



U.S. General Services Administration

Ascend Industry Day

OCTOBER 3, 2024



DISCLAIMER

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No telephone inquiries will be accepted and requests for solicitation packages will not be honored.

GSA may or may not respond to specific questions or comments.

Any information submitted by respondents during this exchange is strictly voluntary and will not be shared.

All information in this presentation is subject to change without notice.

Ascend Industry Day

Administrative Overview

- This event will ONLY review the following about the Ascend Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA):
 - Acquisition strategy / approach
 - Requirements: Baseline, Pool 1, and Pool 1 Sub-Pools
- All microphones will be muted during the presentation.
- Comments, questions, and feedback should be submitted using the Q&A form posted on SAM.gov.
- We will not accept questions during the presentation.
- GSA will post the presentation on GSA Interact under the "Cloud and Software Community" in 10-12 business days.

Who We Are



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Ascend Industry Day

Welcome

- **Introductory remarks by GSA's Office of Information Technology Category (ITC) Deputy Assistant Commissioner, IT Acquisition Kim Garcia**
- **Purpose**
 - To review the Ascend second draft solicitation released on October 1, 2024
- **Objective**
 - An opportunity for GSA to communicate and engage with our industry partners

Ascend BPA

Industry day agenda

- Part 1: Acquisition overview
- Part 2: Requirements overview
- Part 3: Preparing for the Ascend BPA solicitation
- Part 4: Future engagements

Why?



Secure and compliant cloud solutions and services



Competition



Standardize vendor to customer interactions



Agility and ability to evolve at the pace of technology



Reduce duplication of effort - aggregate common requirements to BPA level



Speed up acquisition process - simplify ordering

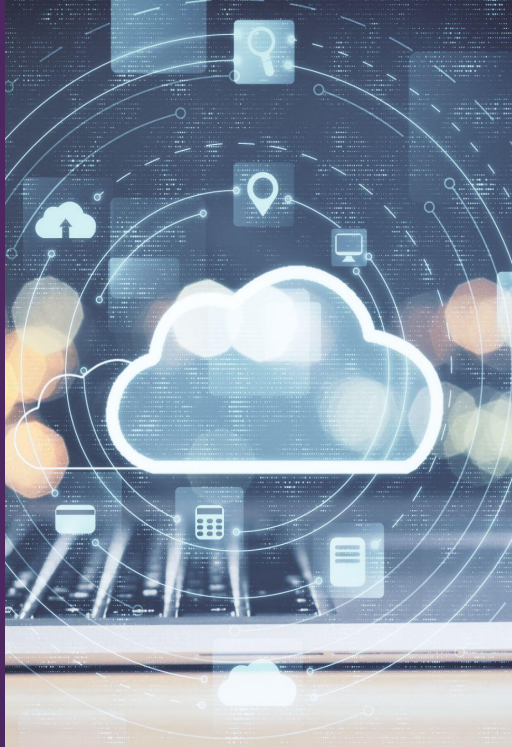


Common drivers

- Governance, best practices, cybersecurity
- Standardized catalogs
- Broader usage and spend visibility
- Roles and responsibilities

Ascend BPA

Overview



- **Scope and objectives:** The Ascend BPA will support the strategic sourcing of cloud services (i.e., Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), Software as a Service (SaaS)) and cloud related IT professional services from vendors.
- **Ascend structure:** The BPA is partitioned into three (3) primary pools with each primary pool's scope further partitioned into discrete and defined sub-pools.
 - Pool 1: IaaS, PaaS
 - Pool 2: SaaS
 - Pool 3: Cloud Related IT Professional Services
- **Socioeconomics:** In support of the agency's / buyer's effort to meet socioeconomic initiatives, large businesses seeking consideration for this BPA must demonstrate a proactive effort to achieve subcontracting goals. Small businesses that meet the requirements will also be considered for awards.

Basics



- **NEXT STEPS**

- Comments and feedback are due October 18, 2024
- GSA reviews, analyzes, and incorporates comments into Ascend BPA
- Pool 1 Solicitation

- **PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE**

- The anticipated period of performance for this agreement is eight years consisting of a three-year base period, a three-year option period, and two one-year option periods, from date of BPA award.

Basics (cont.)



- **NUMBER OF AWARDS**

- All qualifying vendors will be eligible for an award. Specific requirements are outlined in the Instructions to Quoters

- **TO TYPES:**

- Firm-fixed price
- Labor hour
- Time and materials
- Requirements TO - GSAM 552.238-199 Special Ordering Procedures Applicable When Procuring Cloud Computing On a Consumption Basis (Mar. 2022)

Cybersecurity requirements

Pool 1, Sub-Pools 1-1, 1-2, 1-3

This table highlights the major cybersecurity requirements that differentiate the individual Pool 1 Sub-Pools.

Cybersecurity Requirements	Sub-Pool 1-1	Sub-Pool 1-2	Sub-Pool 1-3
Clearance Level - Facility	"None"	"None"	"Secret"
Clearance Level - Personnel	Tier 1 Minimum (Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 4, Tier 3, Tier 5)	Tier 4 Minimum (Tier 4, Tier 3, Tier 5)	Tier 3 Minimum (Tier 3, Tier 5)
Cloud Service Offering - Impact Level	FedRAMP: Moderate DCAS: Impact Level 2	FedRAMP: High DCAS: Impact Level 4, 5	FedRAMP: — DCAS: Impact Level 6
Information Classification Level - Maximum	"Unclassified"	"Controlled Unclassified Information"	"Secret"

NOTE: Clearance levels for personnel increase in the following order (Low to High): Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 4, Tier 3, Tier 5

CHANGES TO THE ASCEND DRAFT PWS

since the first draft solicitation closed



Highlights

Changes since last draft Solicitation (not all inclusive)

PWS Footprint: Initially the PWS spanned 120 pages

Now the page count is close to 50 pages. This is primarily due to the combination of requirements added to the main BPA level versus versus by sub-pool.

