

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
1.	General		Are bidders able to team up/partner/subcontract to respond to the RFP?	Yes, vendors may team up/partner/subcontract in order to respond to the RFP. USAC's revised RFP issued April 13, 2018 carried some changes pertaining to this matter. While there is an intent to award to a single contractor, there is no prohibition to partnering or teaming with other organizations to provide the best bid possible. In Section 8, Instructions and Evaluation Criteria, at 8.9.2.1, USAC requests that where vendors intend to partner with other firms acting as subcontractors for the performance of any task related to the solicitation, the vendor shall include the identity and qualifications of the subcontractor, potential conflicts, and the scope of services to be subcontracted. There are further instructions concerning subcontractors in sections 8.9.2.3 and 8.9.3 at paragraph 3.
2.	2.3 and Attachment 1	11	The contractor will be expected to bid improvement terms committing to a percentage reduction in per unit and/or per service prices year-over-year due to process improvements (please note: Contractor will bid exact percentage amount in Attachment 1). However, Attachment 1 does not have fields for vendors to present their proposed "continuous improvement" percentages. Should vendors modify Attachment 1 to include a "continuous improvement" calculation?	Yes, Bidders can adjust attachment 1 to present their "continuous improvement" calculation.
3.	3.2	14	Could USAC provide volumes of all in scope transaction types via soft copy, in addition to the reading room access, in order to level set for all bidders?	Volumes are shared with the vendors in the reading room only.
4.	8.2	27	The header 8.2 in the Table of Contents states vendor questions are due March 30. The text within Section 8.2 states that questions are due April 16. Which is correct?	This oversight has been corrected in the revised posted RFP. The new/correct deadline for submission of questions is April 30, 2018.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
5.	Attachment 1, Variable Price Tab		<p>Some rows in the "Variable Price" tab include dollar sign designations while others are blank. Are vendors to insert prices solely on rows with dollar sign designations? As an example:</p> <p>n "Year 2015 and Prior" (row 22) appears to be a header, requiring no pricing input. Subsequent rows (23-29) appear to be a listing of Prior Year activities that require Unit Pricing. However, PIA Review and Heightened Scrutiny rows (12 and 13) contain no dollar sign designation, and no subsequent rows with specific activities to be priced. How should vendors submit PIA pricing under the current Attachment 1 format?</p>	<p>Row 22 (Year 2015 and Prior) is a header. The subsequent rows are line items.</p> <p>Row 12 and 13 are line items.</p>
6.	Attachment 1, Definitions and Pricing Notes" Tab		<p>Notes a-e appear to define levels of complexity within submitted Form 471's. Is it USAC's intent to have vendors propose discrete "fixed unit pricing" for each of the 471 types defined in a-e? We respectfully recommend USAC endorse the approach of allowing vendors to modify the "Variable Price" tab to include distinct unit pricing for each of the 471 types defined in notes a-e. Can USAC please comment on this recommendation as well?</p>	<p>Vendors may revise attachment 1 to more explain their proposed pricing. The proposed line items in attachment 1 are the minimum requirements.</p>
7.	Attachment 5		<p>The RFP states that it is available in the Reading Room. Since Vendors are required to respond in the SLA template will USAC provide vendors with a soft copy of the SLA template?</p>	<p>Yes, a soft copy of the SLA template is being shared with vendors.</p>
8.	Attachment 6		<p>The Key Personnel section from the USAC website is labeled Attachment 5 but the RFP references that section as Attachment 6. Is there a missing attachment?</p>	<p>The key personnel is Attachment 6. It is mistakenly labeled as attachment 5 in USAC website. Attachment 5 is the SLAs.</p>
9.	2.3 Contract / pricing structure	11	<p>If a vendor intends to propose a subcontractor to provide specific expertise, is the vendor required to seek approval from USAC prior to submitting a proposal? If so, can USAC detail the process for seeking the approval?</p>	<p>No, vendors are not required to seek approval from USAC prior to submitting a proposal. The referenced RFP section is revised and further clarified in the revised RFP posted April 13, 2018. See the answer to question # 1 for more information.</p>

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
10.	8.1 Period of Acceptance for Offers	26	Are there any restrictions on the file size that can be submitted in a single e-mail?	Yes, the sum of all attachments in a single email must be less than 40MB
11.	8.1 Period of Acceptance for Offers	26	Are there any restrictions on the file format for submission (e.g., PDF, MS Office, zipped, etc.)?	As stated under section 8.5, the acceptable file formats are Microsoft® Excel, Microsoft® Word, Microsoft® Project Professional, and PDF.
12.	8.9 Proposal Content	28	The RFP requires Bidders to respond using 12-point font. May Bidders use a smaller, still readable font for each of the following: a) headers and footers b) requirement text c) exhibits/figures/graphics d) tables	All text shall be 12 point font with the exception for graphics and tables discussed in question 19 below.
13.	8.9 Proposal Content	28	Several requested documents/samples (e.g., audited financial statements) do not comply with font restrictions and they are not available in a native MS Office format for font adjustments. Please confirm that it is permissible to submit those documents as is.	Confirmed.
14.	8.9.2.2 Summary of Project Approach	29-30	Section 8.9.2.2 requires our written methodology to include dozens of separate requirements covering approximately 20 pages of the RFP. Would USAC consider increasing the allotted page count for our response?	The page limit for Summary of Project Approach is increased to 20 pages.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
15.	8.9.2.7 Specific Prompts	31	<p>We recognize the word count limits for responses to all subsections falling under Section 8.9.2.7.</p> <p>a) Can USAC confirm that graphics included in our response will not count against these posted word count limits? Or</p> <p>b) Would USAC consider allowing us to include one additional attachment to the Proposal for any large graphics or tables?</p>	Graphics will not be included in the word count limits.
16.	8.10.1.2 Past Performance	36-37	The RFP states that past performance information will be evaluated across six broad areas, but only four are listed. Can USAC please clarify the broad areas for the past performance evaluation criteria?	Past performance information will be evaluated across four (4) broad areas as listed on bottom of page 36.
17.	4.1 Performance Standards	18	The RFP indicates Key Personnel is Attachment 6, but the attachment on USAC's Procurement web page identifies Key Personnel as Attachment 5. Please clarify the correct attachment numbers for these files?	The key personnel is Attachment 6. It is mistakenly labeled as attachment 5 in USAC website. Attachment 5 is the SLAs.
18.	8.7 Identification of Confidential Information	28	Does USAC have a preferred methodology of identifying confidential information in the proposal?	USAC does not have a preferred methodology. The proposal shall clearly and conspicuously identify information contained in the proposal that the vendor contends is confidential information.
19.	8.9 Proposal Content	28	The RFP states: "All text shall be 12 point font." Our experience is that 10 point font is more readable in tables and graphics. May we use 10 point font in tables and graphics?	Yes, for tables and graphs where readability is improved by using 10 point font, 10 point font may be used for tables and graphs.
20.	8.9.1.1 Program Integrity Assurance	29	Please clarify that the section 8.9.1.1 Program Integrity Assurance should be in Volume 1 with the Corporate Information, rather than Volume II with the Technical information. If 8.9.1.1 should be answered in Volume II, where within the Volume should it be inserted?	Subsection 8.9.1.1 is part of Volume 1 – Corporate Information

