General Services Administration
Federal Acquisition Service
Technology Transformation Services
18F and Office of Acquisitions
1800 F St. NW | Washington, DC | 20405

Assisted Acquisition on Behalf of the Food and Nutrition Service
National Accuracy Clearinghouse (NAC) Development Services

Request for Quote

From:	Brian Burns, Contracting Officer (CO), General Services Administration (GSA), Central Office, Office of Acquisitions
Issued for:	GSA, FAS, Technology Transformation Services (TTS), 18F
Subject:	Request for Quotation (RFQ)
Date:	XXX XX, 2021
Set-aside:	Total Small Business
Contract vehicles:	MAS Information Technology's Special Item Number (SIN) 54151S for IT Professional Services All clauses, terms and conditions of the contractor's contract apply / flow down to this solicitation and resultant task order contract. In the event of a conflict between the schedule contract and an order, the terms and conditions of the schedule contract prevail.

Deadlines and response formats

Item	Date responses due	Format
Quote Submission	XXXX XX, 2021 at noon, eastern	Google Form

Government Point of Contact	
Contracting Officer	*Brian Burns*
Contracting Office	*General Services Administration, Federal Acquisition Service, Technology Transformation Services, Office of Acquisition*
Email	*brian.burns@gsa.gov*
Correspondence	*Any emails related to this RFQ shall use the email subject heading “RFQ FNS NAC - [Schedule holder’s name]”*

Important Dates, Times, and Posting Information	
RFQ posting date	*TBD, 2021*
RFQ closing date	*TBD, 2021*
Communications during RFQ posting	*The only method by which any terms and conditions of this RFQ may be changed is by a formal amendment generated by the Contracting Officer (CO). No other communication made whether oral or in writing will modify or supersede the terms of the RFQ. All communication related to the RFQ shall be directed to the CO via email.*

1.0 Background Overview

Agency Background

The mission of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is to offer nutrition assistance to millions of eligible, low-income individuals and families while ensuring program integrity in partnership with state agencies.

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (the 2018 Farm Bill) has tasked FNS SNAP with implementing the National Accuracy Clearinghouse (NAC). To help in fulfilling SNAP's mission, the NAC will be designed to allow SNAP state agencies to prevent individuals from receiving SNAP benefits in multiple states at the same time by meeting the following goals:

- The system will be populated with information about active SNAP cases provided by state agencies to include all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories of Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- State agencies will match against the nationwide NAC database to ensure SNAP applicants and participants in their state aren't already receiving benefits in another state before certifying them for SNAP benefits.
- State agencies will be notified when existing duplicate participation is discovered to allow them to take timely action to resolve the issue.

In FY2021, FNS entered into an interagency agreement (IAA) with 18F within General Services Administration (GSA) / Technology Transformation Services (TTS) to develop software for the NAC that meets Farm Bill requirements and to provide assisted acquisition services for the procurement of software development services. 18F and FNS are working together to obtain the best value possible for contractor services and collaborate throughout solicitation, competition, evaluation, implementation, and administration. In post award, 18F's role will transition from the developer of the NAC MVP to supporting the FNS vendor management team once the contractor is completely onboarded. 18F will assist FNS with providing contractor oversight and reviewing contractor work. The size and involvement of the 18F team could change over the life of this contract in accordance with the agency agreement.

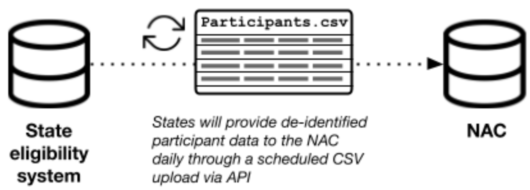
FNS is seeking a contractor to take over the development of the NAC minimally viable product (MVP) from 18F (if the MVP isn't completed by the time of award), develop any future enhancements to the NAC (including enhancements of significant size or as the result of legislation or other government mandates), manage ongoing NAC system operations, and work with state agencies to implement the NAC. With the assistance of the GSA Office of Acquisitions (OA), 18F will award the assisted acquisition on behalf of FNS and will hand over contract administration to FNS at a mutually agreed upon time (to be determined).

Systems Background

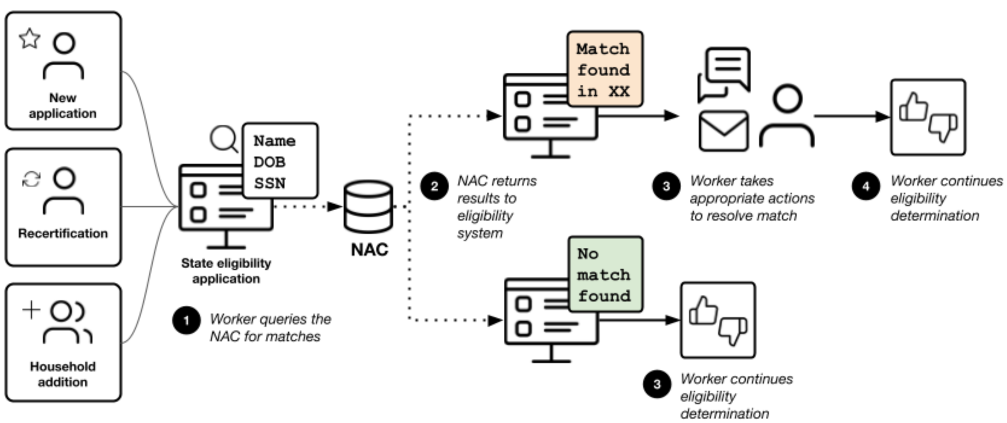
When a state implements the NAC, it will involve three overarching sets of actions:

1. Using Privacy-Preserving Record Linkage (PPRL) techniques, share de-identified information about SNAP participants to the NAC
2. Conduct matches against the NAC to discover and prevent interstate duplicate participation
3. Take appropriate actions when matches are found

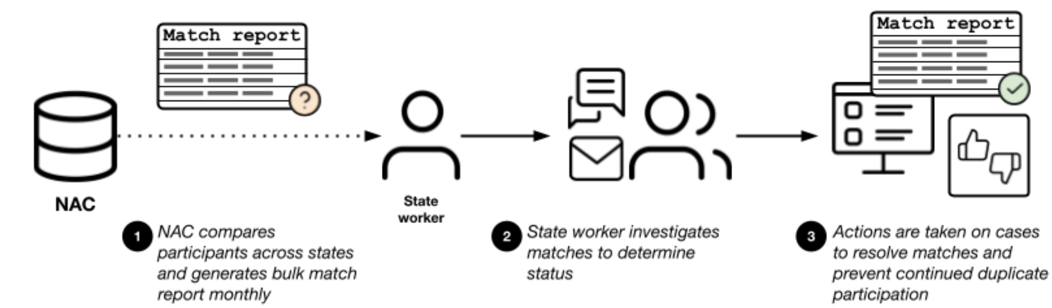
State system shares de-identified participant data to the NAC on a daily basis



Prevent duplicate participation via real-time match queries



Discover duplicate participation via a monthly bulk match process



Anticipated Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for the NAC include, but are not limited to:

- **Azure Storage Blob Service API** for publishing de-identified participant records in bulk to the NAC
- **Active Matching API** for querying de-identified participant records (or Name, DOB, SSN directly) against the NAC, which returns matches as well as an opaque match ID
- **Lookup API** that takes an opaque match ID from a prior query and returns corresponding matches

A high-level architecture diagram of the NAC and additional NAC-related information can be found on Github.

