



Helping Connect Business & Government In Alaska



Responding a Sources Sought or Request for Information Notices

What's in your response?

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August 23, 2023

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Introduction to PTAC

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Are you new to government contracting?

Government contracting is a more complex, involved business process than what is usually found in the private sector.

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for government contracting? »

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to government contracting »

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- Now part of the *APEX Accelerators* program
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<https://www.aptac-us.org/>
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UAA Business Enterprise Institute
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

The Alaska PTAC is a program of the UAA Business Enterprise Institute and funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the Department of Defense Office of Small Business Programs



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Discussion Topics

- ❖ Purpose of notices – why are they used
- ❖ Sources Sought Notice (SSN) vs. Request For Information (RFI)
- ❖ Agency mandates to conduct Market Research
 - FAR definitions and requirements
 - Socio-economic Drivers
- ❖ Contract Opportunities – current Sources Sought notices
- ❖ Why Should you respond?
- ❖ What information to provide
- ❖ Common errors & omissions
- ❖ What should the agency take away from your response





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Purpose of Notices

Purpose:

- ❖ Improve small business access to acquisition information
- ❖ Enhance competition
- ❖ Complete market research requirements

To determine:

- What is Industry doing? Agencies want to discover:
 - ✓ Industry trends & innovations
 - ✓ Current, updated or new product options
 - ✓ Process improvements
 - ✓ How is the activity handled in a commercial setting
- Contractor data:
 - ✓ Interest level, capacity, capability, experience & availability
 - ✓ Business socioeconomic & size designations
 - ✓ Does the contractor have potential solutions to agency needs





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Purpose of Notices - Agency

<p style="text-align: center;">Sources Sought Notice (SSN)</p> <p>Helps identify potentially capable small businesses that could perform the requirements of a planned procurement activity.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strategic Market Research</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Request for Information (RFI)</p> <p>Gathers information about whether or not there is a solution to a problem. Provides an opportunity for industry to enter into discussion of commercial practices</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Tactical Market Research</u></p>
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Market Research

Market research is conducted to determine the availability of commercial products and services and to identify and evaluate market practices. It's a continuous process of finding viable sources of goods and services to meet government requirements. Market research is mandated for all acquisition programs.

Subpart 15.2 - Solicitation and Receipt of Proposals and Information



15.201 Exchanges with industry before receipt of proposals.

(a) Exchanges of information among all interested parties, from the earliest identification of a requirement through receipt of proposals, are encouraged. Any exchange of information must be consistent with procurement integrity requirements (see [3.104](#)). Interested parties include potential offerors, end users, Government acquisition and supporting personnel, and others involved in the conduct or outcome of the acquisition.

(b) The purpose of exchanging information is to improve the understanding of Government requirements and industry capabilities, thereby allowing potential offerors to judge whether or how they can satisfy the Government's requirements, and enhancing the Government's ability to obtain quality supplies and services, including construction, at reasonable prices, and increase efficiency in proposal preparation, proposal evaluation, negotiation, and contract award.

...(c) – (d) ...

(e) 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.

(f) ...



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FAR: Requesting Information

52.215-3 Request for Information or Solicitation for Planning Purposes.

As prescribed in [15.209](#)(c), insert the following provision:

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OR SOLICITATION FOR PLANNING PURPOSES (OCT 1997)

(a) The **Government does not intend to award a contract** on the basis of this solicitation or to otherwise pay for the information solicited except as an allowable cost under other contracts as provided in subsection [31.205-18](#), Bid and proposal costs, of the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

(b) **Although "proposal" and "offeror" are used in this Request for Information, your response will be treated as information only. It shall not be used as a proposal.**

(c) This solicitation is issued for the purpose of: **[state purpose]**

(End of provision)

19.202-2 Locating small business sources.

The contracting officer shall, to the extent practicable, encourage maximum participation by small business, veteran-owned small business, service-disabled veteran-owned small business, HUBZone small business, small disadvantaged business, and women-owned small business concerns in acquisitions by taking the following actions:

(a) Before issuing solicitations, **make every reasonable effort to find additional small business concerns** (see [10.002](#)(b)(2)). This effort should include contacting the agency small business specialist and SBA PCR (or, if a PCR is not assigned, see [19.402](#)(a)).

(b) Publicize solicitations and contract awards through the Governmentwide point of entry (see [subparts 5.2](#) and [5.3](#)).