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
21.	8.9.2.3 Key Personnel	29-30	Section 8.9.2.3 requests an organization chart of the team structure, the roles and responsibilities of each of the key personnel, and the names and citizenship of non-US citizens. Please clarify if there is a page limit for providing this information.	This may not exceed 3 pages.
22.	8.9.2.5 SLA Performance	30	Will USAC provide an electronic version of Tab 5.1 that bidders can complete?	A soft copy of the SLA Template is being shared via email.
23.	8.9.4 Price	34	USAC requests pricing through 2023, based upon projections in the Reading Room. With this information not yet available, will USAC be able to share the information in another format with the bidders?	The volumes expectations are available in the reading room and have been available in the reading room since the afternoon of 4/11/2018.
24.	8.10.1.2 Past Performance	36	The RFP states: "Past performance information will be evaluated across six (6) broad areas:" However, only 4 broad areas are listed. Please clarify if there are additional areas for evaluation.	Past performance information will be evaluated across four (4) broad areas as listed on bottom of page 36.
25.	8.9.1.1 PIA Improvements		Is there an expectation that PIA improvements recommended per the request under section 8.9.1.1 will be implemented in Year 1?	USAC does not require the PIA improvements be implemented in Year 1. USAC understands that the implementation of recommendations for improvements / and/or other approaches to PIA review that are compliant with FCC rules may take extended time to implement. USAC anticipates that offerors will require a period of "as is" operations work in order to assess the additional opportunities for improvements as part of continuous improvement efforts. However, the vendor may explore this possibility at their own effort/choice during year 1.
26.	3.1.6	12	The contractor is required to have reviewers available to program participants during regular business hours of 8am – 8pm ET. Will contact with the reviewers be exclusively through calls transferred from the Call Center or through a direct number to the BPO?	Calls between reviewers and program participants are not routed through the call center. Reviewer phone numbers are included in each outbound contact with program participants so that the reviewer can be reached directly for clarifications and/or questions.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
27.	3.4.1	17	This section includes references to the prioritization of critical and non-critical business functions. Would USAC please define which business functions outlined in this RFP are considered "critical" and "non-critical"?	Attachment 5, SLA Template was shared via email on April 20, 2018. This document indicates which functions are deemed critical and which are non-critical.
28.	4.1.3	18	The RFP states that we will store all work on USAC's servers and systems. Does this include workflow and other contract data we collect for internal data analysis and continuous improvement activities, training materials, and reviewer guidelines and procedures?	All data associated with the work performed under this contract will be USAC's property. USAC must have access to all data and derivatives of the data that are collected or generated under this contract.
29.	8.9.2.7.3	32	Will the selected vendor have access to the existing USAC Enterprise Data System (EDS) environment to perform data research and analytics?	USAC will provide read-only access to our reporting database, and will provide access to our Pentaho and Socrata platforms. Access to the databases and data will be limited according to the individual's role and responsibility.
30.	8.9.2.7.3	32	Will the full Pentaho suite of analytic tools, housed in the EDS, be made available to the vendor for their analytics and reporting functions?	The vendor will have access to the Pentaho tools that are available to SLD for analytics and reporting.
31.	Attachment 1, Variable Price Tab		The priced element within Invoicing is stated to be: "Processing Lines." The term "Processing Lines" does not appear anywhere in the Solicitation documents. Please provide detail on the scope of work associated with an invoicing "Processing Line."	"Processing Lines" refer to invoice line items. A line is an item on an invoice associated with a charge or cost for that item. An invoice may have multiple lines for different items that are included on the invoice. The scope of work for processing invoice lines is described in the Invoicing Procedures in the Reading Room.
32.	Attachment 1, Definitions and Pricing Notes" Tab		The definitions and pricing notes do not appear to be referenced elsewhere in Attachment 1. Please provide vendors with additional information on how these definitions should be used to generate pricing.	These are illustrative list of items that may help bidder to construct their tier price
33.	Attachment 1, Definitions and Pricing Notes" Tab		There is no definition provided for 471 forms for fiber services. The complexity and level of effort required to process 471's that include requests for fiber services appears to be significantly higher than non-fiber requests. Will USAC consider adding an additional note (and approval for separate fixed unit pricing) for Form 471's that include applications for fiber service?	No. USAC will not add an additional note or approval for separate fixed unit pricing for fiber related applications. As discussed in the RFP, bidders are requested to provide pricing for the application processing service on the Bid Sheet and include the anticipated costs associated with fiber related applications in the bidder's price for this service.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
34.	8.9.2.7.6 Recording of calls Page # 32		This section references a requirement that 100% of calls are to be recorded. Please clarify if the vendor is required to record 100% of the calls to and from applicants? Or does USAC also require calls with USAC and external parties be recorded?	This requirement refers to calls to and from program participants (applicants, service providers, and consultants) and the SL BPO vendor. It does not include calls to/from USAC.
35.			What is the volume per work stream (noted the 35k for PIA work type) for a Calendar year	Information pertaining to volumes is available in the Reading Room only.
36.			What is the current Agent and then Support headcount numbers used to deliver the service as outlined in the RFP?	USAC cannot disclose confidential information about current vendors. USAC expects each bidder to independently determine adequate staffing levels for their proposal.
37.			Where in the US is the service delivery currently based? Reason for this question is linked to our location choice for the solution as there may be the opportunity to utilize resources who are currently delivering the service for USAC, especially if not done within USAC itself	USAC does not provide information related to the current incumbent.
38.	2.2.1 Application Processing	7	Of the approx. 40,000 applications processed annually, please confirm what percentage involves manual processing.	Currently, all applications require manual review. The manual resources vary on the complexity of the applications. There are approximately 4.5% of the applications that require minimal work. Additional information is available in the Reading Room.
39.	2.2.1 Application Processing	8	It is understood that applications can undergo up to 4 levels of review during the process. Please provide a current estimated number of applications or a percentage for each of the below levels of review: - Initial Review = 100% - Peer Review = ? - Vendor QA Review = ? - USAC QA Review = ?	All applications undergo an initial review. Please see the PIA procedures available in the Reading Room for additional information regarding applications that are not subject to Final/Peer Review. In addition, the QA sample rates differ by review function.
40.	2.2 Services to be performed	7	Please provide the current number of full-time employees assigned to each service currently being performed by the BPO vendor.	USAC cannot disclose confidential information about current vendors. USAC expects each bidder to independently determine adequate staffing levels for their proposal.
41.	2.2.1 Application Processing	9	Please provide the estimated percentage of Post-Commitment Reviews of applications.	The volumes of Post Commitment reviews are in the Reading Room. You can determine the percentage based upon this data.
42.	General		Please provide the volume of Post-Commitment Reviews of applications.	The volumes for post-commitment reviews are available in the Reading Room.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
43.	4.1 Performance Standards	18	This section references “Attachment 5, SLA Template, tab 5.1, which will be made available in the Reading Room.” We were unable to locate the referenced attachment in the Reading Room. Does USAC intend to make Attachment 5 available at a later date?	Attachment 5, SLA Template was shared via email on April 20, 2018.
44.	4.1 Performance Standards	18	Please provide expected service level agreements in regards to processing time for each service to be performed by the BPO Vendor (Please indicate business or calendar day expectations).	Attachment 5, SLA Template was shared via email on April 20, 2018.
45.	3.2 Volume Expectations and Statistical Information	14	a) Is there an expected ramp schedule or full volume cutover of all processing? b) If there is an expected ramp schedule, what is the duration of that schedule?	USAC expects to sign the contract in August 2018. The transition period will begin immediately and will continue through December 31, 2018. The vendor will be responsible for delivering the services at the SLA levels as of January 1, 2019.
46.	General		Question: Any information regarding whether Time / Rate studies have been performed / average time to process Form 471, 486, 498, 472, 473 and 474. If yes, can these be made available in the reading room?	No, Time/Rate studies have not been conducted.
47.	RFP 2.2.1/2.2.2		Statement (General): Heightened Scrutiny, high dollar, COMAD/RIDF and other reviews are completed by designated staff with higher levels of E-rate program experience and additional training.  Question: Are criteria for experience and additional training defined by USAC as qualifiers for these personnel?	USAC will work with the selected vendor to ensure that these staff receive additional training in these areas. In addition, they will be required to demonstrate that knowledge by passing a test before they can begin these reviews.



