

RFP Guidelines Manual Mobile Application Development

Vendor Questions and USSC Answers from Bidders Conference 5/18/17, with some additional questions received by this writing.

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1. The Period of Performance table states that the Base Period is Oct 1, 2016 – Sept 30, 2017. Is this accurate? **The funding is tied to the fiscal year, but as long as work gets well under way during the fiscal year, then we can access the funds in the future fiscal year.**
2. Would the government consider extending the due date for the proposals? **We are reluctant to do so – the start up of this project will draw on USSC staff time, and we have the capacity right now to take it on. That capacity will diminish the later in the year it gets. However, if we decide to extend, the new RFP due date will be updated in the GSA RFP announcement.**
3. Do the Fixed Price tables need to provide back-up data to justify the cost build-up (e.g. number of FTEs and their Labor Categories)? **No, backup data, FTEs, Labor Categories, etc., is not a requirement.**
4. Is this procurement a Small Business set-aside? **This is not a small business set aside, nor will any portion/task of the RFP be set aside for Small Business or 8(a) Business Development Program. Each vendor, small business, minority owned, 8(a), etc. would have to bid on the RFP in its entirety.**
5. Does USSC have an existing framework, tools, and process that it wants the vendor to adhere to while building the web-based mobile application? **If the vendor's approach uses the Commission's existing website (www.ussc.gov), Drupal 7 would be the base. Any changes to the existing website (www.ussc.gov) will need to go through a security certification/remediation process conducted by the Security office and Hosting Branch of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AO).**
6. What are end-user authentication requirements for the application? **There will be no end-user authentication.**
7. Does this application need to undergo a security accreditation process before it can be deployed to production? Does the security accreditation process follow a specific standard (e.g. DIACAP or NIST RMF)? **Web applications hosted on the US Courts infrastructure must undergo security certification through the AO's Information Technology Security Office, based on the NIST standards, prior to deployment into**

production. Any methodology that involves 3rd party hosting would be subject to FedRAMP security and controls requirements before being deployed into production.

8. Can the USSC share the environment topology that will be used to build, test, and deploy the application? **We have appended a topology diagram at the end of these questions. The diagram represents the current internal hosting situation, should the vendor's solution host the mobile web application on the US Court's infrastructure.**
9. Is there an incumbent for this work? **There is no existing web application, so there is no incumbent.**
10. Does USSC expect any specific certification(s)/education for the Key Personnel? **Key Personnel will be evaluated based on related work experience and education listed in the vendor's proposal. Key Personnel resumes should highlight experience relevant to this project.**
11. Are there external interfaces that the application needs to connect to? If yes, how many? Are those interfaces developed? Or is that development within the scope of this work? **There are no existing external interfaces at this time, but, if an approved solution requires connectivity to an external interface this would need to be discussed in greater detail. We would expect the vendor to propose a solution that includes all components required to deploy the mobile app once it is developed.**
12. Would the awarded vendor be expected to provide the development environment outside USSC servers? **It is assumed that a vendor will use an external development environment initially (which the vendor would be responsible for). If the vendor's proposed solution utilizes the Commission's existing website, the off-site development work would then ultimately be moved to an internal development server that will be set up and maintained by the Court Services Hosting Branch.**
13. Please indicate whether security requirements include user authentication and authorization. **There will be no end-user authentication.**
14. Will the application be hosted on-premises or cloud based? **This answer depends on the vendor's recommended solution.**
15. What is the expected amount of change for the Manual each year? (10%?) **The amount of changes will vary from year to year. Estimate around 10 amendments per year, could be higher or lower. However, a single amendment may affect more than one guideline. The following link provides access to a reader-friendly version of the 2016 amendments showing the type of changes an amendment brings about:
<http://www.ussc.gov/guidelines/amendments/reader-friendly-version-amendments-effective-november-1-2016>**

