

The RFP is amended as follows:

- 1) The closing date of the RFP is extended until January 16, 2001.
- 2) Under B.3, 301-22, Contract Definition, page 17, 2nd paragraph, delete first sentence and replace with the following two sentences:

Individual Task Orders may be issued from \$25,001 up to \$3,000,000, or more, if approved by a Contracting Officer at the task order level. These task orders will be awarded at a Contracting Officer's discretion on a Fixed-Price, Time and Materials, or Cost Reimbursement basis.

- 3) Under C.3, Ordering Provisions, delete in its entirety and replace in lieu thereof with the following:

The task order procedures apply to all task orders issued under this contract. It is the Government's intent to issue task orders for every task order request. Any services to be furnished under this contract will be ordered by issuance of task orders. Task orders shall be issued in accordance with FAR 52.216-8 (Fixed Fee), 52.216-19 (Delivery Order Limitation), 52.216-22 (Indefinite Quantity) and 52.243-2 (Cost Reimbursement). In addition:

- 4) Under C.4, Task Order Procedures, paragraph (b), delete third sentence and replace with the following:

The request will state whether the task order is to be fixed-price, time and materials, or cost-reimbursement.

- 5) Under C.4., Task Order Procedures, paragraph (g) 5. Type of Task Order--delete paragraph (b) and replace with the following: Time and materials and cost-reimbursement task orders shall include the total not-to-exceed amount, authorized hours of labor by labor classification and authorized dollar amounts for labor, materials, and materials overhead, generally by incorporating the contractor's cost proposal.

- 6) Under C.6, Time and Materials Labor Classifications and Rates, delete the first sentence and replace with the following: With regard to all time and materials and cost-reimbursement task orders, the labor rates listed in the pricing schedule shall be the firm fixed hourly rates of charge for personnel provided under this contract.

- 7) Under G.5, 52.216-19, Order Limitations (Oct 1995), delete paragraph (b)(1) and replace with the following: Any order for a single item in excess of \$3,000,000, unless waived by a Contracting Officer at the task order level.

- 8) H.17 Performance Incentive Plan should read H.19 Performance Incentive Plan.

- 9) In Section I, Contract Clauses, add the following clauses:

52.232-20, Limitation of Cost;
52.243-2, Changes--Cost Reimbursement;
52.246-5, Inspection of Services--Cost Reimbursement;
52.246-8, Inspection of Research and Development--Cost Reimbursement;
52.249-6, Termination (Cost Reimbursement).

10) L.6 311-2a, General Instructions--Offerors must submit one (1) original and twelve (12) copies of the technical proposal and one (1) original and nine (9) copies of the business proposal.

11) L.6 311-2a, General Instructions--ED is not providing an estimated level of effort.

12) Under Technical Proposal Instructions, L.6.a, under 2.(1) Coversheet, delete Attachment E and replace in lieu thereof, with Attachment B.

13) Under Technical Proposal Instructions, L.6.a, under (3) Personnel Qualifications/Key Personnel, replace Section V with Section IV.

14) Under Technical Proposal Instructions, L.6.a, under (4) Organizational Experience, second paragraph, replace Section V with Section IV.

15) Under Section L.6.a Additional Technical Proposal Instructions, on page 70, second paragraph under Class VI: Secretaries/typists; Delete last sentence in the paragraph and replace with the following:

Offerors shall submit their Subcontracting Plans in the Technical Proposals. (The Subcontracting Plan is not included in the 100-page limit.)

16) Under L.6.a, Technical Proposal Instructions, paragraph 2(5), Subcontracting Plan, first sentence, delete the following: "Since the maximum value of task order awards under the resulting contracts is \$3,000,000," and begin sentence with "All Offerors."

17) Clause 311-4a Business Proposal is hereby incorporated into the RFP in full text as Attachment I of the Amendment.

18) Under L.8 311-6, Clarification Questions (April 1998), delete the email address for Pamela W. Bone and replace with the following: Pamela_Bone@ed.gov.

19) Under M.1, Evaluation Factors for Award, second paragraph, third line, delete the following: have weaknesses.

20) Under M.1, Evaluation Factors for Award, II. Personnel Qualifications/ Key Personnel - 40 Points, delete first sentence and replace with the following in lieu thereof:

Key personnel may include the manager(s), supervisor(s), and project director(s) proposed in Labor Classification I or II whom the Offeror proposes to assign full time responsibility for the performance of the prospective task orders awarded under the contract.

21) Under Attachment A, SOW, Section IV, Tasks to be Performed, delete first paragraph and replace with following:

The Services contemplated under this contract may include one or a combination of the activities listed below. An individual task order

may require services in these activities or a combination of the activities. The following are reflective of anticipated usage, and are not all-inclusive. Additional services may be added.

22) Under Attachment A, SOW, Section I, Performance Measurement Systems, delete entire paragraph under third bullet and replace with the following:

Use of a reporting system to report contract status.