**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
48.	RFP 2.2.1/2.2.2		<p>Statement (General): Heightened Scrutiny, high dollar, COMAD/RIDF and other reviews are completed by designated staff with higher levels of E-rate program experience and additional training.</p> <p>Question: Are there distinct training levels defined and specific training programs already developed by USAC for this purpose? (or is that a contractor function?)</p>	<p>There is specific training that has been developed for each type of review. USAC will work with the selected vendor to ensure that the training is up to date and complete prior to the launch of the training.</p>
49.	Attachment 3, ROW 11		<p>USAC Question: Can you provide technical troubleshooting for all on-line, production, and legacy applications?</p> <p>Our Question: Can USAC please define the scope of technical troubleshooting and specific systems referenced? As written, we interpret this as technical troubleshooting for EPC and USAC's current legacy systems.</p>	<p>USAC expects that the BPO vendor will perform the initial triage of any operational issues performing the review and report system bugs to USAC IT for tier-2 support.</p>
50.	8.9 and subparagraphs		<p>Question regarding submission requirements: Should the submission be transmitted as one file / one electronic copy of the files, OR submitted as separate files (Volumes I through V) corresponding to each proposal section?</p>	<p>USAC requires that the proposal be submitted as separate files (Volumes I through V) corresponding to each proposal section. Note: the files should not be secured.</p>
51.	8.9 and subparagraphs		<p>Question: Based on response to question above – Should pages be consecutively numbered for each file? Or consecutive numbering across the entire submission if separate files?</p>	<p>The pages should be consecutively numbered for each file (volume) separately</p>

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
52.	8.9 and subparagraphs		<p>Question A: Is it permissible for offerors to use a smaller font for tables or images like workflow or systems diagrams in lieu of 12 Pt? Would the Government allow for 8 Pt font, which is typical for table, diagrams, and images as it is considered legible? (We are aware of the response to Q&amp;A round 1, question 19)</p> <p>Question B: Please define the allowable margins for each 8 ½” by 11” sheet.</p> <p>Question C: Is it allowable for offerors to include 11” by 17” sheets with its proposal? If yes, would this count as two 8 ½” by 11” sheets?</p> <p>Question D: For each proposal volume submitted, is it permissible for offerors to include a volume cover sheet, volume table of contents, and volume glossary of acronyms? If yes, are these specific sheets excluded from page and word count limits?</p>	<p>A. As per Q&amp;A round 1 question # 19, offer may use 10 Pt font for tables, diagrams and images.</p> <p>B. The allowable Margin is 1" for edge</p> <p>C. 8 ½” by 11 sheets are acceptable only</p> <p>D. Offerors may include a cover page, table of contents and glossary of acronyms for each volume and these are not counted toward the specified page limits.</p>
53.	SLA / Line Item 15		<p>Line Item 15 SLA - Question: What is the annual volume of FCC Public Notices (resolving appeals) and usual timeframes for resolution?</p>	<p>In general, the FCC issues a monthly Public Notice that resolves pending appeals at the Commission. USAC is generally directed to process the remanded applications within 90 days of the order, unless otherwise directed by the Commission.</p>
54.	SLA / Line Item 28		<p>Line Item 28 SLA - Question: What is the current / expected sample size for QA for each of the referenced processes?</p>	<p>This information will be shared with the selected vendor. It is expected that less than 1% error rate will be met as stated in the SLA.</p>
55.	SLA / Line Item 29		<p>Line Item 28 SLA - Question: What is the current average yearly volume for Self-ID Appeals?</p>	<p>This number varies from year to year.</p>
56.	SLA / Line Items 33, 34, 35		<p>Question: Please clarify if “Days” listed are Business Days.</p>	<p>"Days" are calendar days.</p>

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
57.	SLA Line Items 40 and 41		Question: Respectively these SLA’s require performance completion within 1 day and 4 hours. The reporting frequencies for these SLA’s do not seem to correlate with the SLA requirement as they are listed as Weekly (SLA 40) and Monthly (SLA 41). Please clarify.	The reporting frequency is not tied to these SLAs. Bug fixes are weekly and system releases are deployed monthly.
58.	SLA / Line Item 43		Line Item 43 SLA – Question: Please review the uptime requested (as listed is less than 1% uptime).	The uptime should be 99%
59.	ATT1-RFP-SL-Business-Process-Outsourcing-Service-Bid-Sheet - Variable Price Tab		Background: The instructions at the top indicates a fixed price per unit, tiered by volumes. The area offered to enter volume and price only accommodates one entry per activity/function. It is unclear how many tiers (volume per activity/function) USAC is requesting offerors to bid. While the volumes are located in the Reading Room and it appears bidders are to assess volumes for the tiers within this worksheet.  Question: Will USAC offer some guidance as to the minimum number of tiers an offer should bid (i.e. 3 volume tiers) and rework the worksheet to include this minimum number of tiers?	USAC requests that the bidders take initiative to bid volume tiers and rework the worksheet to include the proposed number of tiers.
60.	ATT1-RFP-SL-Business-Process-Outsourcing-Service-Bid-Sheet - Variable Price Tab		Background: Similar to Q&A #5, in regards to attachment titled “ATT1-RFP-SL-Business-Process-Outsourcing-Service-Bid-Sheet” and specifically tab titled “Variable Price”, Column C “Volume” has Accounting instead of Number formatting, there is only one Volume column presented (typical volume tier range would have two for min/max of the tier), and not all of the cells for Columns E, G, I, K, M “Totals” have a formula.  Question: Would USAC update the model to better reflect the requirement?	Column C (Volume) should have number formatting. Offerors may adjust/revise attachment 1 to update the formatting, include formulas needed and to propose tier range if they wish to do so.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
61.	ATT1-RFP-SL-Business-Process-Outsourcing-Service-Bid-Sheet - Variable Price Tab		<p>Background: In regards to attachment titled “ATT1-RFP-SL-Business-Process-Outsourcing-Service-Bid-Sheet” and specifically tab titled “Variable Price”, there appears to be a yellow box hanging out in rows 5 and 6. We believe this to be the same instructions as found in the Stand-up FFP and Ongoing FFP, “To be completed by contractor”, however the title is missing.</p> <p>Question: If an updated file is to be released, perhaps this can be addressed?</p>	Rows 5 and 6 are the same instructions as found in the Stand-up FFP and Ongoing FFP, “To be completed by contractor.”
62.	ATT1-RFP-SL-Business-Process-Outsourcing-Service-Bid-Sheet - Variable Price Tab		<p>Background: We understand that offerors have a great deal of discretion in manipulating the bid-sheet to fit their offers, however there seems to be some intended areas missing or not reflected ore reflected correctly with the USAC intent as we read the solicitation.</p> <p>Question: Based upon the questions above, and questions 2 and 5 from the Q&amp;A, would USAC consider an update to the provided Bid-Sheet so the minimum requirements are better reflected?</p>	The pricing line items identified in attachment 1 are the minimum requirements for pricing. However, USAC allows offerors to adjust attachment to better present their pricing information.
63.	8.9.1 Corporate Information (Volume I), paragraph 6	28	<p>a. Given the length and file size of our audited financial statements (more than 400 pages to meet all requirements), can vendors provide a URL/link to these documents only?</p> <p>b. If not, because our financial statements are shared as secured PDFs, can vendors provide them as a separate file in our submission?</p>	Bidders can provide the financial statements as a separate file as an Appendix to Volume 1.
64.	8.9.2.1 Differentiators	29	Given the recent addition of subcontractor information required for this section, would USAC consider increasing the word limit from 250 to 500?	It is increased to 500 word limit.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
65.	RFP Section 8.9.5, Insurance, Volume V	34	In addition to providing certificates of insurance, is it acceptable for the Contractor to indicate our level of insurance coverage in the form of suggested edits (redlines) to the insurance language in RFP Section 8.9.5?	Bidders should indicate their level of insurance coverage in the form of suggested edits (redlined) to the insurance language in the RFP and a clean copy of it. The level of insurance shown in brackets under section 8.9.5 are USAC's suggested coverage limits.
66.	2.2.1 Application Processing	7	40,000 Funding Applications - can USAC publish the monthly volumes for the last 12 months to March 2018 inclusive	The FCC Forms 471 are received during the annual Application Filing Window (Window). The Window is generally opened from January to March. We do not receive FCC Forms 471 throughout the year.
67.	2.2.1 Application Processing	7	40,000 Funding Applications - can USAC publish the Day Of Week percentage split of Funding Applications received	The majority of the applications are received within the last two weeks of the Window.
68.	2.2.1 Application Processing	7	100,000 Individual Funding Request - can USAC publish the monthly volumes for the last 12 months to March 2018 inclusive	The FCC Forms 471 are received during the annual application filing window. The application filing window is generally opened from January to March. The funding requests referred to in the questions are included in each application. We do not receive FCC Forms 471 or other submitted funding requests at other times during the year.
69.	2.2.1 Application Processing	7	100,000 Individual Funding Request - can USAC publish the Day Of Week percentage split of Funding Applications received	The majority of the applications are received within the last two weeks of the application filing window. Most funding requests (which are included in the applications) are therefore also received in this time period.
70.	2.2.2 Post Commitment Reviews	8	How many Post Commitment Reviews are completed each year?	This information is available in the Reading Room.
71.	2.2.2 Post Commitment Reviews	8	What is the Day of Week Percentage split of Post Commitment Reviews received for each of the 5 categories? I.e. 20% Monday, 12% Friday etc.	The post-commitment requests are not tracked on a daily basis.
72.	3.1 Responsibilities and Requirements of the Contractor	12	What is the current number of Agents/CSR's supporting all aspects of the requirements of the RFP?	USAC cannot disclose confidential information about current vendors. USAC expects each bidder to independently determine adequate staffing levels for their proposal.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
73.	3.1 Responsibilities and Requirements of the Contractor	12	What is the current number of Supervisors, Trainers, Quality Associates, Subject Matter Experts etc. supporting all aspects of the requirements of the RFP?	USAC cannot disclose confidential information about current vendors. USAC expects each bidder to independently determine adequate staffing levels for their proposal.
74.	3.1 Responsibilities and Requirements of the Contractor	12	On basis that 0 is low and 10 is high, how would the USAC rate the current provider of services outlined in the RFP?	USAC does not disclose ratings on any of its current vendors.
75.	3.1 Responsibilities and Requirements of the Contractor	12	What are the reasons for USAC's rating in response to Question above?	USAC does not disclose ratings on any of its current vendors.
76.	3.2	13	For Vendors who did not attend the Reading Room but have signed the NDA and Conflicts of Interest forms, can USAC supply all historical and planned volumes?	This information pertaining to volumes is available in the Reading Room only.
77.	6	24	Will USAC provide initial Agent/CSR training in tandem with a Train the Trainer approach so the successful Vendor can own training of new staff and upskilling of incumbent staff on behalf of USAC?	The training module will be determined after the selection of the vendor.
78.	6	24	What is the total number of Agent/CSR training days for new employees to the service? This question applies to each of the various Lines of Business outlined in the RFP	The training module will be determined after the selection of the vendor.
79.	8.2 Submissions of Questions	26	How will USAC publish all Vendor Questions and Answers on 7th May 2018?	The Q&A will be provided via email and published on USAC website depending on confidentiality nature of the responses to the Q&A requests.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
80.			Section 2.0 – Business Requirements/Scope - Can USAC provide job descriptions/skills profiles for the varying levels of reviewers that work on the program? For example, the initial reviewer, the peer to peer reviewer and the Heighten Security Reviewer.	This information may be shared after the selection of the vendor.
81.			Section 6.0 – Training - Will USAC be providing the contractor with a training curriculum and training materials upon award?	Yes, USAC will provide additional information after the selection of vendor.
82.			Section 2.2 – Services to be performed - Can USAC provide the number of agents, by level, that are currently operating under the E-Rate program?	USAC cannot disclose confidential information about current vendors. USAC expects each bidder to independently determine adequate staffing levels for their proposal.
83.			Section 2.2 – Services to be performed - Can USAC provide the current annual budget for contractor support for the E-Rate program?	This is confidential information. USAC will analyze all bids to determine reasonableness.
84.			Section 8.9.2.3 - Are Key Personnel required to be in the metropolitan Washington DC area?	No. The Key Personnel are not required to be in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, but will be required to travel to Washington, D.C. as required.
85.			Section 8.5 - RFP Key Dates - lists August 15 – 31 as the ‘work commencement date’ – is this a ‘hard cut over date’ or the beginning of a transition period? If a transition period, will current contractor continue their performance during this transition period?	August 15 – 31, 2018 is the anticipated date of the beginning of the transition period. The current contractor will continue and transit their performance during this transition period.
86.	2.2.1	8	Would USAC please provide the volumes, skill level, and LOE for the three of type's reviews for FCC Form 471: PIA Review, Heightened Scrutiny Reviews, Funding Commitment reviews?	The volumes of the review work is available in the Reading Room. In an earlier questions, we responded that in general, current reviewers have a college degree and telecommunications experience. The level of effort (LOE) will be dependent on the complexity of the review work.
87.	2.3	11	In the first paragraph, please clarify if the reference "Sections 2.21 through 2.2.4" should be Sections 2.2.1 through 2.2.4	In the first paragraph, the reference "Sections 2.21 through 2.2.4" should be Sections 2.2.1 through 2.2.4