16. Will the amendment changes require changes to the sequential numbering? **Any changes to Appendix C will be added consecutively. Changes to the Guidelines Manual will be in place. For example, if one provision of a guideline is changed, then the revised provision will replace the old one. By way of example, we are providing a Reader Friendly version of the last two sets of changes. This Reader Friendly is not the official Congressional document promulgating guideline amendments, but it will serve as a useful example for vendors to see the types of amendments made in a given amendment year. These changes would be implemented in the Guidelines Manual (and added to the proposed App) generally once per year. The following link provides access to a reader-friendly version of the 2016 amendments showing the type of changes an amendment brings about:**
<http://www.ussc.gov/guidelines/amendments/reader-friendly-version-amendments-effective-november-1-2016>.
17. Where is the web application to be hosted? Does it have to be hosted on the Commission website or servers? **It is not a requirement that the web application be hosted on the Commission's website or servers.**
18. If the app is hosted outside of our website does the firm fixed cost include a hosting cost? **Yes. If your solution requires an external hosting solution, the vendor should include that cost in their proposal under TASK SEVEN.**
19. Does the application require 508 compliance? **The Rehabilitation Act does not apply to the judicial branch, so there is no requirement that the mobile app be 508 compliant.**
20. If we require adding notes or highlighting how can that be done without authentication? **This would be up to the vendor to provide the best way to add those features. It was, however, the Commission's original intent that any highlighting or notes would be stored locally on the device, without need for cross-device continuity (e.g., it is not necessary at this stage that notes or highlights added to one device be also available to the same user on a separate device).**
21. Does the Commission currently have any cloud based applications? **No.**
22. Is the Commission looking for a native device/native application platform development or are you looking for something more like a hybrid mobile app solution? **The Commission is currently uninterested in the development of a native application made available through the IOS App Store, the Android Store or other similar vendors. The Commission is more interested in a cloud based or browser based solution.**
23. If the manual is available in PDF or etc., are we looking for a content based solution? **The Manual is currently available in PDF, HTML, and Word. Appendices A and B are**

currently available in PDF and Word; they are NOT available in HTML. Appendix C is currently available in PDF, Word, and WordPerfect; it is NOT available in HTML. Content is not currently hyperlinked. The Commission anticipates that necessary hyperlinking will be included as part of the bid as part of TASK ONE. The Commission expects that the vendor will include any necessary requirements as part of the proposed solution, and will include any relevant technical assumptions.

24. Whether all the manuals in various formats need to be converted into a single format to be displayed? **The Commission is not specifically requiring single formatting for all portions of the Manual. However, the Commission expects that bidders will identify necessary formatting changes required by their proposed solution. The Commission further expects the vendor will identify the cost and technical requirements for reformatting, including any need to strip out formatting, styles or similar coding as part of creating a uniform style (if required by the proposed solution).**
25. Is a content management system required? **The Commission expects the vendor to identify and include all necessary components required by its proposed solution. Thus, while the Commission is not specifically requiring a content management system, the vendor should include such system in its technical proposal if required by its proposed solution.**
26. Will proposals that do not include a content management system be considered? **Yes.**
27. Depending on the end task, does this need to be accessible/viewable in any format? **The purpose of the RFP is to make it available in a app like format. The Commission anticipates that it will be viewable within the proposed app pursuant to the vendor's proposed solution.**
28. Does the Commission have a table or matrix where you can provide applicable browsers that we can work within? **We do not have a list or an exact cut off, for browsers that cannot be used. It is expected that the mobile web application would be compatible with modern day browsers not older than 4 years.**
29. Are there any performance requirements and simultaneously users?
For performance requirements, Jakob Nielsen's book *Usability Engineering* set the benchmark back in 1993 (later updated in 2014 to wrap in web-based applications) is a good starting reference point regarding performance. The usability testing of the development model will serve to help address any performance issues identified before moving into production.
- With regard to simultaneous users; this is going to be heavily influenced by the solution being proposed. Using our primary website (ussc.gov) and the Interactive Sourcebook (isb.ussc.gov) for comparison, our primary website is a delivery tool of static information and the servers can handle a large number of visitors without issue**

while the ISB actually leverages server-side functionality to process data requests and will have noticeable performance drops if a large number of visitors are in there at the same time. As long as the proposed solution does not require direct and constant interaction with the server(s) hosting the “app” in order for it be functional the issue of simultaneous users would only be a factor if traffic to the server(s) was extraordinarily high.

30. Does it need to work offline? **As set forth in the RFP, it is the Commission’s requirement that basic content from the current Guideline Manual remain available to users without internet access. Advanced features are not necessary during out of network times and the Commission understands that updates would only be available while connected. The purpose of this request is to accommodate guideline users in areas that may be without internet connection. The best example of this occurs when attorneys visit their clients in a prison setting where no or limited internet connection is available**
31. What is the cutoff date for questions? **All questions must be submitted by 6/2/17.**
32. Does the app need to have cross platform compatibility? **As set forth in the RFP, the Commission’s requirement is to have the requested content available in an app-like format usable for most guideline users. This requirement anticipates that the application will have cross-platform compatibility such that it is viewable and supported by common mobile devices. The vendor should identify any limitations on functionality as part of its bid. The mobile web app should have cross-browser and cross-platform compatibility, and supported by most mobile devices.**
33. Is the Commission not interested in native app via Apple/ Android? **Correct.**
34. If the vendor uses their own hosting environment who would retain ownership? **The Commission will maintain ownership and control of all content. If the vendor proposes externally hosting, the Commission understands that the vendor would maintain and control the hosting environment and necessary technology to host and make the content available.**
35. What is the budget for the program? **Budget will be solidified when the Commission awards.**
36. What is the page limit and font size for proposal? **No page limit and font size. Vendors should try to limit proposal to 100 pages, 12pt font minimum. Proposals in excess of 100 pages WILL NOT disqualify any proposal from consideration.**
37. Task 8 total labor hours or labor rate? – **The labor category and labor hour rate should be provided for this task. Total/estimated hours not required.**