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FAR - Sources Sought Notices

- ❖ FAR 19.501(c): “The contracting officer shall **review acquisitions to determine if they can be set aside for small business**, giving consideration to the recommendations of agency personnel having cognizance of the agency’s small business programs. The contracting officer shall perform market research and document why a small business set-aside is inappropriate and when an acquisition is not set aside for small business.”
- ❖ Sources Sought Notice is a procurement tool that is used to request vendors to identify themselves if interested in providing a product or service.
- ❖ It is not a solicitation for work, nor is it a request for proposal. [Reference: FAR Subpart 7.3 and OMB Circular A-76]
- ❖ Provides data to determine the solicitation type:
 - Allows acquisition staff to identify who’s who in a given market
 - Industry availability, capability & interest
 - Provides data to determine reasonable expectation of response
 - Determines what type of competition, if any:
 - ✓ Set-aside (FAR 19.502-2(b) – Rule of Two)
 - ✓ Full and Open
 - ✓ Sole Source





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Responding to the Notice

Tractor Trailer and Dump Truck Simulator

Notice ID: Sources_Sought-TractorTrailer-Simulator

The 673d Contracting Squadron is looking for vendors that are able to fulfill a possible requirement. Please see attached statement of work for further information.

Department/Ind. Agency DEPT OF DEFENSE	Sub-tier DEPT OF THE AIR FORCE	Office FA5000 673 CONS LGC
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Contract Opportunities
Current Response Date
August 18, 2023 at 04:00 PM AKDT
Notice Type
Original Sources Sought
Updated Date
Aug 14, 2023
Published Date
Aug 14, 2023

Tractor Trailer and Dump Truck Simulator

ACTIVE

Notice ID
Sources_Sought-TractorTrailer-Simulator

Related Notice

Department/Ind. Agency DEPT OF DEFENSE	Sub-tier DEPT OF THE AIR FORCE	Office FA5000 673 CONS LGC
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Attachments/Links

Attachments

Document	File Size	Access	Updated Date
SOW_Tractor Trailer and Dump Tru ck Sim.docx	25 KB	Public	Aug 14, 2023

Earth Moving and Moving Equipment Simulator

Notice ID: Sources_Sought-Earth-Crane-Sim

The 673d Contracting Squadron is looking for vendors that are able to fulfill a possible requirement. Please see the attached statement of work for further information.

Department/Ind. Agency DEPT OF DEFENSE	Sub-tier DEPT OF THE AIR FORCE	Office FA5000 673 CONS LGC
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Contract Opportunities
Current Response Date
August 18, 2023 at 04:00 PM AKDT
Notice Type
Original Sources Sought
Updated Date
Aug 14, 2023
Published Date
Aug 14, 2023

Description

The 673d Contracting Squadron is looking for vendors that are able to fulfill a possible requirement. Please see attached statement of work for further information regarding this requirement.

Classification

Original Set Aside:
Product Service Code: 6910 - TRAINING AIDS
NAICS Code:
o 333310 - Commercial and Service Industry Machinery Manufacturing
Place of Performance:
JBER , AK 99505
USA

Statement of Work (SOW)

Procurement of a Tractor Trailer and Dump Truck Simulator with Virtual Reality Pre-Trip.

- Description of Service:** Procure and install; Tractor Trailer and Dump truck simulator with multiple displays for immersive training, virtual reality interface for pre-trip inspections, a movable platform, and the ability to train on multiple terrains and in inclement weather to include on an airfield. Vehicle controls must include manual and automatic transmission adaptation as well as a lever control interface for attachments on a dump truck. Also, device must be able to link up to an external instructor station to monitor and direct training. Package must include a 1-year annual Maintenance & Support which includes unlimited technical support, a warranty on all hardware and software updates and upgrades. Product must be able to operate without internet connectivity.

<https://sam.gov/opp/e4e2e129c541410993977f38129fd793/view>



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Responding to the Notice

Install Bus Heaters

ACTIVE

Notice ID
F1W3LF3188AW01

Related Notice

Department/Ind. Agency DEPT OF DEFENSE	Sub-tier DEPT OF THE AIR FORCE	Office FA5000 673 CONS LGC
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General Information

Contract Opportunity Type: Sources Sought (Original)

All Dates/Times are: (UTC-08:00) ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA
Original Published Date: Aug 10, 2023 02:20 pm AKDT
Original Response Date: Aug 25, 2023 04:00 pm AKDT
Inactive Policy: 15 days after response date
Original Inactive Date: Sep 09, 2023
Initiative:
o None

Description

Purchase and installation of two (2) dry air heaters, two (2) LED lights, and a battery tender on four (4) GSA International Buses for a total of eight (8) dry air heaters, eight (8) LED lights, and four (4) battery tenders.

The dry air heaters need to be 12V and use diesel as its fuel source. The LED lighting needs to be 4"-6", mounted to the front bumper, and have a switch on the driver's left console to turn on and off. The battery tender need to be 2-4 Amps with the cord going to a junction box/power strip along with the block heater (already installed) with one female outlet coming out of the bus to plug into a power source.