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
88.	2.3	11	Does USAC consider staffing companies (used to hire employees and assist in staffing for surge periods) to be subcontractors?	USAC will evaluate the proposed subcontract methodology at the time of proposal evaluation. Staffing companies retained by contractor to place new employees at the contractor are not considered subcontractors. Staffing companies retained to place staff with the prime contractor where the staff continue to be compensated by the staffing company are considered sub-contractors to the prime contractor and should be disclosed as such.
89.	3.1	12	For transition planning purposes, what is the USAC protocol for obtaining access to the EPC system –and other E-rate IT systems necessary for Go Live- as well as the anticipated timeline for obtaining access?	System access is managed through USAC IT.
90.	3.1	12	Will USAC provide earlier access to test sites for these systems (listed in Question 11) in support of transition?	A test environment will be provided.
91.	3.1.5	12	Contractor will use USAC’s E-rate IT systems, including EPC and all legacy tools and IT systems to conduct the reviews. However, the contractor may suggest additional tool(s) that could be used to supplement existing tools that would drive efficiencies. Does the Legacy system have a case management system built into it that is similar to EPC or is the workflow managed manually?	No.
92.	3.1.6	12	The contractor is required to have reviewers available to program participants during regular business hours of 8am – 8pm ET. Will contact with the reviewers be exclusively through calls transferred from the Call Center or through a direct number to the BPO?	No. Direct email and phone contact between the reviewers and program participants is required. The call center does not forward calls to the BPO. The BPO is dedicated to processing forms associated to the program; it is not a call center.
93.	3.1.6	12	Please provide the current volume of calls received from program participants between 8am and 8pm. Please provide breakdown by hour.	Call and email correspondence varies with each case. The BPO is dedicated to processing forms associated to the program; it is not a call center.
94.	3.1.11	13	Please provide estimated volume for incoming and outgoing mail, to ensure that all vendors price this service accurately.	Less than 5 percent of reviewer responses are received outside of USAC IT systems.



**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
95.	3.1.11.2	13	In this section reference is made to the mailing notifications and reports to applicants and service providers. There is not a line item for out-going mail in the variable pricing tab on the bid sheet. Is out-going mail part of scope and therefore a line item added to the variable pricing tab on the bid sheet?	Yes, there may be out-going mail. Offerors can amend the bid sheet to add a line item to the variable pricing tab for out-going mail
96.	3.1.11.2	13	Should the definitions in the “Definitions and Pricing Notes” tab in the bid sheet be utilized for pricing the out-going mail?	The “Definitions and Pricing Notes” tab is illustrative. Bidders may use these information for pricing as they deem appropriate.
97.	3.4.1	17	In this section references are made to the prioritization of critical and non-critical business functions. Would USAC please define which business functions outlined in this RFP fall into each category?	SLA Template 5.1 states the critical and non-critical functions.
98.	8.9.1	28-29	Volume I (Corporate Information) has a 2 page limit. Within Volume I the PIA review has a 2 page limit. Can USAC confirm that Volume I has a total of a 4 page limit?	Confirmed. Two page limit for Corporate information, and a two page limit for PIA review.
99.	8.9.2.2	29	The RFP requests the vendor to include a QA Plan in the described approach. Is this outside of the page limit of 20 pages?	The QA Plan is part of the Project Approach and is within the page limit of 20 pages.
100.	8.9.2.2 Section 2	29 Attachment 2	The Transition Milestone Plan described in these 2 sections appears to be limited to a list of milestones and dates. Does USAC intend for bidders to submit a more thorough transition-in plan in the proposal? If so, can we remove it from the page count and place it in an appendix?	USAC requires bidders to submit a thorough transition -in plan as part of their bid response. The transition-in plan can be submitted as an Appendix X to the proposal.
101.	8.9.2.7.3	32	Will the selected vendor have access to the existing USAC Enterprise Data System (EDS) environment to perform data research and analytics?	The contractor would have access to pull data through USAC's Enterprise Data Services (EDS) and the publicly available data tools.
102.	8.9.3 Past Performance Information	33	Given the 8 page limit to this section which includes discussions of two to four examples of similar projects in addition to a mockup of services for one of the projects, would USAC consider allowing us to provide mock up materials (including workflow diagram, screenshots, timeline, and cost breakdown) in an appendix outside of the page count?	The page count for past performance volume shall remain the same (not to exceed 8 pages)