38. Who is the contractor who developed your website? Can the current contractor working on the website bid on the RFP? **The Commission's website updating and maintenance contract was previously awarded to New Target, Inc. of Alexandria, Virginia. New Target, the contractor working on the website, can bid on the RFP because there does not appear to be a potential organizational conflict of interest.**

39. Searchable – the function described better fits to “filtering,” not search. Do you need to be able to “free-text” search? **It is the Commission intent that the requested application will include a search box or search field. Using this search field, users would be able to input keywords, with the search then resulting in a list of guideline titles that include the searched keyword. Thus, if a user searches the word loss, it would be expected that guideline 2B1.1 (which was included in the sample packet provided before the bidders conference) would appear in the results list, as well as any other guidelines that include the word loss.**

The vendor's proposal should identify the extent and limitations of the search feature proposed in the vendor's solution. For example, the vendor should identify whether the proposed search option will search titles, full text or both. Also, whether the search function will highlight search terms in the text when matches are found.

40. Offline - Webapp has limitation to be offline effectively. If necessary, hybrid app mode ok? i.e. Native mobile app with webapp contents. **See Number 30 above. Vendors should include the extent and limitations of their proposed solution regarding offline access to the full-text of the Manual.**

41. BYOD (Bring your own device) use case? What form factor (tablet, phone) it needs to support? **As set forth in the RFP, the Commission's requirement is to have the requested content available in an app-like format usable for most guideline users. This requirement anticipates that the application will have cross-platform compatibility such that it is viewable and supported by common mobile devices. The vendor should identify any limitations on functionality as part of its bid. The mobile web app should have cross-browser and cross-platform compatibility, and supported by most mobile devices.**

42. I would urge the team to reconsider and possibly further research the response that there is no requirement to be 508 compliant. Additional information may be found here: <https://www.section508.gov/content/accessibility>. **The Rehabilitation Act does not apply to the judicial branch, so there is no requirement that the mobile app be 508 compliant.**

43. Given the strict need to begin development on or about July 3, [we] understand the need to award this effort in a timely manner. However, will the USSC consider moving the RFP proposal response date out by another week? While this may cause more of a

burden of review upon the government, the extension will more fairly enable industry to receive, process, architect, write and price the technical solution. There were many technical and contractual questions yesterday that have yet to be resolved. **See question 2. However, any extension will be done via GSA notification.**

44. Post award, are there resources who will work on the project required to have any US residency requirements? How many years? For clearance. **Any person performing work on this project within the United States must meet the ordinary requirements for eligibility to work as determined by the United States Customs and Immigration Services. Employers must likewise ensure that their employees are eligible. There is neither a specific number of years-in-country nor a year-triggered clearance to work on the job.**
45. If you would like a copy of the recording from the 5/18/17 Bidder's Conference, please contact Alex Mark, Contracting Officer. **Email: AMARK@USSC.GOV**
46. What Mobile platforms are you targeting? **We are not targeting a specific platform, per Objective #3, "Mobile App should have Cross-Browser and Cross-Platform compatibility."**
47. Will a list of attendees be distributed? **Yes, a list of pre-proposal conference attendees will be made available on GSA eBuy under the RFP notice.**
48. On Page 11 under number 2 – Is experience with government agencies a requirement? **The offeror shall highlight experience that demonstrates successful work with government agencies similar to the USSC.**
49. We prefer to host on Amazon Web Services will that be a problem? What is the existing infrastructure? **If the vendor's proposed solution requires hosting by a 3rd party it will be considered, reviewed and weighed against other proposals. Currently, our websites are hosted on the U.S. Courts infrastructure. 3rd Party hosting solutions are required to be FedRAMP authorized and the Commission would prefer a Gov cloud solution.**
50. What work would be required onsite at the Commission? How often? (hours, days, etc.) **Determination of required onsite work will be dependent on the solution that is chosen.**
51. TASK ONE (A) "Full content of the Manual divided into chapters, parts, subparts, and guideline sections; All tables and figures included in the Manual" ...This does not include the physical page number? We strongly recommend against using page numbers. **The RFP does not require inclusion of page numbers. The requirement is separation of the content of the Manual, divided into chapters, parts, subparts, and guideline sections.**

The same answer applies to appendices. Pages numbers are not required; Appendix B should be divided into statutory provisions, and Appendix C divided into amendments.

