

**Sources Sought Notice Response**

Request for Information 36C77622Q0391

Office of Workforce Management & Consulting (WMC)  
Human Capital Management (HCM) Communications Contract

**Due:** July 15, 2022

**Submitted to:** Kymberly Morgan | Kymberly.Morgan@va.gov



**Submitted by:**

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Founded in 2012 with a decade of experience as a Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business • CVE Certified Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) •

Virginia Certified Small Veteran Owned and SWaM Business

• Cage Code: 7LPG7 | DUNS Number: 080176755

### **Statement of Interest: BrennSys Technology LLC**

BrennSys Technologies LLC (BrennSys) is a customer-oriented, mission-focused contractor firm that provides commercial entities and government agencies flexibility and availability of expertise without the expense and commitment of sustaining in-house staff. Our firm focuses on public-sector staffing specializing in temporary and permanent placement of positions for federal agencies. BrennSys provides project-specific and purpose-built assignments, in addition to long-term and outsourced arrangements.

BrennSys has the personnel and experience to provide expertise in Strategic Communications Planning, Stakeholder Engagement, and continuous execution of communication efforts to the VHA audience. We are well-able to analyze and advise on VHA communication plans and strategies. BrennSys understands the primary focus will be on communication execution: assessment of requirements and development of communications content across varying media. We specialize in outreach marketing — a strategy that involves reaching out to special interest group members, potential customers, influencers, and the served community with the goal of developing a strong relationship with the target audience. To do this, we search for these influencers, study them, and send outreach messages.

One specialty is “outreach,” development and execution of marketing strategies aimed at achieving diverse goals such as: to analyze, design, and execute communication strategies and plans. We do this by adhering to the highest level of our industry’s standards. BrennSys past performances demonstrate our ability to deliver communications on a national scale, to a range of audiences — BrennSys is the best choice to:

- Assess, analyze, and evolve VHA’s Human Capital Management (HCM) communications strategy. As trusted VA vendors, BrennSys will strive to understand the communication requirements of WMC’s target audiences, so the appropriate message can be derived from organizational initiatives;
- Determine when a given event, milestone, deployment, or related outcome from an HR activity warrants communication to a broader audience. From there, BrennSys will determine the audience, frequency, and modality for appropriate communication; and
- Synthesize technical information and data from HCM SMEs and integrate input so we can conduct analytics as needed to produce coherent presentations that effectively inform audiences that include decision-makers.

Following, we match our capabilities cross-referenced to the PWS to identify how our expertise would be used to accomplish each task.

**TASK TWO – REPORTING.** Effective management is crucial for the success of any design

project.

Without a plan, things can get out of control quickly. And no one wants to be the deer in headlights when a client asks for that design file you promised because it was lost under a soaring stack of other duties. Design project management is particularly unruly because it usually brings together a range of skilled and qualified individuals from across the team or from a client.

The Weekly Activity Report (WAR) helps align your focus. The idea is to keep your focus on this week's most important things and to be disciplined without being too formal. The idea is to pick the three most important things you want to accomplish in a quarter. Then break those down to help you focus on what you should be working on this month and this week, so when you are planning each day, you can make sure you are doing something that brings everyone closer to accomplishing agency goals.

### TASK THREE – STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION.

BrennSys PMs are skilled at determining return on investment (ROI), effectiveness, and performance of communication using industry standard best practices and comprehensive metrics/analytics tools and techniques. We will leverage the organization's communications strategy to execute WMC communications. To ensure the best performance, BrennSys will advise on enhancements and improvements to all aspects of HCM communications.

With bench support and skilled personnel, BrennSys provides the ability to provide cleared, highly qualified candidates across all task areas, using an integrated staffing team approach, who meet or exceed all qualifications for their specific labor categories. Our extensive graphic design and corporate communications recruiting experience and a dedication to an "employee service" culture that includes parity of benefits and performance incentives, leading to a 90%+ retention rate. BrennSys has the demonstrated ability to provide 100% of the qualified, skilled, and cleared staff needed to meet all VA requirements rapidly, effectively, and efficiently.