A guiding architectural principle for the NAC is to treat state agencies and their data as tenants of a platform, and accordingly apply isolation best practices and the principle of least privilege throughout the system.

Implementation and documentation is ongoing — current specifications are published to the Github repo: https://github.com/18F/piipan. This repository does not yet contain API specifications or implementations that have been updated to use Privacy Preserving Record Linkage (PPRL) techniques. An updated version supporting this aspect of the NAC product vision is anticipated by Fall 2021.

The NAC implementation described above is our ideal approach, but we anticipate that as all 53 state agencies onboard with the NAC, we'll need to be flexible and accommodate the varying technologies of state agencies.

2.0 Scope

2.1 Product Vision

The National Accuracy Clearinghouse (NAC) will make it easier for State agency workers to discover when someone is already receiving SNAP benefits in another State so they can take timely action to prevent duplicate participation while helping eligible SNAP participants receive benefits in the correct state where they live.

The American public will get a SNAP program that effectively uses taxpayer dollars by ensuring that every eligible participant is enrolled in only one state.

SNAP participants will get an accurate eligibility determination, increased assistance disenrolling in previous SNAP programs when they move between states, and can trust that their information is kept secure and their identity is not shared with a Federal information system.

State agency workers, who currently have no way to quickly discover whether another state has issued benefits to the same person, will be able to accurately determine eligibility with minimal delay and burden.

An ideal future of the NAC would include:

The project team is focused on delivering value to FNS business owners, state agency workers, SNAP applicants and participants.

- State agency workers can assess whether a participant is already receiving benefits in another state with minimal delay and burden
- Eligible SNAP participants quickly get access to entitled benefits or a clear path to resolve unintentional mistakes
- Eligible SNAP participants aren't burdened with additional required actions or adverse case actions based on false positives
- State agency workers can understand what data was matched to identify someone as receiving benefits in more than one state

Technology thoughtfully promotes collaboration between FNS teams.

- Between FNS and contractors
- Between different contractor technical teams

Code deployment is consistent, repeatable, and automated across FNS.

- Lightweight, repeatable deploy process using CI/CD
- Environments (ex. Dev, test, staging, prod) have parity
- Automated testing throughout
- Reliable, secure, compliant

Software is built with the future in mind.

- Easy to modify
- Easy to transition to new contractor teams as needed
- Non-proprietary interfaces, data formats, etc.

2.2 Backlog

The preliminary epics and user stories below are the starting point for the development of software to be provided under this task order. These preliminary epics and user stories are provided only for illustrative purposes, and do not comprise the full scope or detail of the NAC project.

FNS expects that the contractor will work closely with the FNS NAC Project Team to perform regular user research and usability testing and to develop and prioritize a full gamut of user stories as the project progresses.
Individual user stories will be refined, retracted, sub-divided, and reprioritized by the team throughout the development process.

2.2.1 Preliminary user types

State agency eligibility worker: Staff within a state agency (that has the title “eligibility worker,” “caseworker,” “benefits worker,” or something similar) and takes some or all of the following actions:

- Queries the NAC for existing matches
- Looks for contact information at another state agency related to a match
- Communicates with workers in other states to resolve matches
- Receives and responds to out-of-state inquiries about NAC matches and investigates the status of those participants

- Views a report of matches discovered by the periodic NAC bulk match process and proceeds with potential follow-up investigative work

Stage agency supervisor: Staff within a state agency that submits eligibility workers for access to the NAC, can see a list of state agency personnel currently authorized for NAC access, notifies FNS when state agency workers need to have access removed, and updates point of contact information for other states to contact their state about matches.

State agency programmer: Staff within a state agency that sets up the NAC integration into their state's eligibility system and interacts with the APIs in order to test integration.

State agency information system manager: Monitors ongoing operations and performance of state systems to ensure that programs are behaving as expected.

FNS business owner: Manages data (both where it goes and how it's used) and ensures the system is meeting program goals and requirements.

FNS system owner: Manages the environment and its functionality, decides which changes are made to the system

FNS technical lead: Approves configuration changes affecting production and pre-production environments, reviews system source code, approves pull requests, can deploy software to pre-production and production environments.

FNS Azure environment manager: Staff within FNS who deploys site and makes updates as needed, applies new configurations, authorizes new system integrations with state eligibility systems, and terminates access for system integrations when appropriate.

FNS NAC authorizing officials: Staff within FNS that authorizes access to the NAC for individual state agency workers, authorizes access to NAC metrics for FNS business analysts, and terminates access to either when appropriate.

NAC system developer: Reviews and modifies source code; can deploy software to dev environment; has ability to read system logs, reports from security scans, and performance monitoring reports.

Help desk support: Provides regular support to users, such as password resets, user group updates, and other tier 1-2 requests

Security analyst: Monitors and audits system logs, and views reports from security scans.

Security administrator: If necessary, this user can move, modify, or delete audit logs with authorization of a second authorized person.

2.2.2 Preliminary user stories

Epic: State agencies need to be able to share SNAP participant data to the NAC

- As a state agency programmer, I need to be able to share bulk SNAP data of current SNAP participants to the NAC in an automated way to be able to match records.
    - I need to be able to generate de-identified participant data (e.g., using Privacy Preserving Record Linkage techniques) that transforms PII to protect against misuse of participant's sensitive information
    - I need to be able to normalize data that includes PII so that it can be compared with other de-identified records so that I can correctly identify cross-state matches
- As a state agency programmer, I want to know how to interact with the bulk upload APIs so that I can test my integration.
    - I want a well-documented API
    - I want a test environment that I can develop against
    - I want feedback on the results of my bulk uploads so that I know when there were errors and which inputs caused problems
- As a state agency programmer, I want a stable API to interact with so that I don't have to modify my code multiple times.

Epic: State agencies need to be able to conduct matches in the NAC

- As a state agency eligibility worker, I need to be able to conduct matches in the NAC when someone applies for or is being recertified for SNAP benefits so I know if the individual is already receiving benefits in another state.
- As a state agency programmer, I want my state's eligibility system to automatically query the NAC (during application / recertification / add a household member) via API so that I can test integration and confirm the API is running properly.

- As a state agency eligibility worker, I want to know if new matches are found in the course of approving an application.
- As a state agency eligibility worker, I want to know when there are no matches so that I can proceed with certifying benefits.
- As a state agency eligibility worker, I want to know when there are matches because I have to take follow-up steps to verify, provide notice, and an opportunity to contest. (I can't certify the SNAP applicant/participant for benefits until I have verified that they are not already participating in another state.)
- As a state agency supervisor, I want to be able to prove that we used the NAC (during the application/recertification/add a household member process) so that FNS audits / QA can verify that my state is in compliance.

Epic: State agencies need be able to follow up with another state agency in response to NAC matches they initiated

- As a state agency eligibility worker, I need to be able to communicate with the other state agency when a match is found by the NAC, so I can verify the match information and prevent duplicate participation.
- As a state agency eligibility worker, I want to be able to address NAC matches reported by other states so that participants who are eligible for benefits in my state continue to receive them and participants who have moved can have their cases closed to allow them to receive benefits in their new state of residence.
- As a state agency eligibility worker, I want to know if all matches relevant to an applicant have been resolved.
- As a state agency worker, I want to be able to look up a single match based on the lookup ID shared with me by the initiating state.
- As a state agency worker at the matching state, I want to be able to look up all household members involved in a match based on the lookup ID shared by the initiating state.
- As a state agency worker at the matching state, I need to be able to communicate with the initiating state to verify information and share the match resolution for a SNAP applicant/participant with the initiating state.

