

Solicitation No. AA-19-089			
No.	RFP Reference	Question/Comment/Clarification	Answers
1	N/A	Will the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) please confirm that completion of the OFFEROR CONTACT INFORMATION and OFFEROR SIGNATURE fill-ins are a post-award requirement? If not, in which Volume/section should they be included?	USAC confirms that completion of the OFFEROR CONTACT INFORMATION and OFFEROR SIGNATURE fill-ins are preferred to at the proposal submission stage. It should be included in Volume I (excluded from page count)
2	SECTION B, 7. PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS – GENERAL PROVISIONS, D. Subcontracting (page 8 of 61)	This section states, “Subcontracting the Services to another firm will not be permitted,” which contradicts both page 8, Section C.VIII of the solicitation and standard business practices. As such, will the Government please revise this section to align with page 8, Section VIII. Assignment/Subcontracting, which permits subcontracting with USAC’s prior consent? Suggested language is: “Subcontracting the Services to another firm will not be permitted, <u>unless USAC provides its prior consent in accordance with Section C.VIII.</u> ”	Subcontracting the Services of Key Personnel to another firm will not be permitted. USAC’s prior written consent is required for subcontracting non key personnel. The RFP is revised to reflect this change (Second Amendment)
3	SECTION B, 8. SERVICES, K. Travel (page 16-17 of 61)	Will USAC please confirm the reference to the Travel Expense Policy should be Attachment 2 vs. Attachment 3?	USAC confirms that the reference to the Travel Expense Policy should be Attachment 2
4	SECTION C, VIII. ASSIGNMENT/ SUBCONTRACTING (page 25 of 61)	Will USAC please confirm that subcontractors included with the awardee’s bid will be deemed accepted/approved without further action (unless required by USAC)? In other words, please confirm our understanding that subcontractors named in the bid are accepted on award, and the consent requirements apply to newly proposed subcontractors added post award.	USAC will review the proposed subcontracts during the proposal evaluation and will determine whether to approve the proposed subcontract or not. Subcontracts proposed after award will require USAC’s prior written approval. p
5	SECTION C, XIII. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, E (page 28 of 61)	This Exclusions section states that the contractor/subcontractors cannot disclose anything without prior written approval, but USAC can disclose any awardee information without notice to the contractor (e.g., the contract, proposal information, work product, pricing). To give USAC carte blanche to disclose non-public information, especially that information that is protected by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), is unfair and damaging to competition. Will USAC please	This is USAC’s standard terms and conditions. Please see Section E, I. General, A. Terms and Conditions for instructions to identify deviations from, or revisions, exceptions or additional terms (collectively “exceptions”) to the Terms and Conditions.

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		revise this section to ensure that awardees are offered the fair and reasonable opportunity to redact proprietary and/or competitively sensitive information prior to disclosure?	
6	SECTION C, XVI. MALICIOUS SOFTWARE (page 29 of 61)	The final sentence of this paragraph states that the contractor agrees to “indemnify USAC for any damages Proprietary Rights.” As this appears to be an incomplete sentence, will USAC please correct or clarify this language?	The last two words of the paragraph “Proprietary Rights” were mistakenly added. These two words are removed from the RFP.
7	SECTION E, I. GENERAL, B. PERIOD OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFERS and C. PROPOSAL SCHEDULE (page 38 and 39 of 6)	Page 38 of 61 states that proposals are due no later than 3:00 PM ET on August 26, 2019. However, the table on page 39 of 61 lists the proposal due date as 2:00 PM ET on August 26, 2019. Will USAC please clarify whether proposals are due at 2:00 PM or 3:00 PM?	Proposals are due at 2:00 PM on August 26, 2019
8	SECTION E, II. NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT (page 39 of 61)	Will USAC please confirm that the reference to the NDA at Attachment 6 should be Attachment 4?	The Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) is Attachment 5
9	SECTION E, II. NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT (page 39 of 61)	Will USAC please clarify if one Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) for the Offeror as a whole is acceptable? If not, which Offeror employees must sign the agreement in order to receive the list of all carriers that will be audited?	One Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) for the Offeror as a whole is acceptable
10	SECTION E, VI. PROPOSAL CONTENT, B. TECHNICAL (VOLUME II), 2. (page 41 of 61)	This section states, “The Offeror will provide a clear statement of whether the Offeror’s performance of the Contract will comply with all requirements, Terms and Conditions set forth in the RFP. Offerors must submit a detailed response to this RFP. ... This statement will be no longer than one (1) written page.” Will USAC please confirm that the compliance statement ONLY, and not the detailed response to the RFP, is limited to one (1) page?	USAC confirms that the compliance statement ONLY, and not the detailed response to the RFP, is limited to one (1) page.
11	SECTION E, VI. PROPOSAL CONTENT, B. TECHNICAL (VOLUME II), 4. i. and j. (page 42 of 61)	Will USAC please exclude item i. (certification that the firm is a licensed accounting/audit firm that complies with AICPA professional standards) and item j. (most recent	The AICPA certification and the peer review report can be provided as attachments to the proposal and will not be counted as part of the page limit.

