

**Universal Service Administrative Co. (USAC)
USAC-25-040 – Enterprise Statistician Services
Questions & Answers**

Q#	Question	Answer
1	Do you currently have an incumbent to provide these services? If so, could you please share details including the incumbent name.	USAC cannot share any information regarding the current incumbent.
2	What current software is USAC using for statistical modeling – R, SPSS, SAS, Python?	USAC does not currently use a specific software for statistical modeling. Thus, there is a need for statistical services to be performed on USAC's behalf.
3	Could we leverage our broader past performance in providing Data Analytics services to clients which also includes statistical modeling services?	If the past performance agency is relatable to USAC programs, there is a possibility that data analytics could be useful but USAC will determine whether the statistical modeling services are necessary and needed.
4	Since there is no definitive award month/date for this bid, could we have the flexibility to swap key personnel if we must engage them on other projects that gets awarded in the next few weeks?	Key Personnel will be a deciding factor for award of this contract. If Offeror, at time of proposal and prior to the award of the contract, has information that any such Key Personnel anticipate terminating his or her employment or affiliation with Offeror, Offeror shall identify such personnel and include the expected termination date in the proposal. USAC must be notified and approve any change to Key Personnel as soon as possible prior to award of this contract and during the performance of any awarded contract.
5	You have mentioned Ph.D. as a requirement for the Statistician role. One of our senior statisticians holds a Masters and Bachelor's degrees in Statistics with over 20 years of experience working as a Statistician for various federal projects. Would that be acceptable?	Because the work of the Statistician may be called into question, subject to appeals, and even brought into a court of law, we are going to keep the Ph. D. requirement. USAC will allow for additional LCATs for a Junior and Senior Statistician. However, USAC will require at least one person assigned to the contract to hold a Ph.D. in statistics to oversee the work of Junior and Senior statisticians.

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6	The RFP states that all work must be performed at USAC Headquarters, virtually, or at "such other locations..." and that "Presently, USAC has a hybrid work approach requiring Contractor Staff...to be in the USAC office at least two (2) days per week." Does USAC anticipate that this hybrid work schedule will change?	At this point in time, USAC does not foresee our hybrid approach changing, however, this hybrid work approach is for USAC employees. Contractors will operate virtually unless a special need to come into the office or appear at the FCC, which is a rare occurrence.
7	The RFP states that all work must be performed at USAC Headquarters, virtually, or at "such other locations..." and that "Presently, USAC has a hybrid work approach requiring Contractor Staff...to be in the USAC office at least two (2) days per week." Can USAC provide additional details on where the "other such locations" would be?	Another location could be at the FCC but that would be a rare occurrence.
8	Will USAC provide parking for contractor assigned staff when working on-site at USAC locations?	USAC does not anticipate that Contractor Staff will be required to work on-site unless a special need to come into the office or appear at the FCC, which is a rare occurrence. Parking expenses would not be covered under this scenario.
9	Is there an incumbent contractor providing this service or is this a new requirement?	This is not a new requirement.
10	If there is an incumbent contractor providing the service, under the Federal Freedom of Information Act, can USAC provide the incumbent company name, contract number, contract value, and period of performance?	USAC does not disclose details of current contracts as this information is confidential.
11	This section states that "USAC may award task orders at any time during the Contract Term." Does USAC expect that Task order will engage the two key personnel on a full-time basis for the entire period of performance?	No USAC does not expect that the Task Order will engage two key personnel on a full-time basis for the entire period of performance.