Epic: The NAC needs to conduct monthly matches for existing participants, notify both states of any matches, and state agencies need to take action to address duplicate participation

- As a state agency eligibility worker, I need to be notified by the NAC when there are any matches of existing participants.

- As a state agency eligibility worker, I need to be able to communicate with the other state agency about an active match once notified by the NAC, so I can verify the match information in order to take possible action on the case.
- As a state agency information system manager, I want my state eligibility system to query the NAC via API on a monthly basis so I can see if any existing participants are enrolled in another state.

Epic: FNS business owners need to be able to measure whether the NAC is working successfully

- As the FNS business owner, I need to be able to view metrics on NAC performance to know when the NAC is preventing duplicate participation
- As a FNS business owner, I want to know that the backlog of pre-existing matches is being addressed.

2.3 Expectations

2.3.1 High Level Quality Attributes

The NAC project will use agile software development principles with robust documentation and human-centered design. The development process should be collaborative and iterative with open, regular, and frequent communication between FNS, 18F partners, and the contractor. Even though the NAC project is being developed using agile principles, FNS is mandated to follow government compliance rules, even those that may not align with agile practices (i.e. SDLC documentation requirements). FNS expects the contractor to produce training materials and clearly written documentation that follows the Plain Language Act to be used for both team communications and guidance for state agencies.

FNS expects that the development process will consist of sprint cycles. The FNS NAC Project Team will work with other stakeholders, weigh business needs, set direction, and make prioritization choices. The contractor will assist FNS with product management. The COR and additional FNS subject matter experts will be available to assist in the development process.

It's imperative that we prioritize the following attributes when building the NAC:

- **System/data security**
  We need to protect the PII of millions of people – the best way to do that is

not to collect PII at all through de-identification (e.g., by applying Privacy Preserving Record Linkage (PPRL) techniques).

- **Data accuracy**
  The information used for the match needs to be accurate, otherwise the NAC isn't useful.

- **System availability/responsiveness**
  State agency team members need to be able to connect to the NAC and get responses in near real-time as they are certifying applicants.

- **Usability**
  Uploading data and integrating APIs can't be burdensome otherwise state agencies won't implement the NAC. If state agency workers find the process too hard, they may not use the NAC or use it incorrectly.

- **Future capacity**
  The NAC needs to be able to adapt to potential future legislative requirements and business needs. For example, FNS could collaborate with other benefit programs to bring other information into the foundation we build for the NAC.

2.3.2 System Enhancements, Maintenance, and Authority to Operate (ATO)

The contractor may need to take over development of the NAC MVP at the time of contract award. This could include significant enhancements (including usability or design enhancements) to the MVP based on what FNS and 18F discovered during its development.

The ATO process has begun for the 18F MVP and is hosted within the FNS Azure environment. We expect that any iterative NAC development completed in 2021 will require modification of ATO documentation and reassessment by the contractor. The contractor will need to complete the ATO process for the NAC if 18F does not complete development of the MVP by the start of this contract.

The contractor will provide operational support and address relevant security issues to maintain an authority to operate (ATO). Since the NAC system is a high-value asset, it will need to be pen-tested every 2-3 years and disaster tested annually.

Once the MVP is deployed to production, the contractor will continue development of the NAC based on user needs, agency priorities, and legislative mandates. The contractor will assist with troubleshooting, bug resolution, operational support, and incident response for the NAC.

2.3.3 State Relationship Management

The contractor will assist in coordinating communication with NAC state partners, including research sessions, project check-ins, technical support, and other collaboration for both new states coming on board to integrate the NAC and existing states that have already integrated the NAC.

2.3.4 Training

The contractor will train states on the NAC system by presenting clear, easy-to-understand webinars and user guides when states onboard to the NAC and when new features are added.

2.3.5 Help Desk Support

At least one contractor must be available during the hours of 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM Eastern Time, Monday through Friday to assist states with help desk support tickets such as password resets, user group updates, and other Tier I and II type requests. An answering machine that is checked regularly is acceptable in combination with a regularly checked email account. Availability needed outside these hours will be scheduled on an ad hoc basis for events such as disaster recovery testing, deployment testing, or coordinated calls with Guam.

Users of the system will be limited to state employees and can vary from 5,000 users to over 50,000 depending on many factors including if state eligibility workers from every state will be accessing the NAC.

Additional help desk support can be found in Appendix 3 - Help Desk Support Plan.

3.0 Anticipated Period of Performance and Budget

The initial (base) period of performance (PoP) for this task order is 12 months. There will also be two (2) option periods of 12 months each, for a total possible period of performance of 36 months. The PoP is expected to begin on December 27, 2021.

Schedule holders are expected to submit a quote assuming an approximate budget of $1.6-1.7M per year (for software development services only). Schedule holders are expected to submit a quote reflective of its solution to fulfill the government's requirements.

4.0 Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan

The government uses the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP, "kwasp") to monitor the quality of the contractor's performance and deliverables throughout the contract. This QASP provides the government a proactive way to avoid unacceptable or deficient performance and provides the basis for performance ratings in the Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS, "see-pars").

Because there are many acceptable approaches to this task order's objectives, this QASP provides high-level performance standards and describes their purpose. As part of the award kick-off process, the contractor will work with the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) to create a detailed set of performance standards and accompanying methods of assessment. Appendix 3 "QASP Implementation Guide" shall serve as the default and starting point for revisions.

The COR will perform the assessments detailed in the QASP Implementation Guide, though they may choose to delegate tasks to another FNS staff member where that other staff member has relevant subject matter expertise. **It's expected that assessment intervals will begin more frequently and can be gradually lengthened as the contractor and government build a collaborative relationship.**

The QASP Implementation Guide may be updated at the discretion of the COR and should serve as a living document that reflects the working standards and processes of the team. Updates to these overarching procedures may be made by modification to the task order.

Contractor deliverables may be measured against each element of the QASP at the interval listed for each element (ex. every sprint). The contractor is expected to pass each element of the QASP when assessed to avoid unacceptable or deficient performance.

The QASP is used as a means to inspect and accept all deliverables within each sprint.

Deliverable	**Tested Code**
Performance Standard(s)	Code delivered under the order must have substantial automated test code coverage
Acceptable Quality Level	Minimum of 90% of code covered by automated tests. All areas of code are meaningfully tested
Method of Assessment	Combination of manual review and execution of the automated tests

Deliverable	**Properly Styled Code**
Performance Standard(s)	GSA 18F Front- End Guide
Acceptable Quality Level	0 linting errors and 0 warnings
Method of Assessment	Combination of manual review and automated testing

Deliverable	**Accessible User Interface**
Performance Standard(s)	Adherence to Section 508, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA standards, GSA 18F Accessibility Guide, and Digital.gov Accessibility Guide.

Acceptable Quality Level	0 errors reported using an automated scanner and 0 errors reported in manual testing. Required agency-specific documentation of the accessibility status is completed.
Method of Assessment	Combination of automated and manual testing with tools equivalent to Accessibility Insights and/or the DHS Trusted Tester process.

