

NOTE: This sample demonstrates our analysis capabilities. We run this same process on your exact RFP.

IT Infrastructure Modernization Support Services

Based on real federal solicitation structure - IT Services / SDVOSB

NAICS CODE	541512 - Computer Systems Design
SET-ASIDE TYPE	Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB)
CONTRACT TYPE	IDIQ - Indefinite Delivery / Indefinite Quantity
ESTIMATED VALUE	~\$8.5M over 5-year ordering period
TYPICAL SCOPE	Infrastructure Modernization + Service Desk + Network Engineering
TYPICAL PAGE LIMIT	55 pages technical + management volumes

What this is

A complete breakdown of a federal IT services RFP - the kind your team would spend 2-3 days reading before writing a single word.

What we did

We mapped every compliance item, structured all proposal volumes, and identified the win themes VA evaluators score highest.

What it means for you

You start with a roadmap, not a blank page. The difference between a 60-hour grind and a 20-hour focused effort on a contract worth 100x this cost.

WHAT'S IN THIS DOCUMENT

- 1. Full Compliance Checklist (all requirements mapped)
- 2. Complete Proposal Outline (all volumes, sections, and guidance)
- 3. Key Win Themes (5 detailed discriminators with tactical guidance)

SECTION 1 - COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

Review every item before proposal submission. Items marked with a checkbox are required compliance actions.

Registration & Certifications

- SDVOSB certification current in SBA Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS)
- VETS-4212 report on file with Department of Labor
- SAM.gov registration active - CAGE code, representations and certifications current
- NAICS 541512 size standard confirmed (\$30M average annual receipts for small business)
- No active exclusions, debarments, or suspensions in SAM.gov

Past Performance

- 3 relevant past performance references within the last 5 years
- References demonstrate similar scope: cloud migration, service desk, network engineering
- Dollar value of references comparable to this contract (\$1M+)
- CPARS ratings available or reference contacts confirmed willing to respond
- No adverse CPARS or negative contractor performance assessments on record

Technical Requirements

- FedRAMP Moderate authorization documented (or active in-process letter available)
- NIST 800-53 controls implementation evidence available for prior contracts
- HIPAA / PII data handling procedures documented and current
- DR/COOP documentation tested within the last 12 months
- 99.9% uptime SLA history demonstrable from prior service desk contracts
- 24/7 Network Operations Center (NOC) capability documented

Staffing & Clearances

- Key personnel resumes meet minimum qualifications: PM, Technical Lead, Security Specialist
- Cleared personnel pipeline confirmed - minimum Public Trust, select positions requiring Secret
- No key personnel on this proposal are currently committed 100% to other active contracts
- Proposed Program Manager has PMP or equivalent and 5+ years federal IT PM experience

Compliance & Legal

- VAAR 852.219-9 SDVOSB performance requirements reviewed and teaming plan compliant
- Price proposal structure: detailed labor rates, indirect rates, and cost realism support
- If teaming: subcontractor SDVOSB status verified; teaming agreement executed
- Section 508 accessibility compliance approach documented for all deliverables

SECTION 2 - PROPOSAL OUTLINE & SECTION GUIDANCE

Each section below includes page allocations, what evaluators are looking for, and specific must-include elements.

VOLUME 1 - TECHNICAL PROPOSAL - PAGE LIMIT: 55 pages

1.0 Executive Summary [3 pages]

Evaluator Guidance:

Open with your understanding of VA's mission and this contract's strategic importance. State your key discriminators up front - evaluators read this first. If you have VA-specific past performance, lead with it. Do not restate the PWS; demonstrate you understand the problem VA is trying to solve.

Must Include:

- Your unique qualifications for this specific VA requirement
- 2-3 concrete differentiators (not generic capabilities)
- Your approach philosophy in 2-3 sentences
- Reference to your relevant past performance

1.1 Technical Approach - Infrastructure Modernization [12 pages]

Evaluator Guidance:

VA is mid-way through a 10-year IT modernization push. This section must show you understand the current state (legacy systems, mixed on-prem/cloud environments) and have a credible migration methodology. FedRAMP ATO transfer experience is specifically valued. Evaluators will be technical - use specific AWS GovCloud or Azure Government service names, not generic 'cloud migration' language.

Must Include:

- Current state assessment methodology (how you will document the baseline)
- Migration sequencing strategy - which systems move first and why
- Specific cloud platforms and service tiers (e.g., AWS GovCloud us-gov-east-1)
- FedRAMP ATO transfer or new authorization approach
- Zero-downtime cutover strategy for mission-critical systems
- Rollback procedures and risk mitigation for each migration phase
- Performance benchmarks: 99.9% uptime target, <4hr MTTR, <15min RTO for critical systems

1.2 Technical Approach - Service Desk Operations [8 pages]

Evaluator Guidance:

45,000+ VA end users across 18 regional offices is a significant scale requirement. Evaluators want to see that you have operated service desks at this scale before, not that you plan to build one. Focus on your NOC architecture, ticketing platform (ServiceNow strongly preferred for VA), and how you will meet the <4 hour response time and 85% first-call resolution KPIs from day one.