23) Under Attachment A, Statement of Work, Section I., Overview, first paragraph, delete the following words: . . . "with all work being issued through fixed price or time and materials task order" and replace with the following: . . . "with all work being issued through fixed price, time and materials, or cost reimbursement task orders."

24) Under Attachment A, Statement of Work, Types of Task Requirements, delete second paragraph and replace with the following:

Individual task orders will not exceed three million dollars or extend for a period longer than three years. Unless otherwise indicated, all task orders will be awarded as performance-based (may be waived for quick turn-around task orders), and on a fixed price, time and materials, or Cost reimbursement basis. All contractors must also be able to perform quick turn-around work as needed. Quick turn-around work shall require that work be undertaken within 24 hours and completed by the deadline required. A Contracting Officer at the task order level may waive the dollar limitation and the period of performance ceilings for individual task order on a case-by-case basis. Under no circumstances should a contractor presume that a Contracting Officer will waive the ceilings set forth above. Deviations from the dollar limitation and the period of performance ceilings shall be determined solely by the Government on a case by case basis.

25) Under Appendix I, first column, Area of Expertise, delete Section V and replace with Section IV.

26) Appendix I, page number 15 is an error, the correct page number is 13.

27) In Appendix I of the SOW delete the sentence after the asterisk and replace with the following, in lieu thereof:

For these activities, please indicate your experience as it relates to the US Department of Education, Government wide, and private industry. For experience relating to Government wide and private industry, please provide a narrative description.

Question No. 1: Regarding Section M, IV, Small Business Participation--how many points will be awarded if the Offeror offers the maximum target participation but does not identify the specific subcontractors by name? How many points will be awarded if the Offeror identifies the names of the intended subcontractors? What is meant by "in each of the targeted areas?" Is there an expectation that the Offeror will identify subcontractors in each of these areas?

Response: An Offeror can earn up to 6 points if the maximum target participation is reached. An Offeror who identifies the names of

the intended subcontractors in each of the targeted areas and who provides "letters of commitment" with the subcontracting plan, may receive up to an additional 4 points, for a maximum total of 10 points.

"Each of the targeted areas" means the individual small business goals. There is no expectation that Offerors will identify subcontractors in each of these areas.

Question No. 2: How do the Classes discussed in Section L.6.a (pages 69 and 70) relate to the labor categories in Attachment E?

Response: The Classes discussed in Section L.6.a pertain to the technical proposal; the labor categories in Attachment E pertain to the cost proposal.

Question No. 3: Many of the labor categories in Attachment E are not clear. Could the Government provide clarification for each of the categories? For example, what is the difference between Subject Matter Expert 1 and Subject Matter Expert 4?

Response: The Government expects Offerors to only use those labor categories, which correspond to the area(s) included in their proposal. Offerors are not expected to use all of the labor categories referenced in Attachment E. Offerors may use labor categories not listed under Attachment E.

Question No. 4: Page 12 of the Statement of Work, Attachment A, third bullet refers to a reporting system designed for this procurement. We could not find this description in the Additional Proposal Requirements.

Response: See Item No. 22 above.

Question No. 5: Section L.4, page 66 requires a plan for ADP Security Compliance. Does this plan count in the 100 pages?

Response: This plan does not count in the 100 pages of the technical proposal.

Question No. 6: Please clarify what is meant by "full-time responsibility for the performance of the prospective task-orders awarded under this contract" on page 83?

Response: All key personnel will be responsible for managing the contract or for performance of individual task orders.

Question No. 7: Can we submit the technical proposal in two volumes, with the second volume consisting of resumes?

Response: Yes.

Question No. 8: Page 71, Section L.6.a (4) Organizational Experience--In an effort to encourage small and small disadvantaged business participation, would the Department of Education reconsider the use of organizational experience of subcontractors to strengthen an Offerors' team response to the diverse areas of the SOW?

Response: The Department of Education believes it is in the best interest of the Government to not alter the requirements for Organizational Experience. However, please note that information on major subcontractors (who are doing at least 25% of the overall work) will be included in the overall evaluation process (see Section L.13, 314-1, Past Performance Report, and M.1., Evaluation Factors for Award, (B) Past Performance, paragraph 3).

Question No. 9: Page 70-71, Section L.6.a (3) Personnel Qualifications/Key Personnel-- Solicitation states "... in the areas noted in Section V of the SOW, as they relate to Education." Please identify Section V.

Response: See Item No. 13 above.

Question No. 10: Page 70, Section L--Solicitation states "[t]he project director shall be considered key personnel and indicated as such." Subsequently, on page 83 - Section M, solicitation states "Key personnel include the manager(s), supervisor(s) and project director(s) proposed in Labor Classification I or II." Please clarify key personnel.