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
103.	Attachment 1, Definitions and Pricing Notes" Tab		The definitions and pricing notes do not appear to be referenced elsewhere in Attachment 1. Please provide vendors with additional information on how these definitions should be used to generate pricing.	The "Definitions and Pricing Notes" tab is illustrative. Bidders may use these information for pricing as they deem appropriate.
104.	Answer to #3	Q&A	The volume information available in the Reading Room does not map to the volumes associated with line items in the "Variable Price" tab of Attachment 1, Bid Sheet. How are vendors to correlate the Reading Room volumes with the volumes required for completion of the "Variable Price" tab? It would be in USAC's best interest to provide estimated volumes for each line item in "Variable Price" tab of Attachment 1 to ensure all vendors are bidding to the same scope.	Bidders may rework attachment 1, variable price tab to present their price based on the volumes information made available in the reading room
105.	Attachment 1, Bid Sheet	Q&A	The "Variable Price" tab in Attachment 1, includes a single "Volume" column. Does USAC expect volumes to be level across all contract years for all activities? This does not seem realistic, especially for "Year 2015 and Prior" line items, where volumes should go down over time. Please provide guidance on how vendors should represent volumes for the Option Years of the contract.	For pricing purposes, the bidders may use the same volumes for all contract years. However, USAC expect the bidders to bid improvement terms committing to a percentage reduction in per unit and/or per service prices year-over-year due to process improvements. Bidders may price for Year 2015 and Prior separately.
106.			Are prior commitment adjustment decisions cataloged or index by subject and available to the BPO for guidance?	Commitment adjustments are performed by the BPO during the COMAD review process. The BPO vendor must follow the COMAD procedures which instructs the reviewer on how to arrive at decisions and provides the reasons why commitment adjustments are made.
107.			For documents requested by the FCC for appeals, would the BPO interface with the FCC directly or through USAC?	The BPO vendor communicates only with USAC for document requests. USAC handles communications with the FCC.
108.			At page 10, the RFP states that the BPO is responsible for providing "end-user maintenance and support of the Legacy System." Please explain what this entails. What type of maintenance would the BPO be expected to provide?	The BPO would be expected to help in the User Acceptance Testing (UAT) for all changes to the Legacy System. UAT could occur after a software deployment, database change, or system maintenance outage.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
109.			Does EPC identify the applications that need Heightened Scrutiny Review? If not, how are they selected?	In FY 2018, approximately four percent or less than 1,000 FCC Form 471 applications underwent Heightened Scrutiny reviews.
110.			Please provide an example of how an adjustment would be made when an applicant files the FCC Form 486 late.	If the applicant's FCC Form 486 is late (i.e., filed after the deadline for the form and the associated grace period), USAC will adjust the Service Start Date on any FRN with recurring services to a date 120 days before the date the applicant certified their FCC Form 486. The funding commitment for monthly services will then be reduced to reflect the reduction in total approved months of service.
111.			During the pendency of an appeal of a FCDL that is a partial denial or an award for less than requested, does or may the non-disputed amount continue through the process or must that wait until the appeal is resolved?	Applicants that have received partial funding on an FCDL are still required to file their FCC Form 486 by the deadline, and are able to invoice for those services up to the amount approved, as long as they meet all other program requirements (such as services have been delivered, etc).
112.			At page 10, the RFP states the processing items remaining in the legacy system may require “review consistent with funding year specific procedures.” How are past Funding Year procedures documented and how would the BPO access those past procedures?	Because the FCC rules vary by funding years, the associated review procedures can also differ. For example, prior to FY 2015, the FCC's rules regarding Category Two funding were based on the 2-in-5 rule instead of the current Category Two budget paradigm. Information about the funding year specific procedures are contained in the review procedures for those funding years. The selected bidder will be given a complete set of procedures for all funding years so that they can process review appropriately. There are also other tools available to the selected bidder which will help identify the changes year over year in the PIA procedures.
113.			What reports can currently be generated by EPC? Section 7.1.1.2 (p 25) requires the BPO to be capable of generating customized reports. What reports are desired by USAC that are not currently available through EPC? What data can be exported from EPC to the BPO’s reporting software and in what format can it be exported? Does USAC and/or the current BPO use reporting software now? If so, does USAC deem that software to be adequate and if it is not adequate, what are its deficiencies. Would that software be available to a new BPO?	EPC contains a number of inventory-based reports. However, USAC and its current BPO vendor conduct most of the data analysis in other reporting tools. USAC expects that the selected bidder will be able to provide customized reports, for example, on the various processes, velocity reports, and application statuses. The data in EPC is populated overnight to USAC's reporting datawarehouse. All EPC data is available for transfer into the data warehouse. USAC and our current BPO vendor use a variety of tools, including for example, Pentaho and Qlik Sense.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
114.			<p>Our understanding is that all processing will be done through USAC systems, including EPC and the IT legacy system and that EPC will be accessed through a cloud-based portal and the legacy system through Citrix Gateway. In light of this, it appears that the following sections of the RFP would be inapplicable -- at least until such time that the BPO is approved to use its business intelligence software or IT solution in conjunction with EPC pursuant to section 3.3.4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Section 3.3.1 (p14)</li> <li>b. Section 3.3.1.1 (p14)</li> <li>c. Section 3.3.1.2 (p14)</li> <li>d. Section 3.3.2 (p 15)</li> <li>e. Section 3.3.3 (p15)</li> <li>f. Section 3.4 (pp 16-17)</li> <li>g. Section 4.2.5 (p 19)</li> <li>h. Section 5.1.1.8 (p 23)</li> <li>i. Section 5.1.4 – as it relates to software (p 23)</li> <li>j. Section 5.1.5 (p 23)</li> <li>k. Section 5.1.6 (p 23)</li> <li>l. Section 7.1.1.2 (p 25)</li> <li>m. Section 7.1.1.3 (p 26)</li> <li>n. Section 7.1.1.5 (p 26)</li> </ul> <p>Please confirm whether these sections are applicable during the first year of the contract during which time USAC IT systems will be used exclusively.</p>	<p>The contractor is expected to comply with all of the requirements listed in the first year.</p>
115.			<p>Please confirm whether these sections are applicable during the first year of the contract during which time USAC IT systems will be used exclusively.</p>	<p>The contractor is expected to comply with all of the requirements listed in the first year.</p>

