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General			Has a contractor performed similar work to this for the government in the past? If available, please provide the incumbent contract number. If you are unable to provide a contract number, is it safe to assume this is a new requirement for the government?	USAC has retained vendors historically to perform most of the functions outlined in the RFI. These are not US Government contracts. It is important to note that USAC is not a government agency, but is a not-for-profit corporation which functions as the Administrator of the federal Universal Service Fund and the four universal service programs.
General			How many vendors support your current erate program?	We have one vendor which performs the processing work.
General			Are you looking to consolidate BPO services with one vendor?	We are looking for the best solution to meet our needs.
General			What are your timeframes to look for an rfp for new services?	We expect to release an RFP in the next year.
General			Do you envision stronger vetting of telcos that provide this service to ensure better more timely quality of service provided?	Please clarify your question. This does not appear to be relevant. As Administrator, USAC does not provide a regulatory framework.
General			What channels of communications are currently utilized by the vendor? It appears that right now it is just phone and email. Are there any additional methods of communications that are being currently planned or considered?	USAC utilizes a large account and application management portal for the E-rate program, known as the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC). Most of the communications with our program participants occurs through the portal. This communication includes outbound emails to prompt users to log in to retrieve their messages. In addition, USAC uses email and phone calls to communicate with stakeholders. We do not currently have plans to add methods of communication but would welcome suggestions.
General			What percentage of annual applications have received funding in the prior funding year for the E-rate program?	Over 90% of the applications submitted in the last funding year were approved for at least some funding. It is important to note that an application can contain multiple requests for funding, and that USAC's decisions are made at the funding request level. Therefore, a single application can have requests approved in full, requests denied, and requests approved, but for a modified amount.
General			How are applications for funding that are not complete or are missing information "handled?"	Requests for funding must be submitted electronically through EPC's web front end. This system contains many validations to ensure that sufficient information is provided prior to submission so that the application can be reviewed. In addition, a set of complex business rules flag certain applications for further reviews. Based on these flags, the reviewers reach out to the applicants through EPC to ask for additional information and to request supporting documentation. Applicants

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				respond through EPC to these requests, which may require them to upload supporting documentation.
General			What percent of applications are reviewed for QA process and also what percent of applications are reviewed by the USAC audit team? Does the USAC audit team conduct random samples of application reviews?	USAC does not publicly divulge the percentage of applications reviewed for QA, but we welcome suggestions. The USAC audit team conducts random and targeted reviews.
General			Are appeals filed electronically with USAC?	Yes, appeals must be filed electronically. For current funding years, appeals are submitted through EPC, and appeals for Funding Years 2015 and prior are submitted by email and through USAC's website.
General			Does the vendor issue the decisions for appeals or does the vendor make a recommendation and USAC issues the decision on appeals?	Appeal reviews are conducted and decisions prepared by the vendor in accordance with the approved procedures and under USAC oversight and direction.
General			What will be GFE vs contractor supplied?	Please clarify the question.
General			What is the vision for reporting and analytics capabilities?	USAC has reporting capabilities in place for its own needs, but the vendor will be asked to provide reporting to USAC and should be prepared to use reporting and analytics to optimize the processing of applications, funding requests, and other forms and requests (e.g., FCC Forms 486, 500, appeals, service substitutions, etc.). The vendor will be required to measure performance and report accordingly.
General Services	2.1	6	What is involved with document management? (paper intake, fulfillment, letters?)	In 2016, USAC moved all intake, processing, and notifications to electronic formats. However, USAC still receives a small amount of paper submissions for requests associated with prior funding years. All paper submissions are scanned and stored electronically. Letters and notifications for all processes associated with Funding Years 2015 and prior are still printed and mailed to program participants.
Invoicing	2.1	5	In order to provide some pricing estimates, please provide current volumes for invoices requiring "additional information" or "corrections to the invoice request.	The invoicing system performs automated verification of approximately 80% of invoices received. The remainder of the invoices (approximately 90,000 – 110,000 line items annually) must be verified manually.
Overview	2.1	3	It is noted that SLD has approximately 40 FTEs that perform multiple functions including Operations, Operational Improvements, Customer experience, Compliance, Customer Service and reporting. What is the role and responsibility of these FTEs?	USAC employees administer the program and provide vendor oversight and direction.
Overview	2.1	3	What is the platform technology / system for EPC? Is USAC interested in replacing this system?	EPC is based on the Appian platform and USAC has no current plans to replace this system.

