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Polaris GWAC - Maximize Your Score on SDVOSB and HUBZone Bids

The General Services Administration (GSA) has released Polaris Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) Requests for Proposals (RFP) for the Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZone) Pool (Notice ID 47QTCB22R0006) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) Pool (Notice ID 47QTCB22R0007). Proposals are due no later than 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Nov. 4, 2022. Proposals must be submitted electronically via the Polaris Submission Portal (PSP). This portal is accessible at: <https://polaris.app.cloud.gov>.

Polaris is the agency's new government-wide IT solutions and services contract vehicle focused on small businesses. The government anticipates that multiple awards will be made up to a maximum of 60 awards for each pool. Bids in the Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) and general Small Business pools of Polaris that were previously paused to resolve a protest are due on Oct. 7, 2022. As noted by Exodie C. Roe III, Associate Administrator for GSA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization: "GWACs serve as a springboard for small businesses to grow."

Building on the success of previous GWACs, Polaris will help GSA meet its small business goals and bring innovation to the small business community, federal agencies, and the acquisition workforce.”

As we have seen with other recent GWAC solicitations, Offerors for Polaris have the opportunity to receive additional evaluation scoring points for demonstrating that they have adequate or approved Contractor Business Systems, as well as certain other Certifications and Clearances. This opportunity is similar to last year’s Chief Information Officer-Solutions and Partners 4 (CIO-SP4) GWAC solicitation, and we expect that future GWACs will continue the trend. In the case of Polaris, Contractor Business Systems, Certifications and Clearances are not minimum or mandatory requirements; however, Offerors who demonstrate having these Systems, Certifications and Clearances within their proposal will receive additional evaluation points against the total 95,000 points available.

Contractor Business Systems

Polaris provides opportunities for Offerors to receive scoring points for both their Accounting and Purchasing Systems. BDO can assist contractors in developing and assessing both of these systems.

- ▶ **Accounting System:** Offerors claiming credit for Accounting System and Audit Information must provide verification from the Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA), Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA), any Cognizant Federal Agency (CFA) or Third-Party Certified Public Accountant (CPA) of an acceptable accounting system that has been audited and determined adequate for determining costs applicable to a cost-reimbursement type contract or order in accordance with FAR 16.301-3(a)(3). Offerors must provide a copy of a Pre-Award Survey of Prospective Contractor Accounting System (SF1408) or a letter from the auditing agency/CPA, on auditing agency/CPA letterhead, indicating unequivocally that the Offeror’s accounting system has been audited and determined adequate for determining costs applicable to a cost-reimbursement type contract or order in accordance with FAR 16.301-3(a)(3). The accounting system audit and adequate determination by Third-Party Certified Public Accountant can add 750 points to the total score (3,000 points if approved by DCAA, DCMA or CFA). Evidence of an approved or adequate accounting system also provides contractors with the opportunity to compete for flexibly-priced task orders under the contract.

- ▶ **Purchasing System:** Offerors claiming credit for an approved Purchasing System must provide verification from DCMA, or any CFA, of an approved purchasing system for contractor compliance when subcontracting. Verification requirements include a copy of the Offeror's most recent official Contractor Purchasing System Review (CPSR) report. If the CPSR report is not available, submit a letter received and provided by the auditing agency, on auditing agency letterhead, verifying the approval of the purchasing system. A Third-Party CPA firm cannot approve a purchasing system or provide the verification. However, a Third-Party CPA firm can assist the Offeror preparing for a DCMA or CFA review. An approved Purchasing System can add 1,000 points to the total score, though most small businesses do not have approved Purchasing Systems as most do not have the requirement in their contracts.

Other Certifications and Clearances

Polaris also provides opportunities for additional scoring points for other certifications and clearances. BDO can provide assistance in these areas as well.

- ▶ **Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) Certification:** 500 points for CMMI - SVC or DEV - Level II, or 750 points for CMMI - SVC or DEV - Level III or greater.
- ▶ **International Organization for Standardization (ISO):** 750 points each for ISO 9001:2015, ISO/IEC 20000-1:2018, or ISO/IEC 27001:2013.
- ▶ **Facility Clearance Level (FCL):** 2,000 points for Secret, or 3,000 for Top Secret.

BDO can help potential Polaris Offerors in providing verification of an adequate Accounting System, or in preparing for audit of their Purchasing System and other Certifications and Clearances. The November 4 proposal due date is rapidly approaching, so time is of the essence.

[Contact us now](#) for assistance with Polaris. Now is also a good time to think about preparing for future GWACs, as we anticipate Contractor Business Systems requirements to continue to be included as either opportunities for additional evaluation points or as gating items for contract award.