Response: Any personnel assigned to manage the overall contract and/or the performance of individual task orders can be considered key personnel under labor classification I or II.

Question No. 11: Are there specific instructions for the business plan or cost proposal other than what is provided in Attachment E? Where, for instance, are Section K and the subcontracting plan supposed to go?

Response: See Item No. 17 for the Business Proposal Instructions. For Subcontracting Plan information see Section L.6.a. (5) - Small Business Participation Program. Section K is part of the Business Proposal.

Question No. 12: Confirm that the areas of specialty are A - E in the SOW. Confirm that each of the 14 subareas under E are to be treated separately.

Response: ED confirms that the areas of specialty are A - E in the SOW; however, they are not conclusive. It is up to Offerors to decide whether or not to treat areas under E separately.

Question No. 13: Does the \$300,000,000 apply to all contractors combined or to each individual contract?

Response: The \$300,000,000 applies to all contractors combined.

Question No. 14: How many awards are anticipated? Is there a maximum number to be awarded?

Response: At this time there is no maximum number of contracts to be awarded; however please refer to the fourth paragraph under Section M.1. The total number of awards is dependent on the number of quality proposals submitted to ED by the deadline.

Question No. 15: Section L.6 - General Instructions, contains blanks for the number of copies of the technical proposal and the cost proposal. Based upon the information in Section 9 of the SF33, are we to assume that the original and 10 copies are to be provided for each?

Response: See Item No. 10 above.

Question No. 16: The estimated level of effort under Section L.6 is also left blank. Was that your intent?

Response: Department of Education is not providing an estimated level of effort.

Question No. 17: Can we submit a proposal independently as well as be listed as a subcontractor on another organization's bid, and can we also list that other organization as a subcontractor for us?

Response: Yes.

Question No. 18: Will the blanks appearing on pages 16-29 of RFP be filled out by the Department of Education for each specific task at the time a contractor is being selected for that task?

Response: The Department of Education will fill in some of the blanks at contract award, and others at task order award.

Question No. 19: The Technical, Business and Performance Reports are mentioned as the 3 basic parts of the proposal to be bound separately (page 67, first paragraph); where is the business proposal outlined? Is it the pricing schedule at the end of the RFP?

Response: The pricing schedule is part of the business proposal; however, please also see Item No. 17 above and Attachment I of this amendment.

Question No. 20: It is our understanding that the evaluation factors (beginning on page 83) are for the proposals sent in response to specific task orders after we have been placed on the contractors list. Is this correct?

Response: The evaluation criteria in Section M.1 will be used to evaluate your proposal for this solicitation.

Question No. 21: If placed on the list of contractors, will we be able to add subcontractors who are not listed in this initial proposal on future task orders.

Response: Offerors may add subcontractors on future task orders with Contracting Officer's approval. However, subcontractors proposed on future task orders will not be included in the evaluation process as listed in Section M.1.

Question No. 22: Please clarify the total number of originals and copies for each volume: Technical Proposal, Business Proposal and Past Performance Report.

Response: See Item No. 10 above for technical and business proposals. Please submit one original and one copy of the Past Performance Report as indicated under L.6, General Instructions.

Question No. 23: What is the anticipated start date for this award? Is a start date of April 1, 2001 for pricing purposes agreeable to the Department of Education?

Response: This is agreeable to ED.

Question No. 24: How does the Department of Education expect to see the pricing of personnel for this task? In Section L, item 2, under the Management and Staffing Plan, you request all proposed staff identified by class and specific individuals. The pricing schedule, Attachment E, asks for the maximum loaded rate/hour for labor categories. Does the Department of Education require the pricing only according to Attachment E? Should the classes just be used in the technical proposal?

Response: Attachment E refers to the cost proposal and the classes refer to the technical proposal.

Question No. 25: Is there a specific outline for the business proposal? We could not locate one in the solicitation.

Response: See Item No. 17 above.

Question No. 26: In Attachment A, SOW, Section IV, item I. Performance Measurement Systems, you state the contractor shall establish a performance measurement system. It states at the end of the last bullet that a description of this reporting system as designed for this procurement can be found in the Additional Proposal Requirements of the solicitation. I cannot locate this information in the solicitation package. Could you please supply it?

Response: See Item No. 22 above.

Question No. 27: Regarding the Small Business Plan, Attachment C: We propose to submit a copy of our master subcontracting plan. Because there are no orders yet for this task order we cannot determine at this time who the actual subcontractors will be. Additionally, the small business plan calls for the total dollar amount of the contract, which at this time is unknown. Please let me know if a submission of our master subcontracting plan will meet the requirements of your evaluation criteria.

Response: Small Business Plan goals in percentages will meet the requirements of the evaluation criteria.

Question No. 28: Will the Department of Education consider extending the closing date to January 10, 2001?

Response: See item number one of this amendment.