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Overview	2.1	3	How do applicants interface with the program (Voice , email , mail etc) ? How will this change (what is future state ) with the digital push? (portal?)	Staff from USAC and its vendor correspond with applicants via the methods described above as well as through the EPC portal.
Overview	2.1	4	Are all applications received on paper or is there an online application process used by Schools and libraries?	All applications are electronically submitted.
Program Integrity Assurance Review	2.1	4	Please provide a description of the automated review process within EPC. Is this a series of automated edits on required fields in the application? Does it simply verify that information is present and in the proper format or does it have logic to assess the information provided?	USAC's system includes a set of complex business rules and validations. The validations ensure that required information has been entered prior to application submission. Business rules then flag discrepancies in the application which must be reviewed to ensure compliance with FCC rules and program procedures. Finally, the system will review data discrepancies and attempt to resolve them based on information and other rules in the system. These suggested resolutions are then verified by a reviewer prior to a funding decision being issued.
Program Integrity Assurance Review	2.1	4	In order for us to provide some pricing estimates, what is the volume and level of effort/time to complete for manual review of the three types of PIA review: General, Heightened Scrutiny and Fiber?	Providing details of reviews is difficult because the time to conduct these reviews varies greatly based on the complexity of the data submitted and applicant response time.
Program Integrity Assurance Review	2.1	4	Is the current "voluminous set of guidelines and federal regulations" stored in a knowledge management system accessible to reviewers? If so, what is the system being used?	Reviewers are provided with access to detailed review procedures and training materials. Training is provided to the reviewers to provide updates on new rules and changes in existing rules. In addition, the processing system provides reviewers with tools, including flagging of possible issues, which help to assist with the reviews.
Program Integrity Assurance Review	2.1	4	Can we get more specific volumetrics and processing times for applicants , appeals etc?	Providing details of application processing is difficult and varies depending on the scope and complexity of the funding requested as well as other factors such as the type of applicant. Appeals and other change processes have a similar range of complexity. In many cases, the reviewer must reach out to the applicant for clarifications and/or supporting documentation before a funding decision can be reached, and delays in receiving a response will delay the completion of the review.
Program Integrity Assurance Review	2.1	4	What is the seasonality/ surge element? What % of annual workload is in what time period?	Applications are filed during a filing window which has an established deadline, typically in the Spring of each year. Reviews can begin as soon as applications are received with the majority of reviews

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				<p>occurring within the first 3-5 months following the close of the filing window.</p> <p>Other processes, including the invoicing function, also have deadlines, which create a surge in requests. Major invoice deadlines occur at the end of October and the end of January.</p>
Quality Assurance (QA) For PIA Reviews	2.1	4	<p>Please clarify if the two rounds of QA reviews on selected applications is inclusive of the USAC Internal Audit team's QA review or if there are two rounds of QA that occurs with the contractor. If it is with the contractor, please provide a distinction as to what the two reviews entail.</p>	<p>The two rounds of reviews are: (1) a quality assurance process at the vendor, and (2) a quality assurance process with USAC's Schools and Libraries division. Both of these reviews are separate from the work undertaken by USAC's Internal Audit team.</p> <p>Both QA processes seek to verify adherence to the procedures and that the correct funding decision was made. The QA conducted by the vendor is undertaken to determine the quality of their work. USAC's QA is conducted as an independent sample and is part of USAC's vendor oversight. Both QA teams conduct their reviews on a sample basis.</p>