This effort will be governed by a Project Management Plan (PMP) that contains standardized artifacts and a WBS tied to the contract deliverables. BrennSys has embraced a company-wide delivery methodology and practices continuous process improvement and the lessons learned from each BrennSys project are reflected in successive evolutions of the delivery framework. Our on-line project management portal will be a repository for all task order directives, draft deliverables, schedule management, and other tools to support execution of VA's requirements.

This effort will be controlled using BrennSys's PMBoK-based methodology, BrennSys's approach to project management is a hybrid, which implements our ISO-based Project Delivery Framework, consistent with Project Management Institute (PMI) best practices. Our framework is compliant with CMMI Level 3 for project/task management and uses BrennSys's standardized PMP template, which is adhered to, so we may plan, monitor and control the work. This results

in BrennSys meeting the specific requirements of PWS, with 100% accuracy and timeliness. We integrate our delivery framework and tailor it to VA's planning requirements and existing communications practices. The PMP would include a staffing plan that defines the program organization and details roles and responsibilities.

**TASK FOUR – COMMUNICATION SOURCING.** As we have done in the past, BrennSys experts would determine when a given event, milestone, or related deliverable from an HR activity warrants dissemination to a broader audience. This enables us to determine the audience and communication channels, directed by HCM/WMC as required. Another example of our experience is how BrennSys provides outsourced personnel to the Virginia Department of Health. Starting in 2019, we worked with the Office of Emergency Medical Services by providing personnel to assist in the development go tools for sharing resources and information to help first responders deal with the mental health impacts that occur as a result of their experiences on their very stressful jobs. BrennSys outsourced personnel ensured that social media platforms were being appropriately utilized and reached the right audiences when they needed to be there. Our team will schedule path-forward recommendations for change management and communications arising from recurring WMC program activities.

**TASK FIVE – COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT.** BrennSys is experienced with developing different content for differing media. For example, where audio information is important, we adhere to Section 508 requirements and provide transcription as well as the audio channel. This means that at least one mode does not require narration, with support for assistive technology used by people with disabilities. Following federal guidelines for Section 508 compliance is an important aspect of communication development. Our company has a long track record of providing high-quality electronic and information technology (EIT) and products compliance with Section 508 of the Americans With Disabilities Act to ensure equal access by people with disabilities. For more than five years, we have been delivering Section 508-compliant EIT products and services to Federal agencies — through Web projects (e.g., technology management contracts that BrennSys currently administer for another government agency), and through multifaceted projects with appropriate provisioning and service support tasks. We will address any applicable Section 508 Accessibility requirements of the PWS. For each commercially available Information and Communications Technology (ICT) item offered through this contract, we will provide an Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR). For each commercially available Information and Communications Technology (ICT) item offered through this contract, we will provide an Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR). The ACR will be created using the Voluntary Product Accessibility Template Version 2.1 or later.

For example, when development a lay audience message, it is important to show “behind the scenes” in the organization. As we did with another VA project, an Annual Report is something that can be shared with the served community, employees, and stakeholders. The main

characteristic that each of those audience members share, is that they're crucial to the mission of the organization. Stakeholders want to know what investments are being made into the mission, so it's important they know that there is positive progress. Employees invest their time and passion, so give them a sign that you appreciate their effort.

One of the most important parts of the annual report design process, is figuring out how to present information from the last year without overwhelming, or boring the reader. Every piece of information in the annual report should be presented in a way that is easy to read and understand. This complicated document should be broken down into chapters or informational chunks that naturally flow and fit together.

**TASK SIX – COMMUNICATION FEEDBACK.** Based on the requirements of the PWS, BrennSys would ensure performance objects meet or exceed the acceptable levels for performance standards. We will facilitate inspection and acceptance by the COR by providing five (5) working days for review of draft deliverables. Per our QA approach, we will correct any deficiencies and make whole the work product so as to meet the acceptable levels of performance. We would suggest delay penalties based on performance targets mutually agreed upon with the government. Our quality assurance system uses five specific activities to attain our goal of providing deliverables that meet customer expectations and standards for both form and function. First, Quality Management (QM) enables preparing, executing, and delivering oversight activities. Second, Quality Assurance (QA) assesses conformance to processes and process performance. Third, QC tracks conformance of products to contract specifications. Fourth, we use Customer Feedback to elicit performance cues and drive improvements. Finally, Continuous Process Improvement that helps processes perform at or above standards. BrennSys views QM/QA/QC as an integrated systems approach to exceed quality, performance, and safety standards for each product, service, and solution.