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12	The RFP instructions specify that resumes be included as an attachment (Attachment A). Does this mean that the resumes be included as a separate submission document or can they be included as a separate section of the Volume 2 Technical Approach submission document?	The RFP instructions state that resumes for all Key Personnel should be submitted as an attachment (Attachment A) to the technical volume (Volume 2).
13	The RFP instructions specify that resumes be included as an attachment (Attachment A). If the resumes do not need to be included as a separate submission document, can they be included as a separate section of the Volume 2 Technical Approach submission document and not be included in the page count limit?	Per the RFP, the Technical volume may not exceed twelve (12) pages excluding Attachment A (Resumes). Each resume may be no longer than two (2) pages in length.
14	If key personnel become unavailable during the contract, what is the process and timeline for substitution approvals?	The USAC Program Manager and Contract Administrator must be notified of any change to Key Personnel as soon as possible prior to award of this contract and during the performance of any awarded contract.
15	Are resumes or bios for key management team members required?	Yes, resumes and a justification are required for any additional Key Personnel proposed in addition to the Project Manager and Statistician.
16	The section specifies the requirement for the Task Orders under the IDIQ and states that "Each task order awarded will be determined using the fixed labor rates proposed in Attachment 1 – Pricing Schedule, and result in a NTE price for that awarded task order." and that the travel expenses will be included in the NTE price of each awarded task order, but the Sample Task Order attachment format does not include a section or instructions/requirements to build up the NTE price. Can the contractor add additional pricing table(s) to the Task Order format to provide details on the NTE price build up?	No. The sample task order is provided for example purposes only and Offeror should not fill out any information in the task order document. Only Attachment 1: Pricing Schedule of the RFP must be completed. The fixed labor rates proposed must be fully loaded and include all direct and indirect costs set forth in Section B of the RFP, including equipment, product support, supplies, general and administrative expenses, overhead, materials, travel, labor, taxes, shipping, and profit.
17	Can USAC provide an estimated number of task orders expected to be issued annually under this IDIQ contract?	USAC currently anticipates up to two (2) task orders annually.

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18	Will each task order involve both key personnel (Project Manager and Statistician), or could some task orders require only one of the roles?	USAC anticipates both Key Personnel would be required for each task order.
19	What is the expected turnaround time for task order responses once issued?	As soon as possible. USAC expects a task order to be fully executed within five (5) business days after being issued.
20	The SOW does not seem to specifically state that the contractor personnel will be issued a USAC personal computers. Section 11. "USAC TECHNOLOGY AND EMAIL USE" seems to indicate that USAC may provide personal computer equipment ("USAC issued property, including laptops...") to the assigned contractor personnel. Can USAC please clarify if the contractor assigned resources will be issued USAC personal computers?	USAC will not be issuing laptop computers for this contract.
21	If USAC does not provide contractor personnel with personal computers and the contractor personnel will need to provide their own computers, what are the requirements for hardware, software and what are the requirements to connect a contractor-owned personal computer to the USAC network?	USAC will accept systems that are FedRAMP authorized for sharing and storing data. Any further requirements will be shared with the Contract awardee.
22	SOW Section 5.A. "Background: Audit and Assurance Division Payment Quality Assurance (PQA)" states "USAC selects a limited number of Support Mechanism beneficiaries for each cycle of PQA assessments." What is the schedule of the cycle of PQA assessments?	PQA Assessments are conducted on an annual basis.
23	SECTION E: Instructions 6.C.3a. (page 64): This section states "For each past performance, provide a description of the relevant performance and the name and telephone number for USAC to contact for past performance information for each project discussed." Is this expected to be a different contact name than the customer points of contact specified in the preceding paragraph to this requirement?	No, these contacts may be the same.

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24	SECTION E: Instructions 6.C.3b. (page 64): This section states "Although USAC will follow-up with the contacts, Offeror, not USAC, is responsible for ensuring that the questionnaire is completed and returned by the specified date in USAC's transmittal." Can USAC please clarify how the contractor will be notified of the required return date for the Past Performance Questionnaires (for example, will the contractor be "cc'ed" on an e-mail to the customer points-of-contact)?	USAC will notify the Offeror after the questionnaire has been sent out via email and provide the deadline established with each reference.
25	If a Table of Contents is included in any of the Response volumes, will the Table of Contents be excluded from the page count limitations?	No, any additions to the volumes that are not required as specified in the RFP will count toward the page limits.
26	Could you clarify the submission requirements—the number of documents, page format requirements, file name structure, and any other information?	All required submission instructions are detailed in Section E of the RFP.
27	Are there any existing statistical tools or platforms currently in use by USAC (e.g., R, Python, SAS)?	Please see Answer to Question #2.
28	Will USAC provide historical program data to support the development of the required sampling plans?	Yes, USAC can provide historical program data to support the development of the required sampling plans.
29	SECTION E: Instructions 6.C.2. (page 64): The section states "Description of Offeror's recent experience with consultation and support of an organization's information security program of similar size and scope." The phrase "information security program" is cited a number of times in the RFP but does not seem to be in the context of describing the Scope of Services for this RFP or should be the primary focus of relevancy for the past performance write-ups. Can USAC verify if this is indeed the focus of relevancy for the past performance examples?	The RFP has been revised to address this matter.