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		final external peer review report) from the page limitation?	
12	SECTION E, VI. PROPOSAL CONTENT, B. TECHNICAL (VOLUME II), 4; SECTION E, VII. EVALUATION, A. EVALUATION FACTORS, 1. a. (page 42 and 45 of 61)	The Evaluation Factors for the Experience section of the Technical Volume do not match the instructions for the Technical Volume on page 42. For example, the Technical Volume instructions on page 42 require the Offeror's experience in "experience with statistical sampling and data analytics," but this is not listed as an Evaluation Factor. Will USAC please clarify?	Experience with statistical sampling and data analytics will be included as an Evaluation Factor.
13	SECTION E, VI. PROPOSAL CONTENT, B. TECHNICAL (VOLUME II), 5. (page 42 of 61)	Will the USAC please confirm Appendix A may be submitted within the Technical Volume, rather than as a separate attachment with the proposal submission?	Appendix A should be submitted as an attachment to the technical volume. It should be included at the end of technical volume.
14	SECTION E, VI. PROPOSAL CONTENT, B. TECHNICAL (VOLUME II), 4. (g) (page 42 of 61)	This section states that Offerors must describe how their experience would impact the resulting audit and fees. Please delete reference to "fees" in this section, since that may result in commingling of price data within the Technical Volume. If USAC does not intend for "fees" to involve discussion about pricing, discounts, savings, etc., will it please clarify?	The question was intended to identify how past experience would positively affect the audit process and results, and the hours expended to perform an audit. The reference to 'fees' can be discarded.
15	SECTION E, VI. PROPOSAL CONTENT, B. TECHNICAL (VOLUME II), 6.; SECTION E, VII. EVALUATION, A. EVALUATION FACTORS, 1. C. (page 43, 45, and 46 of 61)	The Evaluation Factors for the Management Capability section of the Technical Volume do not match the instructions for the Technical Volume on page 43. For example, the Technical Volume instructions on page 43 ask the Offeror to identify "your firm's strategy to perform simultaneous audits under one task order," but this is not listed as an Evaluation Factor. Will USAC please clarify?	The firm's strategy to perform simultaneous audits under one task order will be included as an Evaluation Factor.
16	SECTION E, VI. PROPOSAL CONTENT, C. PAST PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (VOLUME III) (page 43 of 61)	This section states, "USAC will attempt to contact past performance references identified in the proposal for confirmation of the information contained in the proposal and/or will transmit a past performance questionnaire to the contacts identified in the Offeror's proposals. Although USAC will follow-up with the contacts, the Offeror, not USAC, is responsible for ensuring that the	USAC will notify the Offeror that it has transmitted a past performance questionnaire to the Offeror's contacts. The notification will include the "specified date" for completion, etc.