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
116.			Section 3.3.1.2 of the RFP (p14) states that FedRAMP is applicable if “cloud-based services shall be employed by Contractor and interact with USAC data . . . .” Please confirm that FedRAMP does not apply if the only use of the cloud by the Contractor is to access EPC. Please confirm that during the first year of the contract the BPO is not expected to house any data outside of EPC.	EPC will need to update its architecture and Interconnection Security Agreement (ISA) to include the Contractor's cloud based service to access to EPC. The Contractor's cloud-based service will need to be FedRAMP Certified/ATO if it is connecting a Paas/IaaS to EPC. It is expected that all USAC data will be housed in EPC or the SL legacy system during the first year.
117.			Section 3.1.12.3 (p 13) of the RFP references “Task Order.” Please define what that is.	The requirement # 3 under Section 3.1.12 (page 13) is revised to read as following: 3. Contract number
118.			Section 3.1.12.4 (p 13) requires invoices to include “Contractor Weekly Status Report and Time Sheet by each Contractor performing services . . . .” What is meant by each Contractor? Does that refer to sub-contractors, if any; or to individual staff member of the BPO?	The requirement # 4 under Section 3.1.12. (page 13) is removed in its entirety.
119.			Section 3.3.1 of the RFP (p14) refers to an “interconnection security agreement.” Please provide a sample of such an agreement.	USAC's ISAs are based on NIST guidance, specifically Special Publication (SP) NIST 800-47. The templates that USAC uses for its ISAs are available in this publication. Some examples can be found at these links: <a href="https://www.ihs.gov/oit/security/isa/">https://www.ihs.gov/oit/security/isa/</a> <a href="https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/Legacy/SP/nistspecialpublication800-47.pdf">https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/Legacy/SP/nistspecialpublication800-47.pdf</a>
120.			In the discussion of Vendor Governance (Section 4.2 pp 20-21, there are requirements for various weekly meetings. Where will these meetings be held? Will they be in-person meetings or can the BPO participate by phone?	The weekly meetings can be held by phone or in person. However, the Strategic Board meeting will be expected to be held in person and will alternate between USAC and the contractor site.
121.			What documentation and electronic data will the outgoing BPO have that will need to be transferred to the new BPO during the transition, as indicated in section 5.1.1. 4 and 5.1.1.5 (p 22)?	USAC and the current BPO vendor have a large amount of data and electronic records regarding the administration of the E-rate program. This data includes, but is not limited to, procedures and other job aids, documentation associated with the various review processes, training materials, and reports. This information will be discussed in detail after vendor selection during the transition period.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
122.			Section 6.1.2 (p 24) indicates that USAC will support initial training. How much time does USAC expect initial training will require? Based on past experience, how long is training for a PIA reviewer from his/her start date until the reviewer is able begin processing FCC form 471s? Describe your current training program.	The current training program for new reviewers on regular PIA review lasts five days. This includes a mix of classroom lecture and hands-on activities. Additional training is required for other review processes and is commensurate with the complexity of the review being undertaken. The successful bidder is responsible for proposing a pedagogically sound training program that will ensure that its new staff learn and are able to apply complex knowledge in a fairly short period of time.
123.			Section 6.1.7 (p25) references “new projects or new subject matter.” Would the BPOs responsibilities for any such new projects or subject matter be set forth in an amendment to the contract?	These could be amendments if the new projects are large
124.			Section 7.1.1.5 (p 26) of the RFP requires the BPO to provide USAC with the required FISMA reports and updates. Please identify all the FISMA reports and updates that the BPO will be required to provide.	Additional information on the FISMA-related requirements is included in the SLA document, "IT Security", Lines 55 through 62.
125.			Will the procedure manuals made available in the reading room be provided to the BPO? With or without redactions? Are these the training materials referred to in the RFP that must be updated by the BPO? If not, please identify the current training materials.	Yes, they will be provided without redactions to the selected vendor and these procedures will need to be updated by the BPO vendor.
126.			In Attachment 3 item 37, you ask whether the BPO would be willing to have its staff sign non-compete agreements. Please specify the type of entity that the non-compete agreement would apply to.	A signed non-compete may be used to preclude BPO staff from leveraging knowledge of USAC's proprietary processes and procedures with other entities participating in the E-rate program (e.g., consultants, E-rate coordinators, etc.).
127.			In Attachment 3, item 40, you ask if the BPO would be willing to share any process or sub-process it creates. What entity or entities would the BPO be asked to share with?	These would be shared with USAC, its contractors, the FCC, and other parties on a need to know basis.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
128.			<p>40. The page on volumes of work shows a significant year over year variance in the following processes. For each, please provide an explanation for the increase and indicate which year is more typical”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. FCC for 486 received</li> <li>b. Appeals received</li> <li>c. Spin Changes requested</li> <li>d. Revised funding commitment decision letters issued</li> <li>e. FCC Form 500</li> <li>f. Invoice deadline extensions requested</li> <li>g. Quarterly disbursement reports</li> <li>h. Pins issued</li> </ul>	<p>The volumes of all forms for each year fluctuates with changes in FCC guidance and rules for that funding year.</p>
129.			<p>The e-Rate program call center is currently handled by an out-sourced entity separate from the BPO asked for through this RFP, correct? If so, does USAC contemplate ever merging the two functions in one entity, which could create significant efficiencies? If so, please explain.</p>	<p>Yes, USAC's E-rate call center is handled by a separate contractor. At this time, we are not contemplating merging the two functions.</p>
130.	Intentionally left blank			
131.			<p>The RFP requires the BPO to provide User Acceptance Testing for any EPC updates/upgrades done by USAC. What is the frequency and timing of these releases?</p>	<p>EPC has bi-weekly O&amp;M release and quarterly enhancements releases.</p>
132.			<p>Section 4.1.5 of the RFP (p18) requires the BPO to send copies of complaints and resolutions to USAC within designated times. What constitutes a complaint? How many complaints have been sent for the past two Funding Years?</p>	<p>A complaint can include an unprofessional exchange with a USAC employee, unresponsiveness by USAC, late or deficient performance by USAC, unclear or incorrect information provided by USAC, or ongoing system or tool issues. USAC is exploring methods to better track complaints filed.</p>
133.			<p>Is there a comprehensive list of all the relevant FCC Orders and Directives? If so, please provide.</p>	<p>The FCC maintains a public archive of its E-rate related Orders and directives on their website. Furthermore, some directives to USAC are confidential and are not posted publicly. USAC will work with the selected bidder to provide these confidential directives as needed.</p>

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
134.			How many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff are currently dedicated to the functions of the BPO described in the RFP? Do the staffing needs vary during the year? If so, please provide the FTE by month for the last year.	USAC cannot disclose confidential information about current vendors. Yes, staffing needs vary during the year. More staff may be needed to process the FCC Form 471 applications to achieve the September 1 goal. USAC expects each bidder to independently determine adequate staffing levels for their proposal.
135.			Given the significant start-up cost and the significant changes that would likely occur between the first year of the contract and the subsequent year, including potentially a new software solution, would USAC consider a longer term for the initial contract? If not, how far in advance of the end of the first-year contract does USAC anticipate being able to advise the BPO that it is renewing the contract for the second year?	The initial contract term (base year) will be one year. USAC will advise the BPO contractor of renewing the contract term (exercising option year) at least 45 days in advance.
136.			Please provide copies of all the forms that are used in the e-Rate program.	Information on all forms can be found on USAC's website: <a href="https://www.usac.org/sl/tools/forms/default.aspx">https://www.usac.org/sl/tools/forms/default.aspx</a>
137.			Attachment 4 defines the term "law." Please provide a listing of all the laws that USAC deems applicable.	There is not a list of all applicable laws currently available. As the federal administrator of the Universal Service Fund and universal service programs, USAC is subject to a variety of federal laws, directives, rules and regulations. All of the specific laws specified in the RFP and Term Sheet are applicable to USAC and to the selected BPO vendor. The selected bidder will be provided additional information as it is determined that certain laws are applicable to USAC.
138.			How soon after submission of an invoice that is in good order does USAC expect to pay the invoice?	The winning bidder is expected to meet the SLAs in the RFP. Disbursement are generally made twice a week, so any approved invoice should be included in the next payment file.