Question No. 29: I understand that there are three pieces to the RFP (Technical, Budget, and Past Performance) and that they get submitted separately. Does Schedule K Reps and Certs go into the Technical and the Cost Proposal? The instructions were a little vague. Also can you confirm that all you want is the original and one copy of each of the three separately bound documents.

Response: Schedule K Reps and Certs go into the cost proposal. A clause for business proposal instructions has been added (see Item No. 16 above) to the RFP. For the number of copies for the technical & business proposals, see Item No. 10 above. Please submit one original and one copy of the Past Performance Report as indicated under L.6, General Instructions.

Question No. 30: The Web announcement states that, "All work will be issued through either Fixed Price, Time & Materials, or Cost Reimbursable task orders", but the RFP only talks about Fixed Price or Time & Materials. Are cost reimbursable contracts different from Time & Materials, and if so how? Will the Department use any CPFF contracts for any of this work?

Response: The Department anticipates Fixed Price, Time & Materials, or Cost Reimbursement task orders. The contract is an IDIQ contract.

Question No. 31: In computing costs for labor categories, I understand that daily/hourly rates will be loaded with our current overhead and G&A indirect rates. Should we include our fee in the calculations? If not, how will the fee be recognized or negotiated in the task order?

Response: The loaded labor hourly rates are inclusive of labor, indirect rates and profit.

Question No. 32: On Time & Materials type contracts will we be allowed to calculate a fee on the "Materials" cost of any task order, assuming that a fee is already reflected in the cost for labor?

Response: The fee is ONLY calculated in the loaded hourly rates. The "Materials" cost of a task order does not contain a fee.

Question No. 33: Attachment E asks for loaded labor rates by labor category for each year of the contract. We can project average increases in salary each year over the five year period. How do we reflect any changes that may occur over that period in our overhead and G&A indirect rates? If we use our current indirect rates to estimate labor costs over a five year period, we might be underestimating actual costs. The language in the RFP seems to suggest that if we are successful in this competition we will be locked into the labor category rates presented for each. Can you clarify?

Response: Loaded labor rates will not be renegotiated. Offerors must use their best judgement to estimate anticipated changes in indirect rates.

Question No. 34: Would it be in our best interest, and that of ED, to represent a team approach with several significant subcontractor organization included in our proposal or is ED looking primarily for single organizations with the capacity to address one or more of the areas of interest?

Response: Offerors are free to present either approach.

Question No. 35: If we do not include subcontractors in our initial submission, can they be proposed when task order requests are issued?

Response: Yes, however it will be too late to earn the potential 10 evaluation points.

Question No. 36: Will the government consider an extension of the due dates for proposal from December 26, 2000 to sometime after the beginning the new year, for example, January 15, 2001.

Response: See item number 1 of this amendment.

Question No. 37: I would appreciate if you could clarify what constitutes the budget proposal?

Response: See Item No. 17 above.

Question No. 38: Unless there is extreme urgency to receive proposals by 12/26/00, we urge you to extend the due date to January 10, 2001.

Response: See item number one of this amendment.

Question No. 39: Due to the complication of the holiday season, we respectfully request an extension until January 8, 2001, if possible.

Response: See item number one of this amendment.

Question No. 40: We are requesting that the due date for this RFP be amended to January 5, 2001 to allow for adequate time to prepare and submit our proposal during the busy holiday season.

Response: See item number one of this amendment.

Question No. 41: I would like to request an extension with regard to the December 26th due date. Is there any way you can extend the submission date until January 3rd or even January 5th?

Response: See item number one of this amendment.

Question No. 42: Could you provide a definition as to what is included in the loaded labor rates? Presently we make a provision for annual leave and sick leave; but budget things like fringe benefits, payroll taxes, occupancy and indirect separately from labor. With regard to this RFP, do you need other charges included in loaded labor in order to evaluate proposals consistently?

Response: Loaded labor rates are made up of actual labor rates, indirect costs and profit. It is up to offerors to propose rates consistent with their usual business accounting practices.

Question No. 43: There is a page number 15, also identified as appendix 1, that refers to Section V in the SOW. This reference is in the upper left corner of the matrix in the box that says "Areas of Expertise." We can find no Section V. We surmise that a page is missing that contains Section V, and that this is also the missing page 13 and 14. Please clarify this.

Response: See Item No. 25 above.

Question No. 44: I have some format questions and want to know what is to be included in the "Business Proposal" Section of the above RFP.

Response: See Item No. 17 above.

Question No. 45: Can an Offeror designate exactly which task areas they are proposing on (like A. Research and Policy Analysis/Assessment; B. Research and Evaluation Design, Data Collection, and Analysis; and E.6 Conference Planning and Support)? Or is ED expecting all offerors to propose--probably with one or more subcontractors--for all five task areas and 14 subtask areas?

Response: Offerors may propose on any one, or more, or all areas in Section IV of the SOW.