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30	Is the "Proposal Cover Page" described in this section different than a "Cover Letter" which typically follows the Cover Page and contains a greeting and introduction to the proposal and volume?	Cover letters are not required for any proposal volume.
31	If the bidder includes the required Proposal Cover Page and a Cover Letter, can the Cover Letter be excluded from the volume page count?	Please see Answer to Question #25.
32	SECTION E: Instructions 6.E.1g. (page 65): This point states "The signed RFP cover page and signed Confidentiality Agreement may be submitted in PDF format as separate attachments and will not count towards the page limits for volumes 1–4 of the Offeror's proposal." Is there a required file name structure for this separate submission document?"	The RFP has been revised to address this concern. No specific file name is required for separate documents.
33	Which of the following programs ("Programs") fall under USAC's Payment Quality Assurance Program ("PQA"), and for which USAC is seeking statistician services? a. High Cost b. Lifeline c. Schools & Libraries d. Rural Health Care	All four programs are possible selections for the PQA, for which USAC could seek statistician services.
34	Are improper payment rates required to be prepared for each Program under USAC's PQA, specifically for each of (i) High Cost, (ii) Lifeline, (iii) Schools & Libraries, and (iv) Rural Health Care?	If the FCC has deemed that a program must be tested for PQA purposes, then an improper payment rate must be prepared on a per program basis.
35	How were the sample sizes in PDF page 8 of 79 determined?	The sample sizes were determined by a statistician that reviewed the disbursements data of those support mechanisms.

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36	Are sampling plans required to be prepared for each Support Mechanism separately, for a total of up to four (4) Final Reports per year?	Yes, the sampling plans would be required to be prepared for each Support Mechanism separately. Sampling plans could be required on the fund level, which could result in more than one sampling plan per support mechanism. Further, sampling plans may be necessary for the High Cost Program Mgmt. activities, which would be separate from the AAD and/or PQA activities.
37	Under “1. Scope of Services,” requirement #2 indicates that the Contractor shall “review results of PQA assessments on an ongoing basis to ensure the sampling plan continues to meet IPERIA requirements”. Can you please confirm what frequently “ongoing basis” is intended to refer to? How frequently will Contractor be requested or required to review PQA assessments or in-process results? Will the Contractor be expected to review all PQA assessments or a sample?	For PQA, ongoing statistical services would require initial sampling plans per support mechanism to determine sample sizes, as well as statistical analysis of the results to determine an improper payment rate. Contractor adjustments to the sample sizes or improper payment results may be required depending on certain circumstances.
38	In what form will the USAC data concerning payments to program beneficiaries be provided?	USAC will provide the beneficiary payment data using electronic means using programs such as Excel or Notepad. Depending on how large the files maybe, the data may be zip files.
39	Under “Task 2” PDF Page 10, the scope describes reviewing results “on a continuous basis”. Can USAC please describe how frequently Contractor may be expected to participate in this continuous review (e.g., weekly, monthly)?	Please see the answer to #37.
40	On PDF page 11 of 79 (High Cost Program), there appears a table that lists certain FCC directives that are subject to verification and require a sampling plan. Will each of these verifications be tested in the same sample, or does USAC envision sub-samples may be required for certain kinds of transactions or FCC directives?	A verification is a compliance review (similar to an audit) of an individual carrier. One fund may have 400 different carrier “study areas” in it. The fund level sampling plan would provide overall guidance on calculating the sample sizes. The actual sample and the specific locations reviewed will be specific to each carrier study area.