Contractor Requirements:

- Procurement of all parts and accessories required to install.
- Provide all labor required to inspect, diagnose, and repair vehicles.
- Perform operational checks to ensure proper function and reliability as per manufacturer's design.

THERE IS NO SOLICITATION AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME. REQUESTS FOR A SOLICITATION WILL NOT RECEIVE A RESPONSE. This Sources Sought Synopsis (SSS) is pursuant to FAR PART 10 in support of Market Research being conducted by the United States Air Force to identify potential sources to procure and install bus heaters, lights, and battery tenders. Please e-mail your response to the following primary address: joshua.chirillo@us.af.mil, no later than 4:00pm Alaska Daylight Time, 25 August 2023.

<https://sam.gov/opp/ea1f1bcad35f84909b8085b9ed507c49e/view>

Classification

Original Set Aside: Total Small Business Set-Aside (FAR 19.5)
Product Service Code: K023 - MODIFICATION OF EQUIPMENT- GROUND EFFECT VEHICLES, MOTOR VEHICLES, TRAILERS, AND CYCLES
NAICS Code:
o 811198 - All Other Automotive Repair and Maintenance
Place of Performance:
JBER , AK 99506
USA



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Finding SSN & RFI Notices



US Army Corps of Engineers



Contract Opportunity

- General Information
- Classification
- Description
- Attachments/Links
- Contact Information
- History
- Award Notices

Barrow Alaska Coastal Erosion Reduction at Utqiagvik, Alaska

ACTIVE
Contract Opportunity

Notice ID
W911KB22R00R15

Related Notice
W911KB22R0015

Department/Ind. Agency
DEPT OF DEFENSE
Sub-tier
DEPT OF THE ARMY
Major Command
USACE
Sub Command
POD
Office
W25N ENDIST ALASKA

View Changes

Contract Opportunity Type: Sources Sought (Updated)

All Dates/Times are: (UTC-09:00) ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA

■ **Updated Published Date:** Feb 09, 2022 11:30 am AKST

■ **Original Published Date:** Jan 26, 2022 09:36 am AKST

■ **Updated Response Date:** Feb 14, 2022 02:00 pm AKST

■ **Original Response Date:** Feb 09, 2022 02:00 pm AKST

THIS IS A SOURCES SOUGHT ANNOUNCEMENT OPEN TO ALL QUALIFIED PRIME CONTRACTOR FIRMS (LARGE AND SMALL BUSINESSES UNDER NAICS 237990) FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY. THIS IS NOT A SOLICITATION FOR PROPOSALS AND NO CONTRACT WILL BE AWARDED FROM THIS SOURCES SOUGHT ANNOUNCEMENT.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Alaska District is conducting market research to facilitate determination of acquisition strategy. The determination of acquisition strategy for this acquisition lies solely with the government and will be based on this market research and information available to the government from other sources. This market research is being conducted in order to identify Contractors with the capabilities to perform the following requirement:

The Alaska District is contemplating a Single Award Task Order (SATO) contract to be procured in accordance with FAR Part 16 and the supplements thereto. Anticipated award value of this potential SATO is \$400 Million. There is an anticipated minimum of two task orders to be awarded, and additional task orders anticipated to be awarded as project conditions allow. The contract type shall be indefinite delivery, firm fixed price over a term of 7 years. Anticipated average task order range will be from \$20M - \$250M. The maximum task order limit will be \$250M.

The anticipated NAICS is 237990, Other Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction, PSC is F0006, Natural Resources/Conservation Land Treatment Practices and Small Business Size Standard is \$39.5M.



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What Information to Provide

What is requested in the Sources Sought/RFI notice? Every notice is different!

Basic Information

1. Company contact information
2. Individual point of contact
3. Entity Identifier # (UEI / CAGE Code)
4. Socioeconomic & size data
5. Relevant & current past performance information
6. Agency specific Statement of Qualification or Capability Statement
7. Stay within response guidelines for information, submittals and size of response!

Targeted Information

1. Responses to specific questions
2. Narratives that demonstrate:
 - Capability, capacity & availability to perform/provide
 - Management & Technical ability
 - Qualification & direct experience of key staff or teaming partners
 - Knowledge of agency needs & concerns
3. Evidence of Capability – reviewers will disregard “claims of we know how”
4. Potential to acquire capability by the time of the contract award date

The bottom line in making capabilities assessments is a determination by the Government's technical reviewer(s) that a small business is either “capable” or “not capable” of performing the requirements.