To ensure adequate feedback from the VA on communication projects, BrennSys incorporates multiple ways to gather input. For example, at the Post-Award Kickoff Meeting with the CO and the VA COR/PM, so we can review schedule, transition planning, and any other necessary items related to graphic design services. We will also attend quarterly performance reviews. The purpose of the review would be to analyze our performance, receive quality improvement suggestions from BrennSys or other stakeholders, and identify opportunities for continuous improvement. These status meetings may be held in person at the job site, via teleconference or as otherwise directed by the CO and/or COR. Additional meetings (i.e. ad-hoc client meetings, safety meetings, etc.) would be convened at the discretion of the government.

- *Provide example(s) of your organizations key performance indicators (KPIs) developed for the same or similar services. This is not included as part of the 10-page limitation and can be included as a separate attachment.*

Tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) or measures is critical during a project. Without them, it is difficult to see how we are progressing toward a client's goals. But how do we know what to measure for each project? Overwhelming the team with data won't make the project succeed, but providing the right data, at the right time, ensures the project stays on track.

BrennSys project managers use a variety of KPIs, which generally fall into these four categories:

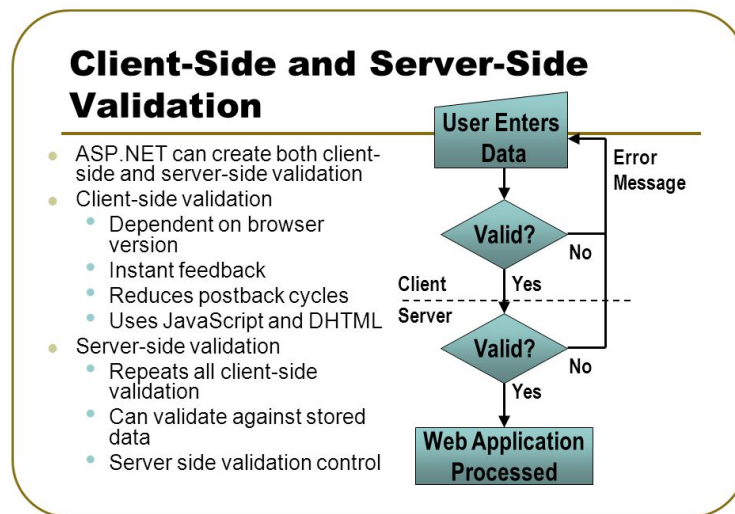
- **Timeliness:** This is making sure your project is done on time—and if it's not, tracking where it's off-target is important so you can always have an estimated completion date.
- **Budget:** Are you going to stay under the budget you've allocated, or is the project exceeding costs?
- **Quality:** How well has the project progressed? Are those working on it or benefitting from it satisfied?
- **Effectiveness:** Are you spending your time and money appropriately, or could you be managing the project more effectively?

**Data Collection and Reporting** — To mine data from existing client sources, BrennSys utilizes an extraction-transformation-loading process to capture data from other information sources, such as educational records or other relevant materials. We will apply an automated data classification process, then quality control for data validity and accuracy assurance using expert inspectors. The process for capturing data from other sources consists of multiple discrete automated steps. During extraction, the desired data is identified and extracted from many different sources, including database systems and applications. Very often, it is not possible to identify the specific subset of interest, therefore more data than necessary has to be extracted, so the identification of the relevant data will be done at a later point in time.

Besides the support of extraction, transformation, and loading, we cover other tasks that are important for a successful abstraction of data: data cleansing, data validation, data manipulation, data quality tests, data refining, data filtering and tuning. BrennSys understands that it is crucial to maintain data quality in order to keep the resultant data warehouse trustworthy for users.

Our subject matter experts will help define and implement ETL rules for how to load complex data from data donor systems into BrennSys's platform. Our SMEs will work with other subject matter experts to understand their data to support data loading activities. Our data specialists will validate loaded data against historical reports. BrennSys's experts will document and troubleshoot data issues, identify possible solutions, communicate and discuss with internal teams for resolution. They will help maintain data issues log and track resolution of issues, and perform data quality assurance on loaded data prior to roll-out.