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41	On PDF page 11 of 79 (High Cost Program), the table lists Data Sources that may represent overlapping layers of geographic detail (Census Block, Study Area, latitude/longitude). Can you please describe to what extent geographic coverage of the sample may be important to the design of the sample?	Historically, the FCC defined study areas have determined the carrier boundaries. Carriers deploy locations within these study area to satisfy their deployment obligation. We select a sample, when reviewing a given carrier, out of the locations that the carrier reported within this boundary. It usually doesn't have a direct impact on the determination of the sample. The HUBB (database of locations) will not allow locations outside the study area to be submitted.
42	On PDF page 13 of 79 (Task 1), scope item (f.) covers transitioning the sampling plan into the HUBB portal. The HUBB will automate the sampling selections for the purposes of verifications in the portal. What role would the Contractor play in this automation? Is this automation specific to a statistician or would we need to include IT resources in our response to assist? Can you please describe what code or interface the HUBB portal consists of? What will be the requirements of the sampling plan as it will be presented in the HUBB portal?	This may be an out of date reference. The sampling plans do not and will not reside within the HUBB. The statistician will not be expected to help transition that into the HUBB. We have started using an audit type software to document our reviews. The sampling plans, if anywhere, would make the most sense to reside within this tool as well as our network drives. This bullet should not impose any specific requirement of the statistician, to be clear.
43	Are the Tasks under High Cost Connect America Fund (PDF pages 12 – 14) required to be performed annually?	Yes, we perform two key verification types – on-demand to assist with carrier letter of credit reduction/termination which happen all year and “milestone verifications” which tend to launch after carrier data is completed (usually toward May of each year). Each sampling plan with a required milestone is updated annually with a huge focus in the February-April timeframe.
44	Can USAC provide an estimate of how much Consultant travel would be expected pursuant to performance of this engagement?	The expected travel would be very minimal and USAC estimates less than 10%. The majority of the work is conducted remotely.

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45	To what extent will the requirement listed under “Place of Performance” requiring consultants to be on site at least two (2) days per week apply during the period of performance of a given task order and the period of performance for the contract as a whole? Does USAC expect the Contractor to be on-site at USAC offices and thus based in the DMV area?	No USAC does not expect the Contractor to be on site two days a week as the expectation is that the work will be done remotely.
46	In Attachment 1 and Attachment 3, we note that only two labor categories are provided: Project Manager and Statistician. Can you please confirm if additional labor categories will be eligible under this contract, for example, including manager or staff with statistical backgrounds to perform and review the work, draft the report, and perform other ad hoc tasks?	USAC only anticipates needing the two (2) labor categories identified in the RFP. Resumes and a justification are required for any additional Key Personnel proposed in addition to the Project Manager and Statistician.
47	In Attachment 3, we note that the Statistician labor category lists a minimum education level of PhD in statistics and minimum experience of 10 applicable years’ of experience. Are additional levels of requirements available under this contract, for example, to include manager or staff statisticians who meet lower education and/or experiential requirements? Will other combinations of education and experience be eligible for consideration to meet the Statistician labor category? While we have a broad group of statisticians only one has their PhD and he is in the principal/partner labor category as to compare to other AAD task orders including directors, managers, senior staff or junior staff where all other statisticians would likely be categorized for doing the majority of the work. Noting the use of resources other than the PhD will reduce the cost of requested services.	Please see the response for Question #5 as well as the updated Attachment #3. The only additional categories that will be allowed are junior and senior statisticians.
48	In Attachment 3, we note that the Project Manager labor category requires a Project Management Professional certification. Are there any other types of experience or certifications that would be considered to fill this requirement?	The Project Management Professional (PMP) certification will not be required but the resume for proposed individual must demonstrate experience in project management.

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49	If updates to terms and conditions associated with NIST, insurance and other areas have been negotiated under [other contracts], will we be able to leverage those for this contract? Or will updated ones need to be completed/re-negotiated?	Proposed exceptions to USAC's Terms & Conditions will need to be submitted as instructed in Section E of the RFP.
50	Is USAC able to provide an indication of the other departments or uses of statistician services that USAC might foreseeably require during the period of performance?	At this point, only AAD and the High Cost Program Mgmt. Division are the only two departments that we can foresee that would require statistical services but if this changes, we will be sure to inform the contract awardee.
51	Page 54 of the solicitation states that contractors must "maintain ISO 27001 compliance certification." However, the bottom of Page 54 also states: "[This provision is applicable to contracts for procuring new information technology systems/tools only]." Can you please confirm that this solicitation is NOT for procuring new IT systems/tools, and as such, that ISO 27001 certification is not required?	USAC confirms this provision will not apply to the contract awarded as a result of this RFP.