Order Catalogs: Initially we required contractors to provide catalogs at the ordering level.

Now the requirement is to deliver and maintain catalogs at the BPA level following a specific format to standardize Ascend BPA catalogs.

Cybersecurity logs: Initially this requirement was directed at the contractor to provide cybersecurity logs.

Now the requirement is to enable the feature for eligible users upon request.

Authorized cloud services: The BPA includes only what is in the BPA catalog. Initially, we required the contractor to restrict usage of cloud services.

Now the requirement is for contractors to provide the capability for eligible users to restrict the usage of cloud services through configuration files and policies, which in turn, gives eligible users more control over what cloud services are being utilized.





Changes since last draft Solicitation (not all inclusive)

Cybersecurity incident reporting and incident response timelines: Aside from following timelines established by current law, we required incidents to be reported to the administrative agency (GSA).

Now the complexity of the requirement has been minimized and no longer requires reporting to the GSA. Reports further defined at the task order level for reporting to eligible users.

Carbon Pollution-Free Electricity (CFE): Initially, GSA specified required sources of CFE. *Now* the requirement is to offer cloud services that are in compliance with current environment and sustainability legislation, regulation, and policies at any given time.

FinOps: The requirements were for the contractor to monitor and automatically suspend cloud services where consumption reaches certain thresholds. *Now* the requirements are to enable metering options and allow for eligible users to set metering thresholds and automation of suspension of specific cloud services once metering thresholds are at a certain level. The contractor is also required to provide notifications to the eligible users.





Changes since last draft Solicitation (not all inclusive)

FedRAMP/DCAS Verifications: Originally, GSA was to conduct 100% verifications. We changed this partially due to the complexities in receiving FedRAMP and DCAS packages on a regular basis.

Now the contractors will provide self-attestation that all cloud services line items on their BPA catalog are FedRAMP and/or DCAS authorized. GSA or the eligible users will verify compliance intermittently. The consequences of non-compliance remain the same.

Other requirements: At first, we included many requirements at the BPA baseline level. *Now those are going to be determined by the eligible users at the TO level. For example (this list is not all inclusive):*

- Clearance levels
- Credentials
- Price estimation
- Financial optimization
- Energy efficiency (not required by law)
- Data center Service Level Agreements





New Requirements Since Last Draft Solicitation (not all inclusive)

New requirements:

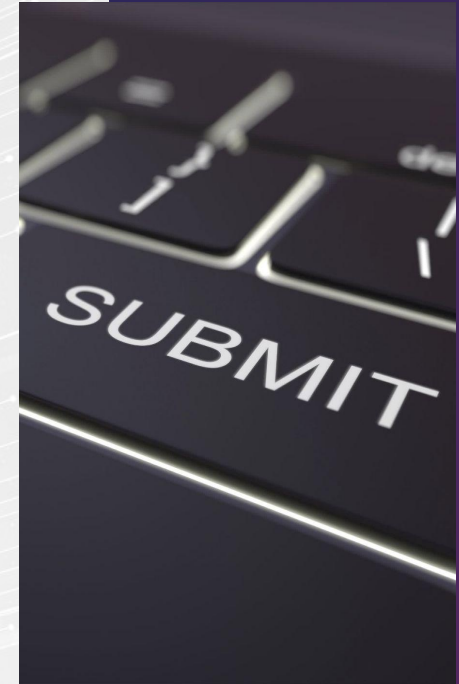
- The contractor shall provide the BPA CO with a monthly report with specified transactional data elements in the format listed in the Ascend Prices Paid Transactional Report. The report shall be delivered no later than 10 business days after the month the services were invoiced.
This monthly report is necessary for seeking Best In Class for the Ascend BPA.
- Twenty-four (24) months after the issuance of a BPA award, the BPA awardee(s) shall provide a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Progress Report, in the contractor format, to the BPA CO and annually thereafter.
GSA is seeking to understand and reduce, as far as practicable, the energy and environmental impacts of services provided under this BPA.



TIPS FOR PREPARING TO QUOTE

Preparing for Solicitation

- Must have the MAS Cloud Special Item Number (SIN) on your MAS contract
- Review final draft solicitation and associated attachments
- Validate and update your MAS level catalogs:
 - Ensure your FedRAMP / DCAS-authorized cloud services are awarded on the Cloud SIN
 - Ensure your Catalog is in a compliant format and pricing for cloud services is in compliance with MAS/Cloud SIN terms and conditions
- Get familiar with the FAStLane process
- Determine your team and subcontracting arrangements



Next Steps

- We want to hear from you before it's too late.
 - Please review the draft solicitation on SAM.gov and GSA eBuy.
- **All communications and questions concerning the Ascend BPA must go through the Ascend Contracting Officer via cloudenterprisewide@gsa.gov.**
- **Sign up for updates on the Cloud and Software page on GSA Interact buy.gsa.gov/interact.**