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		questionnaire is completed and returned by the specified date in USAC's transmittal." Will USAC notify the Offeror that it has transmitted a past performance questionnaire to the Offeror's contacts? If not, how will the Offeror know the "specified date" for completion and whether references have been contacted?	
17	SECTION E, VI. PROPOSAL CONTENT, E. PRESENTATION and PAGE LIMITATIONS, 1. Proposal Presentation, a. (page 44 of 61)	May Offerors use a font size smaller than 12 in headers/footers and cover page descriptive text?	No, the 12 point font applies to all text except for diagrams, tables, and charts
18	SECTION E, VI. PROPOSAL CONTENT, E. PRESENTATION and PAGE LIMITATIONS, 1. Proposal Presentation, d. (page 44 of 61)	Will USAC please confirm that graphics are not desired in Offeror's proposals, since they are not able to be inserted in their native format (e.g., Adobe Illustrator)?	Graphics should be used where applicable. When used - the graphics must be readable when printed. Requirement for native format was to ensure graphs, tables and graphics were not distorted images.
19	SECTION E, VI. PROPOSAL CONTENT, E. PRESENTATION and PAGE LIMITATIONS, 2. Page Limitation (page 45 of 61)	Will USAC please confirm that each Volume's table of contents is excluded from any page limitations?	Table of contents is not excluded from any page limitations. However, inclusion of Table of contents is not a submission requirement
20	SECTION E, VI. PROPOSAL CONTENT, E. PRESENTATION and PAGE LIMITATIONS, 2. Page Limitation (page 45 of 61)	Will USAC please consider excluding each Volume's cover page from any page limitations?	The page limits include the cover page
21	SECTION E, VII. EVALUATION, A. EVALUATION FACTORS, 3. Price Evaluation (page 46 of 61)	The solicitation states that USAC will evaluate price reasonableness by comparing pricing of similarly situated firms, and will also evaluate realism. To enable a fair evaluation and to ensure sufficient competition, will USAC please revise this criteria to include a comparison of bidder's pricing with <u>pricing for similar work completed by similarly situated firms?</u> To simply compare Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) pricing (i.e.,	USAC does not change this requirement

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		rates) between similar firms does not offer a sound basis for reasonableness since it does not consider discounts, expertise, staffing consideration, or the myriad of other factors that are included when a company develops rates/pricing for comparable <u>services</u> .	
22	RFP Page 1, Cover Page:	Would USAC please clarify whether offerors should return a completed copy of the RFP cover page with their proposals, and if so, in what volume?	Please see the answer to question #1
23	Section B.2, <i>Type of Contract</i> (Page 6)	States that “Fixed unit prices must be fully loaded and include all direct and indirect costs” including “travel.” However, fully loaded labor rates do not typically include travel costs. Would USAC please confirm that travel costs are not included in the fully loaded labor rates?	This applies to travel costs such as Contractor Personnel daily commute, etc. Please see RFP Section B. 8. K. Travel, for project/audit related travel expenses.
24	Section B.7.B.D., <i>Subcontracting</i> (Page 8)	States that “Subcontracting the Services to another firm will not be permitted.” Would USAC please clarify whether this means that subcontractors may not be used on any work under this Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA), even subcontractors included in the contractor’s original bid for the BPA? Or rather, does it mean that a firm cannot subcontract out all the work under a task order?	See the answer to question #2
25	RFP Section E.I.B, <i>Period for Acceptance of Offers</i> (page 38)	States that proposals are due August 26, 2019, at 3:00 PM; however, RFP Section E.I.C, <i>Proposal Schedule</i> (page 39), states that proposals are due August 26, 2019, at 2:00 PM. Would USAC please confirm the time that proposals are due?	See the answer to question #7
26	RFP Section E.VI.C, <i>Past Performance Evaluation (Volume III)</i> (page 43)	States that offerors must provide a list of current or recently completed contracts. Would USAC please clarify what it considers to be a recently completed contract (e.g., within the past 5 years)?	A recently completed contract is one within the last 3 years.
27		Would USAC please confirm whether the offeror should include signed copies of Attachment 3, <i>IT security Network Rules of Behavior</i> , and Attachment 4, <i>USAC</i>	The IT Rules form and Confidentiality Agreement will be provided as Attachments to the task orders. Only those individuals assigned to a Task Order will need to complete the forms.