Deliverable	**Deployed code**
Performance Standard(s)	Code must successfully build and deploy into staging and production environments.
Acceptable Quality Level	Deployment from version control of a successful build should be automated using industry standard tooling. In this project, we expect: [X] To be able to trigger builds manually. [X] For builds to trigger automatically from version control (e.g. on merge). [X] Build and deployment to a non-production (staging) environment. [X] Build and deployment to a production environment.
Method of Assessment	Combination of manual review and automated testing

Deliverable	**Documentation**

Performance Standard(s)	Summary of user stories completed every sprint. All dependencies are listed and the licenses are documented. Major functionality in the software/source code is documented. Individual methods are documented inline in a format that permits the use of tools such as JSDoc. System diagram is provided. Relevant security controls are documented and kept up to date. Agile System Development Lifecycle Development (SDLC) documentation will need to be maintained, see Appendix 2 for template.
Acceptable Quality Level	Combination of manual review and automated testing, if available
Method of Assessment	Manual review

Deliverable	**Secure code**
Performance Standard(s)	Code is free of known static and runtime vulnerabilities
Acceptable Quality Level	Code submitted must be free of medium- and high-level static and dynamic security vulnerabilities
Method of Assessment	Tests free of medium- and high-level vulnerabilities from a static testing SaaS (such as Snyk or npm audit), from dynamic testing tools like OWASP ZAP (with documentation explaining any false positives), and ongoing code review informed by OWASP or similar standards.

Deliverable	**User research**

Performance Standard(s)	Representative end users should be involved and consulted throughout the design and development process at regular intervals through both generative and evaluative user research methods. This may include methods such as user interviews and participatory design workshops to inform solutions as well as gathering feedback on design concepts via mockups or code-based prototypes and performing usability testing with final designs, among other activities. The following resources should be referenced: 18F UX Guide, Informed Consent Guide, and Usability Test Heuristics.
Acceptable Quality Level	Research plans and artifacts from usability testing and/or other research methods with end users are available at the end of every applicable sprint, in accordance with the contractor's research plan. Acceptable documentation for this standard can be found here.
Method of Assessment	FNS will manually evaluate the artifacts based on a research plan provided by the contractor at the end of the second sprint and every applicable sprint thereafter.

5. Contract Place of Performance and Contract Type

5.1 Place of Performance

Any work done, whether onsite or offsite, must be covered by the rate agreed upon between the government and contractor. The contractor is expected to be available during the hours of 10:00am to 4:00pm Eastern Time, Monday through Friday. Contractor staff are not expected to work federal holidays.

The contractor can work remotely and won't be required to work at a government facility; however, occasional travel to government facilities in Alexandria, Virginia may be required for some team members. All work performed under this contract must be performed within the United States. Actual travel costs to government facilities will be reimbursed in accordance with federal travel regulation. All travel must be approved by the COR prior to booking.

5.2 Contract Type

The government intends to award a time and materials (T&M) type task order. All rates shall be fully burdened and T&M rates are fixed at the time of award. The contractor must specify whether the fixed hourly rate for each labor category applies to labor performed by (1) the contractor; (2) subcontractors; and/or (3) divisions, subsidiaries, or affiliates or the contractor under a common control.

6.0 Operating Constraints (Non-functional Requirements)

6.1 System Requirements

FNS desires to adopt a comprehensive and unified approach for handling the multiple systems at FNS to best fit its near-term and long-term goals. To aid this unified approach, the technology and the operating constraints for the NAC system are outlined below.

- The NAC must not establish a persistent datastore containing the PII of SNAP participants.
- Through each step in the task lifecycle, the FNS NAC Project Team will provide the final approval on whether the approach, proposed plan and intended production aligns with the program's needs.
- The contractor should adhere to the program regulations from a USDA and FNS security, technology and compliance perspective.
- The contractor may also be required to provide recommendations on additional standards or regulations that the system needs to comply with.
- The contractor shall define and gain program approval of defect resolution procedures during the development, testing (e.g. penetration testing), maintenance and operation of each task.
- No portion of any tool or process may be proprietary to the contractor. All products related to or created as part of this project must be accessible to

FNS and easily transferable as needed at FNS' discretion to other contractors or stakeholders.
- Upon the successful completion of each task, the contractor shall transfer ownership, intellectual property rights and data rights to the program.
- The contractor may not publish any material or discuss this project in any public forum without the express written consent of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. This ban includes a prohibition against any press releases, project summaries or case studies posted on the contractor's website, or discussing the project in any public forums.
- Compliance with NIST 800-53 Security and Privacy Controls for Information Systems and Organizations standards

6.2 Environment Requirements

The system will be deployed to the Microsoft Azure Government cloud infrastructure provided by FNS.

Deployments are automated via continuous integration/continuous deployment tools, including FNS-managed Team Foundation Server (TFS) 2017. FNS will provide the necessary Azure and TFS configuration information to the contractor so that they can use these systems to version control source code and automate builds/tests/deployments.

The system is composed of several subsystems:
- Extract-Transform-Load (ETL) subsystem with per-state data and service isolation
- Orchestrator API implementing the external API interfaces exposed to state eligibility systems
- Query Tool & Collaboration web app
- Dashboard web app and the metric subsystem

Anticipated components that haven't yet been developed include:
- Batch-driven passive match functionality
- Collaboration API and data store

The system is built within the Microsoft ecosystem using:
- Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) and Function-as-a-Service (FaaS) offerings within Azure Government;

- Azure Resource Management (ARM) templates and bash scripts using the Azure Command Line Interface (CLI) for Infrastructure-As-Code;
- C# as the System's primary implementation programming language with the .NET Core SDK;
- ASP.NET and Razor Pages are used for the frontend web applications, along with judicious use of JavaScript.

Newly developed components should be built in a manner consistent with these technology ecosystem choices.

Finally, the USDA eAuthentication (eAuth) identity system shall be used to authenticate users to the System's web applications, in accordance with USDA policy.

6.3 Software Requirements

The software architecture must be extensible to allow for future development including the addition of new statutorily-mandated data reporting. The code base must incorporate analytics, monitoring, testing, and measurement tools. Application design and development must use plain language to the extent practical.

6.4 Design Requirements

In order to comply with the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act, any website that is developed, modernized, enhanced, maintained, or otherwise delivered as a result of this contract shall be in compliance with the website standards of the Technology Transformation Services of the General Services Administration at https://designsystem.digital.gov/website-standards/.

The contractor will employ the U.S. Web Design System (USWDS), adhere to USDA design and brand guidance for digital products, and create design elements that are reusable by FNS.

6.5 System Access

All contractor personnel working under the task order will need to be U.S. citizens and obtain:

- Government-furnished equipment (GFE) from FNS. All work for FNS must be performed on government-furnished laptops.
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (HSPD-12) personal identity verification (PIV) card
- Medium risk security clearance (Tier 2) if they will not have access to PII

Contractors may have to establish multi-factor authentication (MFA) to access systems that require government-furnished laptops with PIV cards.

6.6 System Development Life Cycle (SDLC) Requirements

The contractor shall comply with the FNS Agile System Development Life Cycle (SDLC) framework (see Appendix 2). The contractor shall refer and adhere to the program provided artifacts (such as guides, templates, standards, formats, documents, and reports) to develop task deliverables. The existing artifacts may include aspects from project initiation to closeout (e.g. initiation, project planning, product phase, sustainment, and closeout).