52. Full text search of a 2000 page document, would USSC consider limiting this to key words to help performance? **Although we are open to solutions proposed by vendors, the initial thought is that the Manual and its supplements would have a full text search feature. The objective is for end-users to enter the term/text they are interested in and get as a result the most specific result(s).**
53. Jump to specific location, can you provide an estimate of the number of jump tags? **It is extremely difficult to provide an estimate of jump tags that would be needed throughout the Manual. To get a better idea of the magnitude of this task would be to visualize it in the inverse way. Each application note of all guidelines would be target locations for at least one jump tag from guideline provisions. Different guidelines provision could be directed to the same application note. Additionally, each guideline has a varying number of application notes, ranging from no application notes up to 27 application notes.**
54. In the Drug Quantity calculator, 90 KG or more of Heroin = Level 38, but At least 30 KG but less than 90 KG of Heroin; = Level 36... It would seem like a \leq would be required with the value ? **This logic would be used for all calculations. That logic may be applicable to the function used to do the calculation, but not to the fillable fields. Using the example provided in the question, the requirement would be that if a user inputs 87 KG of heroin into a fillable search field, the calculator would determinate that 87 KG equates to an offense level of 36 (that is, the entered quantity is at least 30 KG but less than 90 KG of heroin).**
55. Per the example on page 159, §2D1.1 Paragraph 8, section iii, where multiple types of drugs are identified... “The defendant is convicted of selling 80 grams of cocaine (Level 14) and 2 grams of cocaine base (Level 12). The cocaine is equivalent to 16 kilograms of marihuana, and the cocaine base is equivalent to 7.142 kilograms of marihuana. The total is therefore equivalent to 23.142 kilograms of marihuana, which has an offense level of 16 in the Drug Quantity Table.” Is the Drug Quantity calculator limited to only one drug or multiple drugs to calculate an offense level? **Task 6(A) requires a “Drug Quantity Calculator” that would be used when there is only ONE drug type involved and it is referenced in the Drug Quantity Table at §2D1.1(c). Task 6(B) requires a “Drug Equivalency Calculator” that be used when there is a drug type involved that is not referenced in the Drug Quantity Table at §2D1.1(c) or when there are two or more drug types involved, even if they are referenced in the Drug Quantity Table at §2D1.1(c).**

56. Using Schedule I or II Opiates as an example...the requirement states that “users to input the quantity of the controlled substance involved in the offense in any standard unit of measurement” .
- The table shows 1 gm of Heroin = , should the unit of measure be limited to grams, or open to ounces, pounds, kilograms, not units, ml, or pills?
 - Based on the response to A: If the user selects 1 pound of Heroin, are looking at the calculator to convert the 1 pound to 453.6 grams and then multiple that by the equivalency factor i.e. 1 Lb of Heroin = 453.6 Kg of Marihuana, which would them equal a Level 38 offense. **The idea is for users to input the quantity of the drug in any unit of measurement (e.g., ounces, pounds, kilograms, milliliters) and the calculator would do the conversion to grams and provide the appropriate offense level. If the drug is pill or capsule form, Application Note 9 to §2D1.1 provides a conversion table from units to grams that, if possible, may be included in the calculations.**
57. What is the anticipated number of updates expected during the year to the Guidelines Manual and its supplements? Monthly, Quarterly? **Typically, the Guidelines Manual is updated once annually, with new amendments taking effect on November 1. There are some years, where additional amendments take effect before November 1. Although this is not the norm, it has occurred about five times in the last ten years.**
58. Based on the current web site and access to the Guidelines Manual, will anyone that has access to the site (general public) be authorized to access the Manual and calculators ? **Yes. Everyone should have access to all features of the web app, as there should be no end-user authentication.**
59. If hosted outside of USSC would the Guidelines Manual Mobile Web App be required to be FedRAMP compliant? **Yes. The Commission would require any 3rd party hosting solution to be FedRAMP authorized and the Commission would prefer a GOV cloud solution.**
60. If hosted outside of USSC would the Guidelines Manual Mobile Web App be required to have an ATO? **Yes. Authority to Operate (ATO) must be granted by the Commission as a requirement for the Cloud system to be FedRAMP authorized.**
61. All pages of the Guidelines Manual and its corresponding supplements will be upload verbatim, the vendor will not be responsible for identifying errors or correct misspellings. Is this a correct assumption? **The vendor will not be required to make edits to the Guidelines Manual before uploading to mobile app.**
62. How soon after contract award does USSC expect task one to be competed? **A time table per task was not stipulated by USSC, however the vendor is required to demonstrate and state in the proposal a work plan to complete each task. The offeror can provide a projected time table to complete each task as part of the technical approach.**

TOPOLOGY DIAGRAM