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Capability Statements

- ✓ Company Name
- ✓ Company Logo
- ✓ Contact information
 - Address
 - Phone number
 - Email
 - Website
- ✓ Entity Identifier Numbers
- ✓ Small Business Certs
- ✓ NAICS Codes
- ✓ Core Competencies
- ✓ Past Performance
- ✓ Selling Points - Differentiators
- ✓ Photos

- ❖ Have multiple templates!
- ❖ Target supporting data
- ❖ The goal is to begin a discussion
- ❖ Can be more than one page

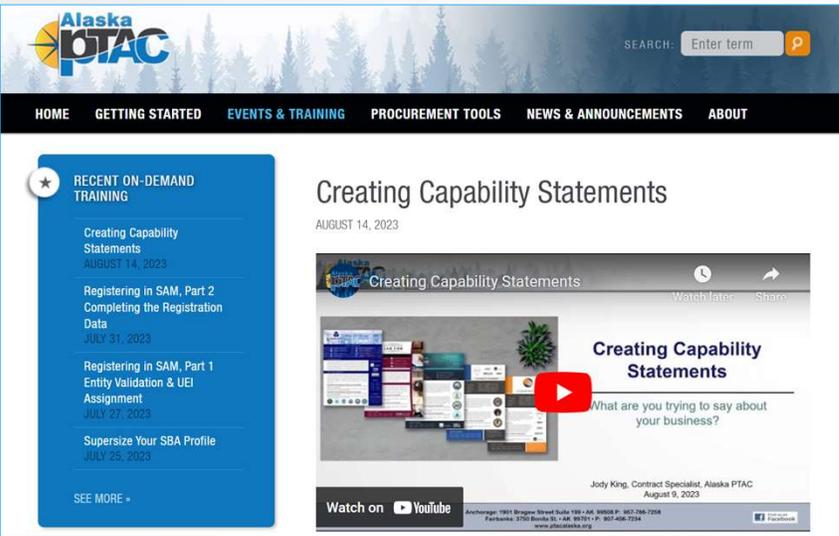




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Capability Statements

On-demand video



<https://ptcalaska.org/training/creating-capability-statements-2/>



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Why Respond

❖ Why respond to a Sources Sought Notice?

- ✓ Determines set-aside type, if any
- ✓ Request to learn more about your company – free marketing!
- ✓ May result in a sole source or restricted bid opportunity
- ✓ Potential to educate/update the agency to new processes or products
- ✓ Start agency-focused marketing campaigns

❖ Excuses for not-responding

- “The agency never responds back...”
- “I’ll just wait for the solicitation...”
- “I don’t have time...”
- “I don’t know how...”
- “It doesn’t make a difference...”

**Not responding
is also a
response.**

NO EXCUSES



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Errors & Omissions

1. Didn’t respond to the Sources Sought Notice
2. Sent a generic response when specific requirements were listed
3. Didn’t respond exactly as requested
4. Didn’t take advantage of the opportunity to present your business
5. Attached a generic Capability Statement that didn’t target the request notice
6. Forgot to ask for a specific Set-Aside
7. Didn’t follow up after a reasonable time





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How to Competitively Respond to a Sources Sought and Influence the Acquisition (2021 Update)

★★★★ (1)



About this product

Format: E-course
 Duration: Approx. 90 minutes
 Instructor: Joshua Frank, RSM Federal
 Learning Credits: 1.5 CPEs, 0.75 ATC
 APTAC BOK: C21 Marketing to Government Agencies
*This course was recorded on October 21, 2021.

~~Price: \$75.00~~ *

1

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**Connect with the Alaska PTAC & ask for our discount code – take the class for free.*

Ten years ago, the government did not utilize “sources sought” as a primary acquisition tool. Now between 8% – 10% of opportunities in SAM.gov are sources sought. This shift indicates that the government is more focused on achieving a balance in its acquisition strategy, which is good news for government contractors.

Most companies respond to a sources-sought notice by only answering the given questions and providing the information requested by the government. However, there are several key strategies for responding effectively. The first is creating a standardized response format with a cover page, corporate overview, and capability statement. The second is recognizing that a sources-sought notice is an opportunity to “influence the acquisition.” You influence the acquisition by making recommendations and “ghosting” your strengths and the weaknesses of the competition.

This course will include many examples to maximize your understanding of the various techniques and strategies for responding to a sources-sought notice to influence the acquisition. The award-winning tactics and strategies in this course have directly helped companies win more than \$2.8 billion in definitive contracts and more than \$30 billion in multiple-award contracts. As a result, Mr. Frank, managing partner at RSM Federal, was awarded SBA’s Veteran Business of the Year and Small Business Advocate of the Year by the Society of American Military Engineers.

<https://govology.com/>



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Questions?

Alaska PTAC Staff Contact Information

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Kristen Sullivan, Program Assistant khsullivan@alaska.edu

General email: info@ptacalaska.org **Website:** <https://alaskaptac.org>

To request assistance, sign up here: <https://akptac.ecenterdirect.com/signup>




LinkedIn

How can the Alaska PTAC help you?