The contractor will be responsible for System Development Life Cycle (SDLC) practices. Activities include, but are not limited to:

- Adhere to FNS Stage Gate Review protocols and documentation requirements
- Manage the development, coordination, review, and delivery of project and security-related documentation and deliverables.
- Create customer-facing documentation for technical enterprise software and developer tools.
- Document complicated procedures in a simple and understandable manner and compose material according to set standards and templates.
- Coordinate, facilitate, write, edit, track progress, and package documentation for review and approval among the appropriate stakeholders.

7.0 Personnel Skills and Knowledge

The contractor must designate who will fill these three key personnel roles: Facilitator, Technical Lead, and Security Lead. The roles may be filled by the same person or by different people and as a result, there should be between one and three people identified as key personnel.

The Facilitator will be a direct liaison to the government product team. They will be responsible for ensuring a healthy and effective team, including both government and contractor personnel. This person will ensure that all contractor personnel are aligned around a set of shared team goals and have clear, actionable tasks that support those goals. This person will be the focal point for all contractor activities including SDLC activities. This person should have a background as a scrum master, product manager, agile coach, or a similar role.

The Technical Lead must have a full understanding of the technical approach to be used by the contractor's team and will be responsible for ensuring that the contractor's team follows that approach. This person will ensure that the technical approach is robust, scalable, and maintainable. They will also manage technical debt and provide strategic input to their government partners about shared services at FNS. This person should have a background as a DevOps engineer, software engineer, or equivalent.

The Security Lead must have a full understanding of the security approach and compliance requirements to be used by the contractor's team and will be responsible for ensuring that the contractor's team follows that approach. This person should have a background in web application and cloud security, as well as data security – including cryptographic techniques and data loss prevention. They should have experience with Authority To Operate (ATO) processes under the Federal Information Security Act (FISMA).

7.2 Key Personnel Substitution

If one or more of the key personnel, for whatever reason, becomes, or is expected to become, unavailable for work under this contract for a continuous period exceeding 30 work days, or is expected to devote substantially less effort to the work than indicated in the quote or initially anticipated, the contractor shall immediately notify the Contracting Officer and shall, subject to the concurrence of the Contracting Officer, promptly replace the personnel with personnel of at least substantially equal ability and qualifications.

Each request for approval of substitutions must be in writing and contain a detailed explanation of the circumstances necessitating the proposed substitutions. The request must also contain a complete resume for the proposed substitute and other information requested or needed by the Contracting Officer to evaluate the proposed substitution. The Contracting Officer and the Contracting Officer's representative (COR) shall evaluate the contractor's request and the Contracting Officer shall promptly notify the contractor of their decision in writing.

If the CO determines that suitable and timely replacement of key personnel who have been reassigned, terminated, or have otherwise become unavailable for the contract work is not reasonably forthcoming, or that the resultant reduction of productive effort would be so substantial as to impair the successful completion of the contract or the service order, the contract may be terminated by the CO for default or for the convenience of the government, as appropriate. If the CO finds the contractor at fault for the condition, the contract price or fixed fee may be equitably adjusted downward to compensate the government for any resultant delay, loss, or damage.

7.3 Skills

The contractor must provide a cross functional team that is experienced in working in an agile process. They must be comfortable delivering value iteratively and be able to pivot quickly based on a continuous learning environment. The contractor should deliver working software early in the post-award period and iteratively improve the software through ongoing development sprints.

The relevant skills for this project must include:

- Project management
- Product management
- .NET Core and Azure cloud platform
- Software engineering (Cloud practitioner)
- Business analysis for Cloud architecture
- Site reliability engineering
- Continuous integration and continuous deployment
- Configuration management/DevOps engineering
- Automated testing (unit/integration/end-to-end)
- Identity / authentication engineering
- Agile development practices
- Usability research (e.g. stakeholder interviews, usability testing)
- User experience and product design
- Wireframing, prototyping, and user task-flow development
- Content design and technical copywriting
- Training webinars and user guides
- User outreach and user adoption strategy
- Relationship management
- SDLC experience

- Web application security
- Cloud security
- Data security
- Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) compliance (moderate or higher is required) and its associated Authority To Operate (ATO) processes

8.0 Administration

8.1 Government Personnel

This contract will be administered by the following individuals, who will also monitor contractor performance:

- GSA Contracting Officer (CO): Brian Burns
- GSA Contracting Officer's Representative (COR): TBD at time of award
- FNS Contracting Officer's Representative (COR): Veronica Brown

The government will notify the contractor if a change occurs to either the CO or COR. Specifically for the COR, the contractor will receive a copy of the "COR Delegation of Authority" assignment letter when a COR is assigned, and the contractor will also receive a letter rescinding the COR's delegation when appropriate.

The government oversight team also includes the FNS NAC Project Team and Technical Lead (Tech Lead).

This task order will be awarded by the General Services Administration (GSA) - Office of Acquisitions (OA) under an assisted acquisition authority. At some point, the task order administration may be transferred to the FNS Contract Management Division (CMD). The transfer will occur via contract modification and will impact the invoicing process and will remove any GSA personnel from the task order. Details about the new invoicing process will be provided in the modification.

8.2 Authorities and Delegations

8.2.1 The CO is the only person authorized to enter into or terminate this agreement, modify any terms or conditions of this agreement, waive any requirement of this agreement, or accept nonconforming work.

8.2.2 The CO will designate a COR at the time of award. The COR will be responsible for technical monitoring of the contractor's performance and deliverables. The COR will be appointed in writing and a copy of the appointment will be furnished to the contractor. Changes to this delegation will be made by written changes to the existing appointment or by issuance of a new appointment.

8.2.3 The COR is not authorized to perform, formally or informally, any of the following actions:

- Promise, award, agree to award, or execute any agreement, modification, or notice of intent that changes or may change this contract
- Waive or agree to modification of the delivery schedule
- Make any final decision on any contract matters subject to the disputes clause
- Terminate, for any reason, the contractor's right to proceed
- Obligate in any way, the payment of money by the government

The contractor shall comply with the written or oral direction of the CO or authorized representative(s) acting within the scope and authority of the appointment memorandum. The contractor need not proceed with direction that it considers to have been issued without proper authority. The contractor shall notify the CO in writing, with as much detail as possible, when the COR has taken an action or has issued direction (written or oral) that the contractor considers to exceed the COR’s appointment, within 3 days of the occurrence.

Unless otherwise provided in this agreement, the contractor assumes all costs, risks, liabilities, and consequences of performing any work it is directed to perform that falls within any of the categories defined in paragraph 8.2.3. prior to receipt of the CO’s response issued under paragraph 8.2.4 of this clause.

8.2.4 The CO shall respond in writing within 30 days to any notice made under paragraph 8.2.3 of this clause.

8.2.5 The contractor shall provide copies of all correspondence to the CO and the COR.

8.2.6 Any action(s) taken by the contractor, in response to any direction given by any person acting on behalf of the government or any government official other than the CO or the COR acting within his or her appointment, shall be at the contractor’s risk.

8.3 Administration

Within five (5) days after award, the contractor must provide the name of the individual responsible for centralized contract administration in support of all work performed under this order. This individual, at a minimum, will serve as the point of contact for contractual issues, invoices, and the contractor representative for annual performance reviews (see section 8.5).