**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
139.			Attachment 4, Section 10a states that USAC reserves the right to inspect the Authority to Operate (ATO). Would not USAC be the entity that would issue the ATO? If not, what entity would issue it?	If the contractor is providing or using a PaaS or IaaS that is connected to EPC or houses USAC data, the PaaS or IaaS will need to be FedRAMP certified or undergo accreditation in compliance with FISMA requirements and NIST guidance (steps 1-6). Information and documentation about the BPO vendor's PaaS or IaaS ATO and accreditation package must be available for inspection and review by USAC. Since USAC is a non-government entity, it will not issue an ATO. However, the vendor's system must be assessed in compliance with FISMA (NIST steps 1-6).
140.			Who is responsible for maintaining and updating the Urban/Rural look-up tool?	The USAC IT team is responsible for maintaining and updating the Urban/Rural look-up tool.
141.			What are the grounds for granting a CIPA waiver for the second funding year?	If the applicant meets the requirements (i.e., they are in the second year of participation in E-rate and they need additional time to come into compliance) then they are eligible to receive the waiver.
142.			For a consortia, is there any review by the BPO of the underlying compliance of the consortia members?	The consortium leader certifies compliance with all applicable rules on behalf of their members. The BPO vendor is responsible for testing those certifications, which can mean ensuring that the consortium members are fully compliant with program rules and requirements.
143.			What are the requirements and licensing needs for the BPO's end users connecting into the system? What specific licenses will be provided or needed? What, if any, change would be associated with those licenses?	There are different licenses, such as Microsoft Office Suite, Okta, JIRA, for example, that will need to be available to the selected vendor. USAC will work with the selected vendor during the transition period regarding licensing issues.
144.	8.5	27	Will USAC extend the due date until 6/15/2018?	The proposal due date is extended until May 30, 2018 by 12:00 PM
145.	8.5	27	As we are operating under NDAs, can USAC provide non-redacted copies of materials in the Reading Room?	The non-redacted procedures will be provided to the selected bidder after the contract award.
146.	2.3	11	Will USAC modify the contract period from one year with option periods to a five year term, consistent with prior solicitations?	The contract will have one (1) year base period plus four (4) additional one (1)-year option periods.
147.	2.2, 2.3	7,11	Please provide the overall cost of the current contract for each of the past three years, with these costs disaggregated between software, hardware and labor support? What are the total costs allocated by the 4 primary services outlined in Section 2.2	USAC does not provide information pertaining to the current contract/incumbent.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
148.	N/A	N/A	Please provide proposed capital investment budgets over the next 3 years, including roadmap and significant milestones.	This information is not available.
149.	2.2.1	7-8	USAC notes that PIA reviews can include up to four (4) different levels of review. Please provide the average number of 471 applications that have through each level for each of the last three years. Please provide an associated level of effort for each of the first three levels of review. Additionally, please provide the average number of 471 applications that went through the fourth level review and were returned to the contractor for additional processing.	The average elapse review time for PIA review is 24 calendar days. Applications with Heightened Scrutiny elapsed review time average is 30 calendar days. These numbers are based on reviews completed for FY2017 and FY2018. However, most of the larger and complex applications have not been completed for review, therefore expect the days to complete reviews to increase. The days do not represent total man hours spent in review. This is the elapsed time from assignment to wave ready. Queue management, escalation and outreach ( e.g., 15 day responses) are included in the review process and average time to complete review.
150.	3.1.4	12	USAC requires the contractor to forecast demand and keep strong workforce management principles. Please provide additional information regarding the quarterly work flow for each of the six main tasks contemplated in this solicitation.	Please refer to earlier responses addressing review time, returns and forms intake to assist you to prepare your bid response, such as the Reading Room Volume document, questions #262, 264, 265, and 266.
151.	3.1.4	12	USAC requires the contractor to forecast demand and keep strong workforce management principles. Please provide the number of surge resources that are currently needed to support fluctuation in form intake, given volume fluctuations based on submission windows opening and closing	USAC cannot disclose confidential information about current vendors. USAC expects each bidder to independently determine adequate staffing levels for their proposal.
152.	3.1.6	12	USAC requires the contractor to provide services from 8:00AM-8:00PM, ET. Please provide current contractor staffing levels by various shifts within the required business hours.	USAC cannot disclose confidential information about current vendors. USAC expects each bidder to independently determine adequate staffing levels for their proposal.
153.	Attachment 5	N/A	Attachment 5 includes proposed SLAs. Are these the same SLAs currently be utilized? If not, please provide the current SLAs. Additionally, please provide performance against those SLAs under the existing BPO contract, disaggregated by system performance and labor support.	The SLAs included in Attachment 5 will be the governing SLAs for this contract. The current SLAs utilized are not applicable.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
154.	N/A	N/A	Does USAC require multi-lingual support from the BPO contractor? If so, please specify the languages.	While the RFP does not have a technical requirement for multi-lingual services, there are program participants that may not consider English their primary language (e.g. some Puerto Rico applicants). Providing multi-lingual support may improve the applicant experience and facilitate program participation and participants' success for those where English is not the primary language. Please provide this information in the Attachment 3 Vendor Capabilities Checklist.
155.	3.1.4	12	USAC requires the contractor to forecast demand and keep strong workforce management principles. Please provide the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees that currently support the work contemplated in the Solicitation?	USAC cannot disclose confidential information about current vendors. USAC expects each bidder to independently determine adequate staffing levels for their proposal.
156.	3.1.4	12	USAC requires the contractor to forecast demand and keep strong workforce management principles. Please provide an organizational structure of the current BPO solution, including skillset by each level, management and quality assurance structure.	USAC cannot disclose confidential information about current vendors. USAC expects each bidder to independently determine adequate staffing levels and structures for their proposal.
157.	2.2.3	10	For FY2015 and prior processing, USAC expects that contractor to support similar services utilizing legacy IT systems. Please provide the anticipated number of each of the enumerated activities and associated level of effort for this requirement.	<p>On average, there are 6 major releases every year. In addition, the BPO will submit production defects. On average 200 tickets are documented by the BPO vendor staff. Each release requires gathering requirements, UAT and production verification.</p> <p>The testing includes creating test scenarios, performing the testing, reporting defects, identifying enhancements, attending software release meetings, and production verification post-release.</p>

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
158.	3.1.3, 3.1.5, 3.1.10, 4.1.3	12, 18	<p>USAC requires the contractor to utilize current and legacy IT systems. USAC also requires the contractor to provide the turn-key solution, including all software. Please provide a list of all IT systems that are currently being utilized. Does USAC expect the contractor to purchase any necessary licensing, or will USAC provide the licenses for software? Please provide additional information regarding anticipated connectivity methods and process for access to the required USAC systems. What is the current solution?</p> <p>Does USAC expect the contractor to include the cost of connectivity in its response?</p>	<p>Currently, USAC uses EPC and the SL legacy systems. The BPO vendor will need a secure connection to the USAC network to access the legacy systems. The BPO vendor is not required to provide a solution.</p>
159.	N/A	N/A	<p>In addition to EPC, what additional capital investments initiatives have been made to “transform” the service model and service levels over each of the past 3 years?</p>	<p>EPC is the primary capital investment that USAC has undertaken for the E-rate program in the past three years.</p>
160.	Various	Various	<p>Please provide detailed information regarding the decommissioning of any legacy systems, planned implementation of new systems, system enhancements or other IT modifications that are expected to impact the contractor.</p>	<p>At this time, information is not available.</p>
161.	N/A	N/A	<p>USAC requires SLA responses that are dependent upon USAC IT solutions. Please provide further information regarding USAC SLAs to the contractor.</p>	<p>The uptime should be 99%</p>