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		<i>Confidentiality Agreement</i> , as appendices to the offeror's proposal, and if so, in what volume?	
28	Section B.1, Overview (Page 5 of 61)	"USAC anticipates conducting, at a minimum, the number of audits necessary to assess general rates of compliance with FCC rules on an annual basis among program participants." Does USAC have an estimate of the number of audits needed for the base period and the four option years?	The number of audits to be performed is determined based on the audit plan developed by year. This information is not available for the base period and each of the four option years at this time.
29	Section B.4, Where the Work Takes Place (Page 6 of 61)	Where is the supporting documentation maintained? Can supporting documentation be obtained from the audited entities electronically to minimize travel costs?	Supporting documentation is electronic as a norm.
30	Section B.7.B, Performance Requirements (Page 7 of 61)	USAC stated, "Contractor shall have a proven background of managing and performing limited scope compliance audits ." Can USAC please confirm the work to be performed under this solicitation is performance audits and not compliance audits?	The Contractor shall perform limited scope performance audits.
31	Section B.7.D, Subcontracting (Page 8 of 61)	USAC states that "subcontracting the services to another firm will not be permitted." Can USAC confirm whether or not a specific engagement team member can be subcontracted, e.g. are 1099s permitted?	See the answer to question #2
32	Section B.8.A, General Services (Page 9 of 61)	USAC stated, "Contractors shall provide compliance audit services in accordance with GAGAS issued by the Comptroller General of the United States (July 2018)..." Can USAC please confirm the work to be performed under this solicitation is performance audits and not compliance audits?	The Contractor will perform limited scope performance audits.
33	Section B.8.F, Reporting Requirements (Page 14 of 61)	In bullet #4 it states that "the advance draft of all findings should be provided to USAC no later than four (4) weeks after the completion of fieldwork". However, per Section 9.D, Draft and Final Reports, it states that "the draft audit report shall be submitted via a web-based portal provided by USAC no later than twenty (20) days after completion of fieldwork." Please consider revising the date of the draft	The draft audit report is inclusive of the draft findings. The draft audit report will be provided to USAC no later than twenty business days after completion of fieldwork.

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		report due date as it currently is due the same day as the draft audit findings.	
34	Section B.8.F, Reporting Requirements (Page 14 of 61)	In bullet #4, USAC stated, “Contractor shall prepare and submit, upon USAC request, other reports or data required, such as a capping (summary) report at the end of the engagement.” Please clarify what is expected for submission.	The Contractor will provide sufficient documentation and/or explanation to satisfy a USAC question or FCC inquiry related to an audit. This may be in the form of work papers or a management memo. The types of requests are unknown at this time.
35	Section B.8.F, Reporting Requirements (Page 14 of 61)	In bullet #7, USAC stated, “Prior to USAC’s acceptance of draft reports, final reports, workpapers...such reports and data may be evaluated by USAC, FCC or by one or more independent accounting firms of USAC’s choosing.” Who are the independent accounting firms that will perform the review?	The clause ‘independent accounting firm’ is included to address a report review as the result of a peer review or FCC request. There is no independent accounting firm selected at this time.
36	Section B.8.I, Project Management, 3. Management Review (Page 16 of 61)	How often is a Management/Project review conducted? How is this review different from the weekly status meetings?	A Management Review will be delivered to the USAC executive team when requested. This review will communicate progress and impediments in performing a task order over a specified period of time. The audience of a status meeting is the project team and the topics relate to activities completed .
37	Section B.8.J, Project Tools (Page 16 of 61)	Is MS Project software required since Gantt charts can also be prepared in Microsoft Excel?	MS Project is required.
38	Section B.9.A, Final Project Plan (Page 17 of 61)	USAC stated, “Contractor shall submit a final project plan within 10 business days of the Effective Date of the Task Order.” In Section B.10.A Project Kick-off Meeting and Training, USAC stated that training will be conducted no earlier than 10 business days after the effective date. Would USAC consider revising the due date of the Final Project Plan for no later than 10 business days after completion of the USAC provided training similar to the submission of the Audit Program?	The final project plan will be submitted 10 days after the Effective Date of the Task Order.
39	Section E.1.B, Period for Acceptance of Offers (Page 38 of 61)	Within the 2 nd bullet it states that the proposals must “be submitted to USAC Procurement Department no later than 3:00 PM ET on August 26, 2018.” However, within Section E.1.C, the table shows the time of the proposal due date as	Proposals are due August 26, 2019 no later than 2:00 PM ET.