The information, inclusive of the name of the point of contact, email, and phone number, shall be uploaded through the Assisted Services Shared Information System (ASSIST) Collaboration tool.

8.4 Post-Award Orientation Conference

The government's oversight team (CO, COR, and Business Owner) will hold a kickoff meeting (or post-award conference) with the selected contractor within thirty (30) calendar days of the acquisition award. This kickoff will include the selected contractor’s team and other relevant government staff to review and clarify the project’s objectives, expectations from the government, and address any questions the selected contractor may have.

8.5 Performance

In accordance with FAR 8.406-7 and FAR 42.1502(c), past performance evaluations shall be prepared at least annually, at the time the work under the order is completed (to include options), and when an order, individually, exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold. These evaluations are generally for the entity, division, or unit that performed the contract or order.

1. Evaluating Performance: The General Services Administration uses the Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) module as the secure, confidential, information management tool to facilitate the performance evaluation process. CPARS enables a comprehensive evaluation by

capturing comments from both TTS and the contractor. The website for CPARS is http://www.cpars.gov. Completed CPARS evaluations are sent to the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS) which may then be used by the federal acquisition community in making source selection decisions. PPIRS assists acquisition officials by serving as the single source for contractor past performance data.

2. CPARS Registration: Each award requiring an evaluation must be registered in CPARS. The awardee will receive several automated emails. Within thirty days of award, the contractor will receive an email that contains user account information, as well as the applicable contract and order number(s) assigned. The contractor will be granted one user account to access all evaluations.

3. CPARS Training: The contractor may sign up for CPARS training. A schedule of classes will be posted to the CPARS training site and updated as needed.

4. Contractor Representative (CR) Role: All evaluations will be sent to the CR named on your award. The CR will be able to access CPARS to review and comment on the evaluation. If your CR is not already in the CPARS system, the Contracting Officer will request the name and email address of the person that will be responsible for the CR role on your award.

Once an evaluation is ready to be released by the government, the CR will receive an email that the evaluation is ready for their review and comment. The email will indicate the time frame the CR has to respond to the evaluation. The CR may return the evaluation earlier than this date.

TTS shall provide for review at a level above the Contracting Officer (i.e. contracting director) to consider any disagreement between TTS and the contractor regarding TTS' evaluation of the contractor. Based on the review, the individual at a level above the Contracting Officer will issue the ultimate conclusion on the performance evaluation. Copies of the evaluations, contractor responses, and review comments, if any, will be retained as part of the contract file.

9.0 Invoicing

9.1 Invoicing Schedule

The contractor may invoice once services or products for the awarded type and quantity of the order have been delivered, inspected (which includes, but is not limited to, confirming that the services were rendered and/or product(s) were delivered and functioning properly, and are accessible and usable by the teams using the product), and accepted by written confirmation of the COR through the CO. Acceptance will occur electronically via GSA's electronic web-based order processing system, currently ASSIST, by accepting the invoice generated by the contractor. Electronic acceptance of the invoice by the COR is considered concurrence and acceptance of services.

The contractor must submit a final invoice within 60 calendar days from government acceptance. No further charges are to be billed following the final invoice submission. A completed and signed Release of Claims (GSA Form 1142) shall be uploaded to the ASSIST with the submission of a final invoice.

9.2 Content of Invoice

In addition to the items below, the contractor shall submit proper invoices as specified in FAR 52.212-4(g):

- GSA Order Number
- Order ACT Number
- Prompt Payment Discount
- Remittance Address
- POP for Billing Period
- POC and Phone Number
- Invoice Amount
- Final Invoice Marked as "Final"
- Name of Product, Quantity of Product, and Part Number of Product matching award documents.

In addition to the requirements for a proper invoice specified in FAR 52.212-4 (g), invoices must include the Prompt Payment clause, FAR 52.212-4(i)(2) and Payments under Time and Materials and Labor Hours Contracts, FAR 52.232-7.

9.3 Invoice Submission

The contractor shall submit invoices electronically by logging into the ASSIST portal, navigating to the appropriate order, and creating the invoice for that order. This is the only acceptable means for invoice submissions.

No paper invoices shall be accepted. For additional assistance, contact the ASSIST Helpdesk at 877-472-4877 or via email at assist.servicedesk@gsa.gov.

9.4 Limitation of Funds

The contractor shall notify the CO in writing when it has reason to believe that the costs it expects to incur under this contract in the next 60 days, when added to all costs previously incurred, will exceed 75 percent of (1) the total amount so far allotted to the contract by the government or, (2) if this is a cost-sharing contract, the amount then allotted to the contract by the government plus the contractor's corresponding share. The notice shall state the estimated amount of additional funds required to continue performance for the period specified in the contract.

Sixty days before the end of the period specified in the contract, the contractor shall notify the CO in writing of the estimated amount of additional funds, if any, required to continue timely performance under the contract or for any further period specified in the contract or otherwise agreed upon, and when the funds will be required.

10.0 Submission Instructions and Evaluation

10.1 Process Timeline

- Due diligence sessions **OR** Q&A [to be decided prior to release of the final RFQ]/ Amendments Issued prior to RFQ closing (within 14 calendar days of release of final RFQ)
- Quote submission via Google Form with attachments using templates provided (30 calendar days after release of final RFQ)
- Evaluating quotes by looking at:
    - Code Repositories
    - Technical Approach / User Research Plan / FISMA Experience
    - Team Structure
    - Technical Challenge Scenarios

    - Price quote
- Government sends Optional Advisory Notices
- Oral interviews are conducted via 60-minute video sessions
- Award decisions are made 2-3 weeks following oral interviews

10.2 Quote Submission Guidelines

10.2.1 Before submitting a quote - Due Diligence sessions

Clear and well-written requests make it easier for competitors to submit better quotes. Contractors who want to submit a quote can meet with FNS and TTS teams for a due diligence session. This gives Contractors a better understanding of the FNS mission, and current work before they submit a quote. They also let Contractors ask questions in private, without sharing details with competitors. The due diligence sessions will replace the traditional Q&A process. The Government will keep all proprietary information confidential. Each session will be no more than 60 minutes and will be conducted via video conference.

The Government will provide competing Contractors equal access to data and information. Any questions asked that result in a change to the RFQ or any related documents, the CO will issue an amendment to the contractors bidding on this RFQ.

Representations by officers and agents do not represent the whole Government. Contractor questions and Government responses given during due diligence are unofficial. Contractors can ask for an official response during the process, and the Government will try to provide one.

10.2.2 Submission checklist

All quotes must be submitted using this Google form and include the following materials:

- [ ] Maximum of 2 code repositories with 2-page narrative about the project for each code repository (Factor 1).

- [ ] Technical approach and team structure report
  7 pages maximum, including diagrams, 12-point font.

- [ ] Demonstrate experience in FISMA moderate or high for no more than 2 projects

1 page maximum per project, 12-point font.

- ❏ Responses to each technical challenge scenario
  1 page maximum for each technical challenge scenario response, 12-point font, 2 pages in total.
- ❏ Price Quote (spreadsheet)
- ❏ Conflict of Interest (signature required)
- ❏ FAR 52.204-24 Provision
- ❏ (Optional) Contractor Teaming Arrangement (CTA) - if you're submitting a quote with a teaming partner. More details at: https://www.gsa.gov/buying-selling/purchasing-programs/gsa-schedules/schedule-features/Contractor-team-arrangements

Only submit information explicity requested in this RFQ. Do not include assumptions, caveats, or exceptions in any part of your submission. Failing to follow these instructions may result in removal from consideration for the award.