Question No. 46: On page 67 of the Multiple Award Task Order proposal, the number of copies needed for the Technical proposal and the Business Proposal is blank. Would you please let me know how many copies you will need.

Response: See Item No. 10 above.

Question No. 47: Reference page 71 Section L Narrative Description--"The Offeror is required to present a brief narrative description of each Class I and Class II employee . . ." Please identify Class I and Class II employees and provide job descriptions.

Response: Class I and Class II employees are identified under Additional Technical Proposal Instructions at L.6.a, page 69. The Offeror must provide the job descriptions.

Question No. 48: Reference Attachment A - Appendix I - Page 14--Please identify labor category and class level for proposed personnel required to support each educational area.

Response: The Government requires Offerors to identify their proposed personnel with corresponding labor category and class level.

Question No. 49: How many awards will be made?

Response: Since this is a multiple award contract, the amount of awards cannot be determined at this time. Also see Response to Question No. 14.

Question No. 50: How many awards will be made to small and small disadvantaged businesses?

Response: This cannot be determined at this time.

Question No. 51: What is the award date and what is the anticipated contract start up date?

Response: An award date and a start up date are dependent upon the amount of proposals ED receives. Therefore, at this time ED cannot determine these dates.

Question No. 52: Considering the numerous clarification issues regarding personnel, would the government consider extending the due date?

Response: See item number one of this amendment.

Question No. 53: Please confirm the proposal due date.

Response: See item number one of this amendment.

Question No. 54: How do we budget an exact price for subcontractors, when we don't know the nature of the work or where or how to use subcontractors? Once the scope of work is known then a definitive subcontracting plan can be made.

Response: See Response to Question No. 27.

Question No. 55: Page 14 of the SOW, Paragraph 1, states: "Use of a reporting system to report contract status. A description of this reporting system as designed for the procurement can be found in the Additional Proposal Requirements of the RFP."

I can't find the "Additional Proposal Requirements of the RFP."

Response: See Item No. 22 above.

Question No. 56: I am wondering if I can get a copy of a winning proposal from the last task order solicitation.

Response: This is a new award. This is not a re-compete.

Question No. 57: Have precise definitions been developed for project director, project manager, and the other categories of positions on the Pricing Schedule? Since the position titles we use here do not necessarily correspond exactly with those on your list.

Response: Offerors may propose categories or titles other than those listed in Attachment E.

Question No. 58: In addition to the signed original, how many copies of the technical and business proposals are required?

Response: See Item No. 10 above.

Question No. 59: Other than the Small Business Participation Program, do all consultants and subcontractors need to be identified in the original proposal, or can consultants and subcontractors be proposed as individual tasks are competed?

Response: Consultants and subcontractors may be proposed at the task order level; however, these subcontractors will not be evaluated under the evaluation criteria of M.1.

Question No. 60: According to the RFP (page 71), qualifications of proposed staff are to be linked to major areas of interest specified in section V of the RFP, yet the document downloaded from the website does not have a section V. Please clarify.

Response: See Item No. 13 above.

Question No. 61: The specific issues of interest to the Department (appearing on page 3 of the SOW) are similar to the educational areas listed in Appendix 1 of Personnel Qualifications, but the two lists are not identical. Which of these two lists should offerors use?

Response: Appendix I is to be used by Offerors in describing their experience and staff qualifications.

Question No. 62: The evaluation criteria section for Personnel Qualifications, page 83, indicates that managers, supervisors and project directors are to be assigned full time responsibility under this task order. Does ED intend that such senior staff be dedicated 100% to this task order?

Response: No. The key personnel to be identified shall include individuals having responsibility for administration of the contract, as well as those who will lead or direct task order awards.

Question No. 63: The RFP (page 68 & page 71) requires the "approximate percentage of time each individual will be available" during the contract period. Does ED want the availability chart for all these staff, given the absence of specific tasks of work?

Response: No, the percentage of time provided should indicate the time to be available to the contract and not to any specific area of expertise.

Question No. 64: We request the proposal due date be extended to January 10, 2001.

Response: See item number one of this amendment

Question No. 65: Under small business participation (page 83), mention is made of target percentages of total contract value. The RFP mentions specific minimums and maximums for given tasks but does not offer an average total contract value. Are we to assume a particular dollar figure for the total contract value?

Response: Under the small business participation an offeror is to estimate their total contract value.

Question No. 66: Do you have a detailed outline of the required contents of the business proposal?

Response: See item number 17 above.

Question No. 67: Should subcontractors submit separate business proposals, including their own pricing schedules?

Response: Yes.

Question No. 68: What items must be included in the Past Performance Report? A brief outline is provided on page 75, but this suggests perhaps one or two pages for each of four projects. Do these represent the total contents of the Past Performance Report (plus the Contractor Information Forms to be sent separately)?