**Exhibit:** Data Collection and Validation in the Browser



#### Timeliness KPIs:

**Cycle Time:** The time needed to complete a certain task or activity. This is helpful for repeated tasks in a project.

**On-Time Completion Percentage:** Whether or not an assignment or task is completed by a given deadline.

**Time Spent:** The amount of time that is spent on the project by all team members—or, if you like, by each team member individually.

**Number Of Adjustments To The Schedule:** How many times your team has made adjustments to the completion date of the project as a whole.

**FTE Days Vs. Calendar Days:** How much time your team is spending on a project by calendar days, hours, and/or full-time equivalent work days.

**Planned Hours Vs. Time Spent:** How much time you estimated a project would take versus actual hours. If the time spent differs from the amount of time anticipated, it's a flag that you underestimated the resource allocation or budget, and your timeline may be affected.

**Resource Capacity:** The number of individuals working on a project multiplied by the percent of time they have available to work on it. This project KPI helps to properly allocate resources (and determine any hiring needs) and set an accurate project completion timeline.

**Resource Conflict YOY:** Comparing the number of projects with resource conflicts year over year (YOY). Not having the resources to complete projects or having employees assigned to several projects at a time can lower efficacy. KPIs that compare these conflicts will show whether the situation is a persistent problem or one-off situation that needs to be addressed.

## Budget KPIs:

**Budget Variance:** How much the actual budget varies from the projected budget. To track this KPI, measure how close the baseline amount of expenses or revenue is to the expected value.

**Budget Creation (Or Revision) Cycle Time:** The time needed to formulate an organization's budget. This includes the total duration of research, planning, and coming to a final agreement.

**Line Items In Budget:** Line items helps owners and managers keep track of individual expenditures—and provide a more detailed way to see how the budget was spent.

**Number Of Budget Iterations:** The number of budget versions produced before its final approval. A higher number of budget iterations means more time is being spent planning and finalizing a budget.

**Planned Value:** The value of what's left to complete in a project—in other words, the planned cost of what still needs to be done. For example, if you have a \$20K budget and 30 percent of the project remaining, the planned value of the remaining work is \$6K. Use this project KPI to compare against the actual cost and adjust the budget if needed.

**Cost Performance Index:** Compares the budgeted cost of the work you've accomplished so far to the actual amount spent. This is a ratio to measure the expense efficiency of a project—earned value divided by actual costs.

We understand changes in key performance indicators using a KPI Dashboard.

## Quality KPIs:

**Customer Satisfaction/Loyalty:** Whether or not someone is satisfied and would come back again. This can be measured effectively by a survey. This comes more into play when the project deals directly with a client or customer.

**Net Promoter Score:** Similar to customer satisfaction and loyalty, NPS (or Net Promoter Score) is a user satisfaction KPI measured by a one-question survey whose purpose is to gauge brand loyalty.

**Number Of Errors:** How often things need to be redone during the project. This is the number of times you have to redo and rework something, which affects budget revisions and calendar revisions as well.

**Customer Complaints:** Keep in mind that the “customer” of a project could be someone internal—does someone from your organization complain because someone else isn't getting things done?

**Employee Churn Rate:** The number or percentage of team members who have left the company. If your project teams have high turnover, it might indicate the need to improve management and the work environment. Churn ultimately slows down projects and creates higher costs for the company in the long run.



## Effectiveness KPIs

**Average Cost Per Hour:** This measures the effort needed to complete a project, including employee salaries, benefits, office space, equipment, and more. Tracking this average and comparing it to project outcomes helps you determine if your employees' time was used effectively.

**Resource Profitability:** Calculating resource profitability helps you understand if your team members' time is being used effectively. You'll need Average Cost Per Hour and billing rates to do this calculation.

**Number Of Project Milestones Completed On Time With Sign Off:** There are different parts within a project—are they being completed in a timely manner? Additionally, were the milestones completed and approved by the owner or buyer?

**Number Of Returns:** If you have a capital project that requires many parts, you may track the return rate of those parts; this helps you see if you did a good job planning or adjusting to the project during implementation.