10.2.3 Optional Advisory Notice

In an effort to save both the government and contractor's time and resources, this procurement will be conducted using a phased approach.

After Technical Evaluation Phase 1 submissions are evaluated, schedule holders will receive an advisory notice from the Contracting Officer (or delegate) via email.

- **If all Factors within Phase 1 receive a rating of "Some or High Confidence,"** the advisory notice will inform the schedule holder if they are among the most highly competitive and will be invited to participate in Phase 2 - Oral Interviews.
- **If any Factor within Phase 1 receives a rating of "Low Confidence," for any factor,** the advisory notice will inform the respondent it is unlikely to be a viable competitor.

Notwithstanding the advice provided by the Contracting Officer in response to Phase 1 submissions, schedule holders may elect to participate in the next phase by notifying the Contracting Officer via email.

In making a decision to proceed regardless of being advised not to continue, please note that technical evaluation factors are in descending or of importance. Also, all technical evaluation factors, when combined, are more important than price; as non-price ratings (i.e., High Confidence) become closer, price will become more important.

Schedule holders that are notified they are not considered among the most highly viable competitors, but still choose to proceed to the next phase, must notify the Contracting Officer via email not later than 24 hours after delivery of the advisory recommendation. Failure to notify the Contracting Officer within the 24-hour period will serve as notice that the schedule holder no longer wants to be considered for award and does not want to participate in the next phase.

10.2.4 Evaluation Factor 1: Code repository

The contractor should demonstrate **a minimum of one (1) to a maximum of two (2)** relevant projects by **submitting source code examples/repositories for each project**. Along with version-controlled source code repository submissions, contractors must submit a maximum **two (2) page narrative for each corresponding project(s) discussing their general relevant project experience and details (total of up to four (4) pages for both projects)**.

Narratives must correspond with the source code submissions. Each project narrative must be no more than **two (2)** standard pages using 12-point font. This page count does not include the repository itself. Please provide a client point of contact (email address and telephone number) for each project submitted.

The source code must have been developed by either the contractor itself, a teaming partner that is proposed in response to this RFQ, or an employee or teaming partner of the contractor that will be assigned to the project.

For source code submissions, contractors must submit (at a minimum):

- The references to one or more source code samples, which must be either links to web-based repositories (either credentialed or public) **OR**
- Equivalent version-controlled repositories that provide TTS with the full revision history for all files (for example, a zipped folder containing a Git-backed project, including the Git metadata).

Each source code sample should include:

- Automated testing of the code base

- Evidence of the use of a continuous integration system
- Architecture documentation

At least one of the provided source code samples should include the use of a cloud-native approach (e.g. PaaS, IaaS, containers, or Twelve-Factor methodology).

Note: If a contractor submits a link to a private Git repository, TTS will provide the contractor with one or more GitHub user identities by email, and the contractor will be expected to provide the identified user(s) with access to the private GitHub repository within 24 hours of providing GitHub user identities. If a contractor wishes to submit a sample repository that was done as part of a contract award with another government agency, but lacks the necessary privileges to share with OFA and 18F, then you may provide the name of the agency, a point of contact, and a brief description of performance (under 200 words). The government will make one request to get access as a peer government agency, but if the government is not able to obtain access to the code within 24 hours of the request, then the contractor will be deemed nonresponsive and will be disqualified from the competition. **Contractors are strongly encouraged to submit sample repositories that they are capable of sharing source code rather than share one at risk of being deemed non responsive.**

If the references to source code samples provided do not include associated references to user research plans and design artifacts demonstrating how ongoing user research was incorporated into the project, then the Contractor must submit a user research plan and design artifacts relating to at least one (1) of the source code samples provided.

10.2.5 Evaluation Factor 2: Technical approach (includes user research plan & FISMA moderate or high experience)

This section will be split into three parts. Part A should be no more than four (4) pages, including diagrams. Written responses should be in 12-point font. Part C should be no more than one (1) page in 12-point font. We would appreciate clear, concise writing that directly addresses how you plan to meet project objectives.

Part A: Technical Approach

If you’re awarded this contract, your technical approach will become the Performance Work Statement (PWS) in the final contract.

The response should include the following:

- Technical capability to perform the work, including how coordination with stakeholders will be accomplished.
- Understanding of and ability to meet the technical requirements expressed in the solicitation.
- Overall approach and what, if anything, it would need from the government to ensure success as well as identifying any barriers that would reduce or delay success.
- Conceptual approach for optimizing and enhancing the existing cloud-native implementation.
- Include what frameworks you have used in the past and experience with .NET and how you will bring those skills to this project
- Knowledge and experience with Agile implementation, including but not limited to the following:
    - Management of an Agile software development methodology
    - User story management, sizing, and estimation method
    - Techniques for release planning
    - Plans for engaging end users
    - Methods for capturing and applying lessons learned, testing processes, reasons behind the composition of their Agile teams
    - Rationale behind the proposed development talent and project oversight (tied to Product Vision)
    - How they will make resources available within schedule and budget constraints
    - Approach to configuration management

Part B: User research

Review user research plans of the code samples demonstrating how ongoing user research was incorporated into the project, then the contractor must submit a separate user research plan relating to at least one of the sample projects. This user research plan should include:

1. A research plan that covers the items in this template
2. An interview protocol that shows your introduction, sample of questions, and closing. Do not include responses.
3. A short summary of the findings of this research, how those findings affected your work, and how your research continued after this iteration

If the references to source code samples provided do not include associated references to user research plans and design artifacts demonstrating how ongoing user research was incorporated into the project, then the Contractor must submit a user research plan and design artifacts relating to at least one (1) of the source code samples provided.

Part C: FISMA system experience
This section should demonstrate experience in FISMA moderate or high systems for no more than 2 projects. The section should be no more than one (1) page per project. Written responses should be in 12-point font. The response should include the following:

- FISMA level,
- Agency name,
- System name,
- Year the ATO work was completed,
- Involvement with the ATO process (roles, length of time, etc),
- Initial ATO/renewal of an ATO/continuous ATO,
- General system characteristics like cloud, self-hosted, etc
- Number of web applications and/or API endpoints, and
- If any CUI (Confidential Unclassified Information, of which PII is one type) was involved

10.2.6 Evaluation Factor 3: Team structure

This section should be no more than three (3) pages, including diagrams. Written responses should be in 12-point font. Since many quotes will be considered, we appreciate clear, concise writing that directly addresses how you plan to meet project objectives. The response should include the following:

- A management plan that addresses:
    - How staff and resources will be allocated to accomplish project goals, objectives, and expectations
    - Plans for recruitment and retention of high-performing staff throughout the project
    - Addressing and correcting for low performance.
- An outline of your proposed team, including:
    - Titles of each labor category and team structure

    - How the team will accomplish the technical approach outlined in Factor 2
    - Team experience with collaborative software development, especially developing modern web applications and APIs.
    - Capabilities around information security, dependency management, and supporting product teams.