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
162.	2.2.1, 2.2.2	9	Please provide the high-level workflow architecture for each of the four levels of review for PIA & Post Commitment reviews.	<p>For PIA reviews:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) During the initial review, the PIA reviewer examines the accuracy and the completeness of the applications and compliance of the application with program rules.</li> <li>2) The final reviewer then examines the accuracy of the initial review, ensures that procedures were followed, and that all supporting documentation is properly stored. If the final reviewer does not agree with the initial reviewer’s decision, the final reviewer returns the application back to the initial reviewer with suggested corrections and/or actions.</li> <li>3) The SL OPs PIA Quality Assurance (QA) team selects a sample of completed applications for review. The QA reviewer determines whether or not the PIA procedures have been followed by the initial and final PIA reviewers.</li> <li>4) The USAC QA team conducts a representative sampling of FCC Form 471 applications that have completed PIA application review. This process evaluates PIA reviewers’ adherence to documented procedures. The USAC QA staff member records the review findings and, if any corrective actions are warranted, emails findings to SL Program OPs' PIA manager.</li> </ol> <p>Post Commitment reviews follow a similar process and are applicable to appeals and commitment adjustment reviews.</p>
163.	1.3	6	In the description of EPC, Section 1.3 states "Additionally, internal USAC users rely on a series of workflows and complex business rules within EPC to flag potential program rule violations on application forms. Those requests are then routed to USAC reviewers for additional manual work..." Can USAC provide clarification around the approximate number of manual processes that will need to be created as “work arounds” in order to process applications?	All exceptions that are not cleared by the system require some level of manual effort in the review of the documentation provided in response to the question/item that triggered the exception. The amount of manual work may vary from application to application and from funding year to funding year. Please refer to the PIA procedures to determine the level of effort needed to clear exceptions.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
164.	2.2.4	10	The 7th bullet, Systems Support and Process Integration, indicates the Bidder is expected to participate in "requirements gathering". Can you provide the number of hours each month bidders can assume will be spent on requirements gathering?	An average of 20 to 25 hours/month is spent on requirements gathering.
165.	2.2.4	10	The 7th bullet, Systems Support and Process Integration, indicates the Bidder will be required to provide end-user maintenance and support of the Legacy System. Can you provide additional details on the scope of this requirement and an estimated number of hours?	The BPO would open tickets for any system defect encountered. The process of opening a ticket takes less than 2 minutes. The number of tickets that will be opened varies.
166.	2.2.4	10	Regarding the 7th bullet: Systems Support and Process Integration, the Bidder is required to "report system defects". Can you provide historical data regarding the number of vendor tickets created and the estimated number of hours to provide this service?	Weekly average of opened issues is 31 and estimated number of hours can vary based on the nature and complexity of the issue reported
167.	2.2.4	10	Regarding the 7th bullet: Systems Support and Process Integration, can you describe for what IT systems the vendor is expected to manage technical system development activities, such as requirements development, testing scenarios, test data inside and outside of EPC (JIRA or Team Foundation Server – TFS)? What is the estimated number of hours required for these activities? What experience in the Agile methodology for software development is required?	BPO vendor will participate in requirements gathering and testing of systems supporting PIA and Post Commitment processes. On average, we expect about 25 to 30 hours/month supporting these activities.
168.	2.2.4	10	Is the bidder required to provide any user administration/ticket management to USAC? Can you describe activities and the estimated number of hours?	EPC is configured as a role-based system. All users in EPC have specific roles to access the system. The BPO vendor is responsible for identifying appropriate access required for all BPO users to perform their tasks in EPC. The vendor is also responsible for requesting new user access with appropriate roles as well as notifying USAC with any changes to the user access including user transfers and terminations. Average amount of time required for user administration depends on frequency of BPO staffing changes.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
169.	2.2.4	10	Will USAC provide procedural Desk Top Guides or will they need to be created by the contractor?	USAC will provide copies of the procedures to the selected bidder. The contractor may choose to create additional job aids, which must be approved by USAC prior to issuance, to ensure compliance with the procedures.
170.	8.9.2.5	30	8.9.2.5 instructs, "Each vendor shall fill out this tab according to the following instructions..." However, Attachment 5, tab 5.1 SLA-Template supplied by USAC on 4/23/18 indicates "For Contractor information only; no areas for Contractor to fill". Please clarify if bidders are to complete tab 5.1 columns G-I?	Vendors shall fill out attachment 5, SLA-Template based on RFP section 8.9.2.5 instructions. Please disregard the sentence "For Contractor information only; no areas for Contractor to fill" in attachment 5
171.			2.2.4 Account Maintenance – Approximately how much time is allotted to account maintenance?	Setting up a new hire in EPC requires ~5 minutes per employee depending on their permission level and how many roles are being assigned. Modifying an existing account holder may require 1-5 minutes per employee. Deactivating an account holder may require 1-3 minutes per employee.
172.			2.2.4 Systems Support and Process Integration - This section includes “provide end-user maintenance and support of the Legacy System”. What kind of maintenance and support is expected from the contractor for the Legacy System? Please provide additional detail regarding USAC’s current IT infrastructure that will be used by the BPO contractor to include expected costs that will be covered by the contractor.	The BPO would be expected to help in the User Acceptance Testing (UAT) for all changes to the Legacy System. UAT could occur after a software deployment, database change, or system maintenance outage.
173.			Sections 1.3, 2.2.4, 2.3, 3.4.5, 6.1.3, 6.1.5 and 9.1 Change Notifications – Multiple sections of the RFP mention potential policy changes during the contract period. If policy changes are significant and require a change in the BPO staff or procedure, what recourse does the BPO have to account for the changes in effort?	During the contract period, if there are changes in the scope that are not contemplated in the contract or the pricing is out of the transaction prices identified in the contract, USAC and the contractor will come to a mutual agreement to implement the changes. USAC assumes that the contractor will have the capability to implement the changes.

**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
174.			8.9.1.1 Corporate Information (Volume I), Pages 28-29 - Is the entirety of Volume I limited to 2 pages or is there a 2-page limit for the specific items listed under 8.9.1 and another 2-page limit for an offeror to "provide feedback and/or other approaches for PIA review improvements" as instructed in section 8.9.1.1 Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) Review.	It is 2 pages for the corporate information and 2 pages for PIA review improvements which will be a total of 4 pages
175.			Can USAC provide the overall annual cost as well as labor cost or FTE of the current contract effort?	This is confidential information. USAC will analyze all bids to determine reasonableness.
176.			Can USAC provide an organizational flow chart of the current BPO process?	USAC does not have an organizational flow chart of the current BPO process.
177.			Would USAC consider extending the due date of RFP submission to June 15th to allow further review of the anticipated answers to question?	The proposal due date is extended until May 30, 2018 by 12:00 PM.
178.			Is the contractor expected to provide multi-language support? If so, which languages?	While the RFP does not have a technical requirement for multi-lingual services, there are program participants that may not consider English their primary language (e.g. some Puerto Rico applicants). Providing multi-lingual support may improve the applicant experience and facilitate program participation and participants' success for those where English is not the primary language. Please provide this information in the Attachment 3 Vendor Capabilities Checklist.
179.			Is the contractor expected to provide support from 8am – 8pm Monday through Friday?	Yes.
180.			Number of exceptions in applications?	For FY 2018, there is an average of 18 exceptions for each application.
181.			How are applications randomly pulled for QA review and what is the percentage?	USAC requests that the bidders take initiative to bid volume tiers and rework the worksheet to include the proposed number of tiers.



**USAC RFP-SL-18-024 Schools and Libraries Program Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Services - Questions and Answers**

Q #	RFP Section Reference #	RFP Page #	Question	Answer
182.	RFP/8.10.1.1		Variable component, it is unclear as to how the tiers (price per unit) should be constructed. Specifically, does USAC have a preference between a guarantee of the lowest tier (base tier) and then payment for volume based upon the tier it is in (actual tier minus the base tier) OR would each tier be exhausted along the way stopping at the actual volume tier (Base tier + Level 1 tier + Level 2 tier + volume in Level 3 tier where the volume stops)?	USAC requests that the bidders take initiative to bid volume tiers and rework the worksheet to include the proposed number of tiers.
183.	RFP/8.10.1.1		Given that cost is the highest rated factor and the significant flexibility granted by USAC with the construction of the pricing and manipulation of the bid sheet, how will USAC evaluate the total cost of any given offer? Would 2017 volume data be applied or some other methodology? It would be important to know what methodology / volumes are going to be applied in the pricing evaluation as this informs an offeror's model.	USAC will consider the total estimated price as important factor and will evaluate each proposed line item based on the assumptions and price line items used in your proposal. For pricing purpose bidders should use the 2017 volume for all the contract years to construct their total price.
184.			Please confirm that SCA regulations are not applicable to the E-rate BPO contract.	USAC is a non-government agency and the Service Contract Act (SCA) regulations do not apply to the E-rate BPO contract.