Must Include:

- Tier 1-2-3 support model with clear escalation paths and ownership
- Staffing model: FTEs per tier, geographic distribution, shift coverage
- Ticketing platform and integration with VA's existing ITSM environment
- KPI tracking: response time, first-call resolution, CSAT methodology
- Knowledge base strategy for VA-specific procedures and known issues
- Training and onboarding plan for inherited tickets and open issues

1.3 Technical Approach - Network Engineering [8 pages]

Evaluator Guidance:

Managing WAN/LAN across 2.3M square feet of VA facilities requires understanding VA's network topology, which spans VistA-connected clinical environments, administrative offices, and remote clinics. Show familiarity with VA's TIC (Trusted Internet Connection) requirements and VLAN segmentation needs for clinical vs. administrative traffic.

Must Include:

- Network assessment and documentation methodology (as-built discovery)
- WAN optimization strategy for low-bandwidth remote VA clinics
- Firewall management and change control process (VA has strict ITSM requirements)
- VPN and remote access management for VA telework requirements
- Bandwidth upgrade planning methodology with cost-benefit analysis
- TIC compliance approach for all internet-bound traffic

1.4 Security & Compliance Framework [6 pages]

Evaluator Guidance:

VA takes cybersecurity seriously after high-profile data breaches. NIST 800-53 controls, FedRAMP, and HIPAA compliance are table stakes. Your differentiator is showing a mature continuous monitoring capability and a proactive (not reactive) security posture. Reference VA Handbook 6500 specifically - evaluators will notice if you don't.

Must Include:

- NIST 800-53 control families and your implementation approach for each applicable control
- FedRAMP continuous monitoring program (monthly and annual review cadence)
- HIPAA / PII safeguarding procedures specific to VA data classifications
- VA Handbook 6500 compliance - incident reporting timelines (1 hour for major incidents)
- Vulnerability management: scanning frequency, CVSS scoring thresholds, patch SLAs
- Security Operations Center integration with VA's SOC/ESOC

1.5 Transition Plan [4 pages]

Evaluator Guidance:

VA cannot afford service disruption. Your transition plan needs a specific Day 1 through Day 90 timeline, not a generic 'phase-in approach.' Show the parallel operations period, knowledge transfer sessions with the incumbent, and explicit go/no-go decision gates. This section is often weighted more heavily than teams expect - it reduces the evaluator's perceived risk.

Must Include:

- Day 1 through Day 90 milestone schedule with named deliverables
- Parallel operations period: how long, what runs in parallel, who owns what
- Knowledge transfer plan: incumbent interviews, documentation reviews, shadow periods
- Go/No-Go decision gates with specific acceptance criteria
- Communication plan: end-user notifications, stakeholder updates, VA IT leadership briefings
- Risk register for top 5 transition failure modes with mitigation actions

VOLUME 2 - MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL - PAGE LIMIT: No stated limit (typical: 30 pages)

2.0 Corporate Experience & Past Performance [10 pages]

Evaluator Guidance:

VA evaluators will verify your references. Use the CPARS format even if it is not required - it signals familiarity with federal contracting. Each reference should map to specific PWS tasks. If you have VA-specific past performance, lead with it. If not, use federal civilian agencies with similar IT complexity (HHS, DoD non-classified, DHS).

Must Include:

- 3 past performance references in CPARS-style format
- Contract number, period of performance, dollar value for each reference
- Specific tasks performed that map to this PWS (use same terminology)
- Measurable outcomes: uptime achieved, tickets closed, cost savings delivered
- Reference contact information (current, willing to respond within 48 hours)

2.1 Key Personnel [6 pages + resumes as attachments]

Evaluator Guidance:

VA will score key personnel on minimum qualifications first (pass/fail), then on differentiating experience. Your PM needs PMP certification and demonstrable VA/federal civilian IT management experience. Your Security Specialist needs CISSP or equivalent. Do not propose someone who is 'available to be assigned' - evaluators expect named individuals who will actually work the contract.