- Which individuals on the proposed team, as a whole, will provide cumulative experience in these following areas:
    - Project management
    - Product management
    - Business analysis for Cloud architecture
    - Software engineering (Cloud practitioner)
    - Site reliability engineering
    - Identity / authentication engineering
    - Agile development practices
    - Automated testing (unit/integration/end-to-end)
    - Continuous integration and continuous deployment
    - Configuration management/DevOps engineering
    - Usability research (ie. stakeholder interviews, usability testing)
    - User experience and product design
    - Wireframing, prototyping, and user task-flow development
    - Content design and technical copywriting
    - User outreach and user adoption strategy
    - Security and compliance
    - Authority to operate (ATO) and system development life cycle (SDLC) experience

10.2.7 Evaluation Factor 4: Technical Challenge Scenarios

Detail ***how*** you would approach each of the following two technical challenge scenarios. One page maximum per scenario, two pages all together.

Scenario 1

For core NAC functions, state agencies integrate their back office eligibility systems with the NAC via exposed machine-to-machine NAC APIs.

We also have a web application that state and territory eligibility workers (EWs) can access, but only if they register an account in the USDA eAuth identity system and are explicitly granted access to the NAC query tool by a FNS admin.

We would like to enable easier, more efficient cross-state collaboration amongst EWs to resolve duplicate participation instances. We estimate there are on the order of 10s of thousands of EWs for SNAP across the nation.

Explain how you would:

1. Approach this challenge from a technology perspective (i.e. technology, security, compliance, etc);
2. Communicate with state agency teams;
3. Roll out a solution for numerous states and territories.

Scenario 2

Explain how you would implement a feedback loop into the NAC to identify instances where the NAC matching algorithms are not working as intended.

10.2.8 Price quote

Contractors shall submit a price quote, utilizing Appendix 4 - FNS Pricing Sheet for all work, terms, and conditions described in the RFQ, QASP, and appendices. Missing or incomplete pricing data may result in the quote no longer being considered.

The government anticipates awarding a time and materials (T&M) contract for this effort. The government expects the contractor's quote (including labor categories, staffing levels, and total estimated hours set forth by the contractor in the pricing sheet) to be consistent with the contractor's team structure and with their GSA Schedule contract pricing.

The contractor will be compensated at fully loaded hourly rates. The evaluation team intends to evaluate quotes without discussions with contractors, and therefore the contractor's initial quote should contain the contractor's best terms.

Contractors are required to offer discounts below GSA Schedule contract rates in response to this RFQ. When discounts are offered, quotes must clearly identify the contract rate, the discount rate, and the percentage discount for each item or labor rate being discounted.

The contractor must provide a copy of their GSA price lists for all three years for verification of pricing. If submitting a quote as a contractor teaming arrangement (CTA), each member must submit their GSA Schedule pricing for each special item number

(SIN) they are eligible to perform under. If price discounts are not provided on the GSA price list, then the contractor will be deemed unacceptable.

For contractors that do not have out-year pricing, your task order pricing may be escalated at the same percentage of your GSA multiple award schedule (MAS) contract provided you submit a copy of a valid executed modification of your GSA MAS Schedule to the CO.

The government is expecting price reductions for every rate proposed for the entire period(s) of performance. Prices will be verified to ensure they do not exceed the contractor's GSA Schedule contract price. Quotes proposing labor rates that exceed those established in the contractor's GSA contract will not be considered for award.

Contractors will submit the attached spreadsheet (Appendix 4) detailing the labor categories, GSA Schedule Labor Category Crosswalk, contract rates, discount rates and discount percentages. This submission must not be submitted in PDF format.

The spreadsheet attached to this solicitation must be completed and returned in Excel format with formulae intact. Submission of any other price sheet will constitute an nonresponsive quote.

10.2.9 Evaluation Factor 5: Oral interviews

10.2.9.1 Oral interview logistics and scheduling

The interview sessions will be conducted by video chat, though audio may be substituted as needed. The government will coordinate and set up the virtual meeting.

10.2.9.2 Oral interview format and evaluation

The oral interview associated with this RFQ does not and will not constitute discussions or negotiations as defined in FAR Part 15. TTS will not determine a competitive range, conduct discussions, nor solicit or allow revised quotes. The entire oral presentation will be conducted remotely via video conference, though audio may be substituted as needed.

Each contractor will be scheduled for a 60-minute interview with the evaluation team so the government can ask questions based on the contractor's technical submission. Schedule holders should also introduce the individuals on their proposed team. Lastly, the evaluation team will ask questions about the contractor's expertise relative to the project.

Each interview will include an unstructured question and answer session during which contractors will be asked about their technical submission (Phase 1). The government expects these interviews to assist with assessing the technical abilities of the proposed development team and to better understand the proposed technical approach described in the contractor's submission. **The contractor's proposed team should participate in the interview.**

The Introduction segment of each interview will last no longer than five minutes. The contractor and government will introduce themselves during this time.

The Open Technical segment of each interview will last no more than 45 minutes. During this phase the contractor interview team will respond to the government's questions related to the technical aspects of the contractor's quote. Contractors will NOT be able to use or present any slides, graphs, charts, or other written presentation materials, including handouts. There will be no follow-up session for further questions from the contractor after this part of the interview.

The Closing Remarks segment of each interview will last no more than ten minutes. The contractor may make a short presentation summarizing their responses to the government's questions within that time.

The interview associated with this RFQ does not and will not constitute discussions or negotiations as defined in FAR Part 15. Statements made during an interview that revise or oppose statements in the contractor's written technical submission will not become part of the contract. The government will not determine a competitive range, conduct discussions, nor solicit or allow revised quotes.

10.3 Submission Evaluation

The government will evaluate the submitted quotes against the criteria set forth below and then make an award based on best value using tradeoffs. The government will award an agreement resulting from this RFQ to the responsible contractor whose quote conforms to the RFQ and represents the best value to the government, price and the other criteria specified below considered. Schedule holders are advised that the technical evaluation factors are in descending order of importance. The technical evaluation factors, when combined, are more important than price; as Non-Price ratings become closer, price will become more important.

- **Phase 1**
    - Evaluation Factor 1: Code Repository Submission

- Evaluation Factor 2: Technical Approach, User Research, FISMA Experience
    - Evaluation Factor 3: Team Structure
    - Evaluation Factor 4: Technical Scenario Challenge
    - Price
- **Phase 2:**
    - Evaluation Factor 5: Oral Interview

Each evaluation factor will be assigned a confidence rating. The government will evaluate price quotes for award purposes by evaluating the hourly rate for each labor category, the overall discount provided off the contractor's GSA schedule pricing and will calculate the total evaluated price by totaling the base year + each option year. The government may determine that a quote is unacceptable if the option prices are significantly unbalanced. Evaluation of options under FAR 52.217-8 will be accomplished by using the prices offered for the last option period to determine the price for a 6-month option period, which will be added to the base and other option years to arrive at the total price. Evaluation of options will not obligate the government to exercise the option(s).

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - FNS Performance Work Statement (PWS) Template
Appendix 2 - FNS Agile System Development Life Cycle (SDLC) framework
Appendix 3- Help Desk Support Plan
Appendix 4 - Security Clearance Matrix/Process
Appendix 5 - Pricing Sheet Template (Will be provided with RFQ)
Appendix 6 - Conflict of Interest Statement (Will be provided with RFQ)
Appendix 7 - FAR 52.204-24 Provision (Will be provided with RFQ)
Appendix 8 - Contractor Teaming Arrangement (CTA) – (Will be provided with RFQ)