Response: See Section L.13. 314-1, Past Performance Report March 1996, page 75 of the solicitation for a complete listing of items required in the Past Performance Report.

Question No. 69: Does each major subcontractor, as well as the prime contractor, need to submit a separate Past Performance Report, including four contract descriptions and four Contractor Information Forms?

Response: Yes.

Question No. 70: On page 75 it says, "Each major subcontractor shall identify the name of the prime contractor on each of its past performance forms." Does "prime contractor" refer to the prime contractor for this bid? Is this simply an identification label on the subcontractor's past performance report?

Response: The prime contractor referenced in Section L.13. 314-1, Past Performance Report, should be the contractor whose work is being evaluated on the Past Performance form.

Question No. 71: Do references for Contractor Information Forms need to correspond to projects described in the Past Performance Report?

Response: Yes.

Question No. 72: Page 64-65: "An offeror proposing to do research that involves human subjects must provide information to ED on the proposed exempt and nonexempt activities. The offeror should submit this information as an attachment to its technical proposal." Does this requirement apply to the current proposal or only to proposals for specific tasks that may be submitted later? Can you provide further clarification about what information offerors should provide regarding human subjects?

Response: The offeror should provide the narrative/information requested in Section L.3 308-1 with the current technical proposal. If the activities are not yet determined, then a simple statement to that effect is necessary.

Question No. 73: On page 67 it says, "you must submit an original and ___ copies of your technical proposal and an original and ___ copies of your business proposal...? Is this 11 copies for both proposals? On the front of Solicitation, Offer and Award #9 states, 11 copies but does this accord with both technical and business proposals?

Response: See item 10 above.

Question No. 74: On page 68 it says, "Please note: Offerors may propose on one, all or any combination of areas set forth in Section IV, Tasks to be performed,...." Is it to our advantage to select areas versus doing them all?

Response: It is to your advantage to provide evidence of your areas of expertise.

Question No. 75: On page 68 it says, "The proposal shall be limited to one hundred (100) pages, ..." is this limited to only the technical or the business and past performance proposals as well?

Response: This 100-page limit is in regards to only the Technical proposal.

Question No. 76: We expect to describe organizational experience and personnel qualifications of major subcontractor as well as those of the prime contractor (and include relevant resumes from the subcontractors' personnel). Should qualifications of each subcontractor, including placement of expertise on the personnel qualifications chart, be presented separately, or integrated with the presentation on the prime contractors' qualifications?

Response: If the subcontractor is a major part of implementing the management plan then their expertise should be included, otherwise it should be separate.

Question No. 77: On page 73 it says, "Offerors certified as a small business under NAICS 54618 do not need to submit a subcontracting plan as part of their proposal." Can you confirm that if we are certified as a small business we will receive full points for small business participation without completing a subcontracting plan?

Response: Yes.

Question No. 78: Can you provide clarification on several items on page 74: 313-1 Certification of Subcontracting and 313-3 Competitive Business Mix Certification. How and where should we address these in the proposal.

Response: These should be addressed through Section K in the Business Proposal.

Question No. 79: On page 77 it says, "(2) The first page of this proposal must show* (I)...." We understand that this "first page" is different than the "cover sheet" identified on page 69 as part of the technical proposal. Is that correct? Is this "first page" to be included as a separate page or attached to one of the three proposals?

Response: Yes, the "cover sheet" is separate from the "first page". The "first page" is part of the Technical, Business and Past Performance. The cover sheet is only submitted once as part of the Technical Proposal.

Question No. 80: Are the three proposals to be sent in separate envelopes?

Response: The Technical, Business, and Past Performance are to be three separate bound documents. However, they do not need to be in three separate envelopes.

Question No. 81: On page 81, under Submission of Electronic Funds Transfer Information with Offer, where should we include this information?

Response: This should be included in the Business Proposal.

Question No. 82: We have existing grants and contract with ED. Would bidding on this solicitation cause a conflict of interest with our existing work?

Response: No.

Question No. 83: If awarded, would we, as contractors under this solicitation, be precluded from applying for ED grants and/or bidding on other ED contracts because of our status?

Response: No.

Question No. 84: Can staff be included in more than one labor category?

Response: No.

Question No. 85: On page 71 of the RFP, the following statement is made, ..."qualifications of proposed staff shall clearly demonstrate relevant experience in the major areas of interest as listed in section V. of the Statement of Work. Furthermore, of particular interest are the qualifications of the Offeror's personnel in the areas noted in Section V of the Statement of Work, as they relate to education." Section V is also mentioned elsewhere in the RFP. There is no Section V of the Statement of Work. Page 12 is the end of Section IV, then the page numbering jumps to page 15. Are pages missing from the RFP? If there are not any missing pages, shall we assume references to "Section V" are meant to say Section IV?

Response: See items numbered 13, 14, 21, 25 and 26.

