Intro, NMITS, 8(a).

# Agenda

- Introduction of myself and my team and IT acquisitions at NOAA
- Quick overview of tips and advice for responding to Government requests
- Facilitate discussion around how NOAA can improve solicitations, evaluations, communications with Small Business.

# Introduction to myself and my team

- Eric Olmstead ([Eric.Olmstead@noaa.gov](mailto:Eric.Olmstead@noaa.gov); 301-628-1427)
  - Branch Chief of the CSAD IT Services Branch
  - Support CIO for their direct acquisitions and also their enterprise initiatives
  - Strategic Sourcing arm for NOAA IT acquisitions

# NOAA MISSION IT SERVICES (NMITS) Overview

❏ The NMITS vehicle is a premier solution for obtaining IT services here at the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) using it's small business partners.

❏ NMITS is a suite of multiple-award Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) provided under the General Services Administration (GSA) Schedule. The BPAs can service a wide variety of IT services with competitive prices while meeting NOAA's socioeconomic small business goals.

# NMITS Overview Cont'd

- 10 Year Ordering Period (November 20, 2020 through November 19, 2030)

- 5 year base + 5 year option period

- Task Orders may extend 60 months beyond the end of the final BPA ordering period

- $2.1 billion estimated spending over the course of the BPAs

- The NMITS BPAs are available for use by NOAA Line and Staff Offices through a partnership with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO).

- The NMITS BPAs may be used by other Department of Commerce (DOC) Bureaus with appropriate waivers

- 29 GSA Small Business Partners were given BPA awards under the Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) code 54151S

**GSA**

# Other IT Strategic sourcing

- CSAD Managed IT Vehicles
  - Strategic Management Services (SMS) (1305L420FNAAJ0078)
  - NOAA Cloud Initiative BPA (1305L419ANAAJ0008)
  - IT Analytics BPA:
    - Forrester (ST-1330-18-BU-0005)
    - Gartner (ST-1330-18-BU-0006)
  - Red Hat BOA (1305M421GNAAJ0002)
  - Geographic Information System (GIS) Software (ST-1330-18-BA-0024)
  - Enterprise Infrastructure Solutions (EIS) (1305M420FNAAJ0111)
  - Smartsheet (1305M419DNAAJ0041)

# IT and the 8(a) program

- NMITS does not have an 8(a) track available, but there are 8(a) vendors on NMITS that can be used for Market Research and solicited using the flexibilities of FAR 8.405

- 8(a) sole source authority is well suited for IT software or digital service development under 4.5M where the end product is a deliverable and no continued service is needed. This use is encouraged by the TechFAR hub: [How to use an 8(a) company for your digital service needs](#). The flexibility provided by streamlined 1 on 1 negotiations on schedule/price, low dollar/risk gateway to accelerated acquisitions and product delivery, non-repetitive acquisition so no concern about outgrowing the 8(a) program and needing to request release.

# RFI vs. Sources Sought

- Request for Information From FAR 15 201: "RFIs may be used when the Government does not presently intend to award a contract, but wants to obtain price, delivery, other market information, or capabilities for planning purposes. Responses to these notices are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract. There is no required format for RFIs."

- Sources Sought FAR 5.201: "the primary purposes of the notices are to improve small business access to acquisition information and enhance competition by identifying contracting and subcontracting opportunities."

# Solicitations/Requests for Quotes (RFQ) Request for Proposals (RFP) Do's and Don'ts

## DO

- Read the entire RFP

- Comply with all mandatory responses needed (ie representations and certifications, minimum needed response to requirements, any required documentation or information)

- Provide innovative solutions when provided the opportunity to

- Demonstrate value

## DO NOT

- Assume compliance

- Regurgitate the Government's requirement

- Assume the Government knows your capabilities (must demonstrate via proposal).

# **Respond to Required Requirements**

- There will always be a "check the box" response aspect to the solicitation. Close reading and compliance will be required.
- Adhere to page count limitations and response dates.
- Fully respond to all instructions and fully understand what the government will be evaluating in the evaluation criteria.

# Propose solutions

- Where the instructions and evaluation criteria ask for solutions be sure to propose and demonstrate creative and valuable solutions.

- Find opportunities throughout the proposal to demonstrate unique solutions and value your company possesses.

- Explain the value proposition and tie it to the requirements, instructions, and evaluation criteria (cost, schedule, efficiency, upgrade, advance).

# Use of Lowest Price Technically Acceptable (LPTA)

- 2019 John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 put restrictions on the use of LPTA for evaluations.

- This change to the FAR will continue further push COs to avoid LPTA and pursue best value procurements.

# Questions and Discussion

Encourage open discussion around NOAA's or Government's requests and how we can reduce the burden on small businesses and improve responses. Feedback gathered will be shared with the NOAA acquisition community.

Topic Ideas: Voluntary down-selects, oral presentations, RFI vs Sources Sought, Industry days, inflation, how NOAA can tailor solicitations to attract the best talent/solutions.