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		2:00 PM ET. Can USAC confirm whether 2:00 or 3:00 PM is the correct time?	
40	Section E.II, Non-Disclosure Agreement (Page 39 of 61)	Please confirm that a signed non-disclosure agreement (NDA) (Attachment 6) should be included within our proposal submission? If yes, which Volume should the NDA be incorporated into and will it be excluded from page count?	The Non-Disclosure Agreement will be required and used at the time of Task Order award. It is not required as part of proposal submission in response to this solicitation.
41	Section E.VI.A, Corporate Information (Volume I) (Page 40 of 61)	Will USAC release a list of carriers that will be audited under this solicitation in order for the Offeror to identify any actual or potential conflicts of interest?	A list of beneficiaries will be provided as an appendix to each Task Order. The Offeror will perform a conflict of interest exercise per Task Order.
42	Section E.VI.B.4, Technical (Volume II) (Page 42 of 61)	Can USAC please confirm that the Offeror's certification (i) and recent final external peer review report (j) is excluded from the page count?	The AICPA certification and the peer review report can be provided as attachments to the proposal and will not be counted as part of the page limit.
43	Section E.VI.B.5, Technical (Volume II)/Key Personnel (Page 42 of 61)	Can USAC please considering allowing a 2-page limit on resumes?	For this solicitation USAC will allow a 2-page resume if needed. A one-page limit will remain when a resume is provided for a Task Order.
44	Section E.VI.E.1, Proposal Presentation (Page 44 of 61)	Would USAC please consider changing the text to permit 11-point font?	USAC standard is 12-point font.
45	Section E.IV.E, Presentation and Page Limitations (Page 44 of 61)	In bullet #1c, USAC states that any diagram, table, Gantt chart may be included as Attachments. If charts, diagrams, graphs are included as Attachments, can they be excluded from the page count?	Attachments will be excluded from the page count.
46	Section E.VI.E.2, Page Limitations (Page 44 of 61)	Will USAC please consider removing the cover page from the page count for each Volume?	No
47	Attachment 3, IT Security Network Rules of Behavior (Page 54 of 61)	Can USAC please confirm this attachment is not required until award?	Confirmed
48	Attachment 4, USAC Confidentiality Agreement (Page 57 of 61)	Can USAC please confirm this attachment is not required until award?	Confirmed
49	Type of Contract (Page 6 of 61)	According to this section, it states task orders will be based on a Time and Materials Basis with a not-to-exceed price, however, the following sentences state each task order awarded will be a firm fixed price. Please clarify if	The task orders will be Time and Material with fixed unit price