Question No. 86: Shall we assume you want 11 copies plus an original of the Technical and Cost Proposals (as per the cover page of the RFP) and an original and 1 copy of the Past Performance Report (as per page 67 of the RFP)?

Response: See item numbered 10. You are correct regarding the original and 1 copy of the Past Performance Report.

Question No. 87: Shall we interpret "Maximum Loaded" Rate/Hour (in Attachment E of the RFP) to mean the ceiling rate for that category?

Response: The maximum loaded rate/hour is the hourly rate the offeror proposes.

Question No. 88: How should we calculate the materials handling overhead charge (page 17 of the RFP) and what can it apply to? It appears from the text that it only applies to materials and travel. What about subcontracts (i.e., do we get a handling charge for them)? Would that be blended into MHO rate?

Response: The materials handling overhead charge is applied to other direct costs including subcontractors' costs.

Question No. 89: Section I, "Performance Measurement Systems," on page 13 of the Statement of Work states that a description of the contract status reporting system designed for this procurement can be found in the Additional Proposal Requirements of the RFP. Please provide reference for this description.

Response: See item 22.

Question No. 90: SF-33 - Please clarify the number of copies of the technical, cost, and past performance proposals that need to be furnished to the Department of Education.

Response: See item 10. The past performance proposals should have one copy.

Question No. 91: H.2 - Please clarify whether all offerors must submit a separately detailed plan for IT System Security Compliance?

Response: Yes, offerors need to explain how they normally deal with IT security.

Question No. 92: Statement of Work, pg.9 - In describing the requirement for skills and expertise, the Statement of Work indicates that "activities outlined above shall require contractors to demonstrate skills or expertise in an area or areas of education...". Should the offeror be prepared to show expertise in education in the matrix entitled "Personnel Qualifications in Education" in order to qualify for providing any or all services under item E?

Response: See item numbered 27.

Question No. 93: Please clarify whether an offeror may respond to selected services under item E and not all services given under item E?

Response: Yes.

Question No. 94: What information should we submit with respect to subcontractors?

Response: Major subcontractors should submit the same information as required by prime contractor.

Question No. 95: In preparing the cost proposal, should we provide separate cost schedules for each subcontractor, or should we propose a single rate per category across the prime staff and the subcontractors combined?

Response: The cost schedule for each offeror, whether prime or subcontractor, should be based on upon an offerors' business practices, and should be submitted separately. See response to question number 67.

Question No. 96: Reference Section L, page 64, Additional Technical Proposal Instructions- This instructions states that offeror may propose one, all, any combination of areas sets forth in Section 4. However, in Section C, page 19, paragraph C.3 (d) it is indicated that the government intends to compete all task orders among the contractors awarded a contract. Does this mean that an offeror may still bid on a task area that has not been included in its original proposal.

Response: The government will award an individual task order to the contractor that provides the best value based upon technical, cost, and other relevant factors. However, it is up to the individual contractor to determine the feasibility to bid on a task order.

Question No. 97: Reference Section L, pages 69-70 and Attachment E - The Government provides a brief description of the Classes of labor categories on pages 69-70 in terms of their qualifications and responsibilities, but there are no corresponding descriptions for the labor categories listed in attachment E. For example, what is the difference between a Subject Matter Expert 1 and a Subject Matter Expert 4? Can the Government provide summary descriptions for all of these positions as they are needed for costing purposes?

Response: See response to Question number 3.

Question No. 98: Reference Statement of Work Section IV, Task E, pages 7 -9; The following questions relate to the Government's requirements for Telecommunications services support:

- a. Is the Government expecting a total "turnkey" satellite environment as a solution?
- b. Will it include installation of downlinks?
- c. Does the Government expect to have the ability to have audio response with satellite services?
- d. Does the Government want point-to-point and multipoint videoconferencing?
- e. Is the Government interested in data collaboration with its conferencing?
- f. Is the Government interested in 800 access to translation/interpretation services?

Response: The Government can not determine at this time what the specific requirements will be. This will be determined at the task order level.

Question No. 99: Referenced Section L, page 67 - This page has several blanks with missing data. The first relates to the number of copies of the proposal that are to be submitted. Since the SF33 indicates that an original and one (1) copy is to be submitted we assume that this is correct; however, we would appreciate clarification for the number of copies for each proposal. Likewise at the bottom of this page the Government's estimate of the effort to perform this contract is also missing. Please clarify.

Response: Please see Item number 10 and response to Question number 16.

Question No. 100: Reference SF33, proposal submission deadline. Will the Government consider changing this date?

Response: See item number one of this amendment .

Question No. 101: Reference Section L, page 71 - there are several references to Section V of the Statement of Work. Should this be Section IV as there is no Section V?

Response: Yes.

Question No. 102: To meet the requirements for Small Business Participation, does the small business need to be certified as such by the SBA or can it self-certify that it has less than \$5 million per year in income?