Must Include:

- Program Manager: PMP or equivalent, 5+ years federal IT PM, VA experience preferred
- Technical Lead: 8+ years infrastructure/cloud experience, FedRAMP experience required
- Security Specialist: CISSP or CISM, NIST 800-53 implementation experience
- Availability commitment: each key person named as X% dedicated to this contract
- Substitution policy: your process for replacing key personnel with VA approval

2.2 Management Plan & Quality Assurance [5 pages]

Evaluator Guidance:

Show how you manage the contract on an ongoing basis, not just how you will start. VA wants to see a governance structure with clear escalation paths to VA leadership, a QA program with metrics, and a mechanism for course-correcting when performance dips. Monthly performance reporting and quarterly business reviews are typically required.

Must Include:

- Org chart showing reporting relationships and VA touchpoints
- Escalation matrix: who calls whom for what type of issue
- QA methodology: how you measure against KPIs, what triggers a corrective action
- Monthly status report format and distribution list
- Quarterly Business Review (QBR) agenda template

2.3 Subcontracting Plan [3 pages]

Evaluator Guidance:

If you are teaming with subcontractors, document the work split and confirm each sub's SDVOSB status (for SDVOSB set-asides, the prime must perform the majority of work). VA will hold you to the SB participation percentages you commit to here.

Must Include:

- Work split by labor category and dollar value between prime and subs
- Each subcontractor's small business status confirmed in SAM.gov
- Prime performance of majority of work (>50%) documented
- SB participation goal as percentage of total contract value

VOLUME 3 - PRICE PROPOSAL - PAGE LIMIT: No page limit

3.0 Completed RFQ Pricing Workbook [N/A - use VA's format]

Evaluator Guidance:

Complete the pricing workbook exactly as VA provides it. Do not reformat. Labor categories must match your technical proposal staffing plan exactly. Any discrepancy between your proposed labor mix in the technical volume and your priced labor categories is a compliance risk.

Must Include:

- Labor categories matching technical proposal staffing plan
- Fully loaded rates (base + fringe + overhead + G&A + profit)
- Hours by CLIN, option year, and labor category
- ODC assumptions clearly documented (travel, materials, licenses)

3.1 Price Narrative & Supporting Documentation [5 pages]

Evaluator Guidance:

VA will conduct a cost realism analysis. Your price narrative must explain your rates, not just state them. Show that your loaded rates are competitive and realistic - too low signals risk, too high gets you cut. Use GSA Schedule rates or comparable government contract rates as benchmarks if available.

Must Include:

- Indirect rate explanation: fringe, overhead, G&A, fee methodology
- Labor rate benchmarking to GSA Schedule or comparable contracts
- ODC assumptions and basis of estimate
- Total price by year and by CLIN for easy comparison
- Price-to-win strategy narrative (how you are competitive without being unrealistic)

VOLUME 4 - REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS - PAGE LIMIT: As required

4.0 SDVO SB Certification Documentation [2 pages]

Evaluator Guidance:

Include your CVE verification letter and confirm your DSBS listing is current. VA verifies this before award.

Must Include:

- CVE verification letter or SBA certification
- Active DSBS listing confirmation

4.1 Representations & Certifications [As required by solicitation]

Evaluator Guidance:

Complete all reps and certs in SAM.gov and confirm they are current. For VA solicitations, specifically verify VAAR clause compliance.

Must Include:

- SAM.gov reps and certs current and confirmed
- VAAR-specific representations completed

SECTION 3 - KEY WIN THEMES & TACTICAL GUIDANCE

These are the 5 most important differentiators for this contract type. Each theme includes tactical guidance on how to execute it in your proposal.

WIN THEME 1: Veteran-Centered Mission Alignment

SDVOSBs with genuine veteran employment initiatives and VA healthcare experience signal authentic mission fit - not just a set-aside play.

Tactical Guidance:

VA evaluators have seen hundreds of proposals that mention serving Veterans in the executive summary and then deliver generic IT services. The ones that stand out demonstrate a genuine organizational connection to the Veteran community: veteran employees in leadership roles, partnerships with VSOs, participation in VA volunteer programs, or prior work directly supporting VA healthcare delivery.

Quantify your veteran employment: number of veteran employees, percentage of workforce, any veteran-owned supplier relationships. If your PM or Technical Lead is a Veteran, make that prominent - it creates personal credibility with evaluators who are often Veterans themselves.

Avoid the generic 'we are honored to support Veterans' language that appears in 80% of VA proposals. Instead: 'Our team includes [X] Veterans, [X] of whom served in VA medical facilities before joining the private sector. Their firsthand knowledge of VA clinical workflows directly informed our transition plan.'

WIN THEME 2: Proven Cloud Migration Track Record at Federal Scale

VA is mid-way through a 10-year IT modernization push. Past performance on AWS GovCloud or Azure Government migrations of similar scale (2,000+ endpoints, \$5M+) is a direct discriminator.