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		task orders will be Time and Materials or Firm Fixed Price.	
50	Data Analytic Experience (Page 8 of 61)	What data analytic software has been used by the previous auditors?	Data analytic software used for test procedures is the choice of the audit firm.
51		Who performed these services for USAC in the past?	The services have been performed both internally and/or by external firms
52		Is the incumbent auditor (s), allowed to bid? Are you pleased with the services they have provided to date?	This is completely a full and open competition. There is no restriction on who can or cannot bid.
53		Have there been any known significant matters, noncompliance findings or audit findings reported in previous audit reports? If so, can you provide details of those auditing or noncompliance findings or significant matters?	Yes to Q1. Details related to audit findings or other matters will be provided if needed upon award of a Task Order.
54		How many audits have been completed during the last issuance of the BPA?	Approximately 500.
55		Is a statistician required to pull samples for testing?	A statistician is required when a statistically valid sample is a requirement of a Task Order.
56		In general, what audit experiences would you like to maintain and what would you like to improve upon? We would like to address in our proposal the areas that are most important to you.	Audit firm should include their own approach to perform efficient and accurate audits.
57		How many call/task orders have been issued during the prior audit period?	USAC cannot share this information
58		How many programs are subject to audit under the call/task orders for this BPA?	Four programs are subject to audit: High Cost, Lifeline, Schools & Libraries and Rural Health Care.
59		With regard to travel, how many programs or locations require non-local travel? What locations have previous audit teams traveled to?	Audit teams have previously traveled throughout the United States and its Territories. The number of programs or locations is not available at this time since travel is dependent on the beneficiary audited and the type of services.
60		What is the estimated level of effort for each audit? What is the typical number of people on the audit team?	Level of effort is directly related to the beneficiary and services to be audited. The beneficiaries have not been selected at this time.

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61		Will USAC accept performance and compliance audit as acceptable experience if not from the telecommunications sector?	Yes
62	Section E: Instructions and Evaluation, VI: Proposal Content, B: Technical Volume II, 4: Experience, list Item i (p. 42)	States each offeror must submit certification that the firm is a licensed accounting/audit firm that complies with AICPA professional standards. Will USAC please exclude this requirement from the page limit for Technical Volume II so the Offeror may place its licensed accounting firm certificate in an Appendix to Technical Volume II?	The AICPA certification and the peer review report can be provided as attachments to the proposal and will not be counted as part of the page limit.
63	Section E: Instructions and Evaluation, VI: Proposal Content, B: Technical Volume II, 4: Experience, list Item j (p. 42)	States each offeror must include its most recent final external peer review report within the proposal. Will USAC please exclude this requirement from the page limit for Technical Volume II so the Offeror may place its most recent final external peer review report in an Appendix to Technical Volume II?	The AICPA certification and the peer review report can be provided as attachments to the proposal and will not be counted as part of the page limit.
64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combined Synopsis/Solicitation Notice Section E: Instructions and Evaluation, 1. General, B: Period of Acceptance of Offers (p. 38) Section E: Instructions and Evaluation, 1. General, C: Proposal Schedule (p. 38) 	The solicitation contains three different times for proposal submission on August 26, 2019. Will USAC please state the correct proposal submission time on August 26, 2019?	Please see the answer to question #7
65	None	Will USAC please provide an estimated (or maximum) contract value for the base year and the four option years?	USAC does not provide this information at this stage/time
66	Section E: Instructions and Evaluation Criteria, VI: Proposal Content, E: Presentation and Page Limitations, 2: Page Limitation (p. 44 to 45)	States "Page count, for each Volume including the cover page, may not exceed the below: "Please confirm that the Table of Contents is excluded from the page count for each volume.	Please see the answer to question #19
67	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section E: Instructions and Evaluation Criteria, II: Non- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please confirm the attachment number for the Non-Disclosure Agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Non-Disclosure Agreement is attachment 5

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	<p>Disclosure Agreement (p.39), "...Non-Disclosure Agreement, (see Attachment 6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section D: Attachments, Attachment 5, Non-Disclosure Agreement (p.37), "Attachment 5: Non-Disclosure Agreement..." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please provide a copy of the Non-Disclosure Agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Non-Disclosure Agreement will be required and used at the time of Task Order award. It is not required as part of proposal submission in response to this solicitation.
68	Section B: Requirements and Scope of Work, 7: Performance Requirements, D: Subcontracting (p.8), "Subcontracting the Services to another firm will not be permitted."	Please confirm that the requirement at B.7.D, (p.8) overrides all conflicting solicitation references to subcontracting, and for this proposal, subcontracting is not allowed.	See the answer to question #2
69		We noted that the solicitation Section E: pages 38 and 39 state the proposal is due at 3pm and 2pm, respectively. Which is the correct time the proposals are due?	Please see the answer to question #7