**Training/Research Needed For Project:** You may track this in hours, number of courses, or something similar. If you need to do a lot of this, your project might get started later than you hope. Another way of looking at this is asking, "What percent of resources did you have at the beginning of the project that were qualified to immediately begin working on the project?"

**Number Of Cancelled Projects:** Tracking how many projects have been paused or eliminated. A high number of cancelled projects could indicate a lack of planning, lack of goal alignment, or an inability to take on new projects.

**Number Of Change Requests:** The number and frequency of changes requested by a client to an established scope of work. Too many changes can negatively affect budgets, resources, timelines, and overall quality.

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Following are examples of BrennSys projects of similar scope and scale:

**VA Department of Health – Office of Emergency Medical Services Outreach.** In the spring of 2019, we worked with the Virginia Department of Health Office of Emergency Medical Services, which needed a marketing firm to assist in sharing resources and information to help first responders deal with the mental health impacts that occur as a result of their experiences on their very stressful jobs. As part of the project, we ensured that social media platforms were being appropriately utilized and reached the right audiences when they needed to be there. We also compiled a list of all the fire, EMS, law enforcement and dispatch locations, and ensured that they receive a targeted print campaign. The project required biweekly reports, and was completed in 2019.

Department of Veterans Affairs – Media Development and Management. We are currently working with the Department of Veterans Affairs on a contract that runs from September, 2018 until September of 2028. Our services include developing materials to promote public and private awareness of the VA's mission, goals, initiatives and objectives. We work to develop and disseminate marketing materials and services which will increase public understanding of the complex and technical aspects of the VA. Some of our services are determining the advertising objective, specifically defining and creating materials with the specific message we are working to communicate, media selection, outdoor marketing, and media services, such as radio, TV, and public service announcements.

Department of Veterans Affairs - Veterans Experience Office (VEO) Support Services. We provide the VA VEO with Graphic Design Services. The Veterans Experience Office (VEO) is VA's lead organization for customer experience (CX) at VA and reports directly to the Secretary. VEO supports VA in the Department's modernization efforts to become a premier CX organization by bringing industry best practices to VA service design and delivery. VEO accomplishes this through four core CX capabilities: real-time CX data, tangible CX tools, modern CX technology, and targeted CX engagement. These capabilities empower employees to deliver outstanding experiences to Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors through actionable real-time CX data and predictive analytics; concrete CX tools such as the VA Welcome Kit and accompanying guides, training and implementable best practices; user-friendly, modern technology; and personal engagement with VA customers.

Strategic Acquisition Center - Frederick Department of Veterans Affairs - AboutFace Outreach Program. In the private sector, we recently contracted with AboutFace Web Design to provide services from October of 2020 until October of 2025, including media production, website maintenance, social media clips, website and YouTube channel maintenance, production of videos of veteran interviews, topic pages, user guides and education, CMS migration and site redesign.

AboutFace is a documentary website that features multimedia stories of Veterans who have experienced posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), their family members, and VA clinicians. By watching the videos on AboutFace, viewers can learn about PTSD, explore treatment options, and get advice from others who have lived with the disorder. AboutFace is produced by the VA's National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (NCPTSD), the world's leading center for PTSD research and education. BrennSys works with NCPTSD to further develop AboutFace's mission while maintaining and advancing the role it plays in reducing stigma and informing Veterans and their loved ones how PTSD treatment can turn lives around.

This contract includes all aspects of creating new media for AboutFace including video and multimedia from pre-production (planning, location scouting, assistance with recruitment of subjects) through production (video- and audio-recording, lighting and set design, etc.) and post-production (editing, mixing, color correct, captioning, audio describes, 508 compliance, etc.). We write content for the website, planning for the expansion and updating of AboutFace, enhancing website design and information architecture, performing functional maintenance,

ensuring 508 compliance, and ancillary tasks. Working with the National Center for PTSD providing services that include all aspects of creating new media for AboutFace including video and multimedia from pre-production (planning, location scouting, assistance with recruitment of subjects) through production (video- and audio-recording, lighting and set design, etc.) and post-production (editing, mixing, color correct, captioning, audio describes, 508 compliance, etc.).

We write content for the website, planning for the expansion and updating of AboutFace, enhancing website design and information architecture, performing functional maintenance, ensuring 508 compliance, and ancillary tasks.