Tactical Guidance:

Generic cloud migration experience does not differentiate you. VA-specific or federal civilian cloud migration experience - particularly FedRAMP ATO transfers and migrations of systems with PHI/PII data - does.

If you have migrated systems from on-premises VA or DoD environments to FedRAMP-authorized cloud, describe the specific technical challenges: handling VistA integration, managing CUI data during transit, maintaining HIPAA compliance during cutover, coordinating with VA's CAB for change approvals.

FedRAMP ATO transfer experience is particularly valued because it eliminates one of the biggest schedule risks in a migration program. If you have shepherded a system through a FedRAMP ATO transfer (inheriting controls from AWS or Azure and documenting agency-specific controls), lead with it.

Quantify: 'Migrated 4,200 endpoints across 12 VA Medical Centers to AWS GovCloud with zero security incidents and 99.97% uptime during transition' is a winning past performance statement. 'Successfully completed cloud migration project' is not.

WIN THEME 3: Uptime Guarantees Backed by Verifiable Data

The 99.9% uptime requirement is non-negotiable. Show your 24/7 NOC capability with documented SLA history from prior federal contracts.

Tactical Guidance:

Every bidder will claim they can meet the 99.9% uptime requirement. The ones who win can prove they have already done it.

Your past performance section should include specific uptime metrics from comparable contracts: 'Maintained 99.94% uptime over 36-month base period serving 12,000 end users across 8 federal sites.' Evaluators will verify these claims with your references - make sure your references know what numbers to confirm.

For the service desk KPIs, the specific numbers matter: <4 hour response time and 85% first-call resolution. If your actual performance from prior contracts exceeded these thresholds, say so explicitly: 'Our ITSM data shows a 3-year average of 2.1 hour response time and 91% FCR on our [contract name] engagement.'

Document your NOC architecture in the technical proposal: staffing model, shift coverage, escalation procedures, monitoring tools (SIEM, APM, network monitoring platforms), and your documented procedures for the most common incident types in VA

WIN THEME 4: Cleared Personnel Bench Ready on Day 1

Recruitment timelines kill proposals. Demonstrate you have a named, cleared technical bench - not 'we will recruit.' Even 3-4 named individuals with active clearances signals low risk.

Tactical Guidance:

One of the most common reasons technically strong proposals lose: the staffing section says 'we will hire qualified personnel' or 'we will identify cleared candidates.' Evaluators see this as a red flag - it means you do not have a cleared bench and plan to recruit after award, which creates schedule risk during transition.

For this contract, the required clearance levels are Public Trust (the majority) with some positions requiring Secret. Public Trust investigations take 3-6 months if the person has not been previously investigated. If you propose someone who has never held a federal clearance, you are implicitly telling the evaluator that key positions will be unstaffed for the first 3-6 months.

The winning approach: name key personnel who either hold active clearances or have held clearances within the past 2 years (re-investigations are faster). For your PM and Technical Lead especially, current or recent clearance status is a significant discriminator.

If you have a cleared bench for specific labor categories, state it in the management plan: 'We maintain a bench of [X] personnel with active Public Trust determinations for rapid deployment on new federal task orders.'

WIN THEME 5: Zero-Disruption Transition Methodology

VA cannot afford downtime. A detailed 90-day phase-in plan with parallel operations, named milestones, and go/no-go decision gates demonstrates operational maturity above the competition.

Tactical Guidance:

The transition section is where many proposals go generic. They describe phases without dates, milestones without owners, and parallel operations without defining what 'parallel' means operationally.

VA evaluators want to see a specific Day 1 through Day 90 timeline. Day 1 should describe exactly what happens the morning your team assumes responsibility: who is on-site at each VA location, what systems they have access to, who their VA counterparts are, and what the first 8-hour shift looks like.

Parallel operations should have a defined duration (typically 30-60 days) with specific criteria for declaring each system 'transitioned' and releasing the incumbent from responsibility. Define your knowledge transfer process: how many hours of shadowing per incumbent technician, what documentation you will collect, and your process for handling open tickets in progress at transition.

Go/no-go decision gates are particularly important for VA because their Change Advisory Board (CAB) must approve all significant changes. Build CAB approval timelines into your milestone schedule - do not plan a cutover for a Monday morning without accounting for the CAB meeting that needs to approve it the prior Thursday.

The most compelling transition proposals include a risk register: the top 5 transition failure modes, the probability and impact of each, and your specific mitigation actions. This shows operational maturity and reduces the evaluator's perception of transition risk.

Ready to run this on your actual RFP?

We return a full breakdown within 24 hours - compliance checklist, proposal outline, and win themes mapped to your exact solicitation. First analysis free. If it helps your bid, the full proposal package starts at \$1,500.

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Standard \$1,500 | Complex