Response: The SBA must certify Small Disadvantaged Businesses as such; see Section K. 11. 52.219-1, Small Business Program Representations.

Question No. 103: If a company does not have expertise in all educational areas listed on page 14 of the Statement of Work (E.G. Family Literacy, Elementary/Secondary), is it preferable to bid with only current staff or to propose consultants or contingent hires in the missing areas?

Response: It is preferable to have commitments from proposed consultants or hires in their areas of expertise.

Question No. 104: Is it likely that a company will be selected as one of multiple awards if it has strong capabilities in many of the support areas (e.g. conference planning) listed on page 7 but has not done this work for ED?

Response: All experience whether with ED or outside of ED will be considered during the evaluation process.

Question No. 105: Do the Security Plan and the Protection of Human Subjects Plan count toward the page total of 100 pages or can those be included as appendixes.

Response: See response to question number 5; the Protection of Human Subjects Plan does not count toward the page total of 100 pages. They can be included as appendixes. Offerors need to propose how their organizations deal with Human Subjects and IT security.

Question No. 106: We understand that the technical proposal is limited to 100 pages of text, excluding resumes and the subcontracting plan. We are assuming that the ADP Security Compliance Plan is excluded from the 100-page limitation. Please confirm.

Response: Yes.

Question No. 107: In the technical proposal guidance found in Section L, there are six classes of personnel identified with appropriate education and experience criteria. Bidders are instructed to present their staffing plans and resumes using these categories. Attachment E - The Pricing Schedule - has a very different set of personnel categories and titles that are not totally relevant to this procurement. May we substitute the Class I through VI format for Attachment E in our Business Proposal?

Response: See response to Question # 2 and #3. It is expected offerors will use Attachment E for their cost proposal.

Question No. 108: Please provide guidance on the information required in the Business Proposal and the organization or structure of that proposal.

Response: See item number 17 above.

Question No. 109: On page 19 of the RFP it states that "Task Orders shall be issued in accordance with FAR 52.216-8 (Fixed Fee) ...". In addition T&M and Firm Fixed Price task orders, does ED contemplate Cost Plus Fixed Fee awards?

Response: Yes, ED intends to award cost reimbursement task orders. See Item number 3 and 5 above.

Question No. 110: Task E under the Statement of Work lists numerous activities. Is it the Departments intent for the offeror to address all of these areas or only these areas relevant to our experience or ability to provide those services.

Response: Offerors should provide evidence of their relevant expertise and abilities.

Question No. 111: The past performance criteria indicates that the "Offeror shall submit information about its most recent four contracts". Does this mean we can provide four per task area A - E, and four for each subtask under E? Also, if using subcontractors does this mean we can provide four task performance descriptions per subcontractor?

Response: Offerors should provide a total of four past performance reports relevant to their areas of expertise, which they are bidding. The same applies to major subcontractors.

Question No. 112: What is meant by "Information should be provided, which will demonstrate your understanding and management of important events or ask?" On page 67 and 69, are these important tasks and events listed somewhere in the RFP. On page 3 of the Statement of Work where "Some specific issues of interest of the Department include is stated, are these issues of interest the same as events or task?"

Response: Section L.6.a Technical Proposal Instructions, page 67- 68, "important events or tasks" refer to the task orders.

Question No. 113: On page 83 and 84 you discuss how "The Past Performance rating will be combined with the technical rating at a ratio of 36% Past Performance to Technical to produce a combined quality rating." Can you elaborate on this statement? What do you mean by 36% past performance to Technical to produce a combined quality rating?

Response: An offerors past performance is worth approximately 1/3 of their overall technical score.

Question No. 114: Will the government give credit to the relevant organizational experiences of the offeror's team as reflected in the work the team has performed under contract?

Response: The Department prefers awarding dollars directly to small business firms. However, the Department has no official stand on the use of subcontractors or teaming arrangements.

Question No. 115: Can an offeror apply to only four of the tasks to be performed or should we apply to all five?

Response: An offeror should be able to identify and provide documentation of their area of expertise and organizational experience.

Question No. 116: How many originals and copies should we submit?

Response: See item number 10 above.

Question No. 117: What should be included in the Business Proposal?

Response: See item 17 above and Attachment I.

Question No. 118: The cover sheet of the Technical Proposal is identified as Attachment E on page 69 of Section L. Is that correct? Attachment E seems to be the pricing schedule.

Response: See item 12 above.

Question No. 119: Is our assumption correct that we are not expected to provide a discussion of the educational issues and challenges related to the categories of the Statement of Work, Section III, Services To Be Provided?

Response: Yes.

Question No. 120: Section L.6., General Instructions, of the solicitation states: "To assist you in the preparation of your proposal, the Government has estimated the effort to perform this contract. The estimated level of effort is _____. These numbers are furnished for the offeror's information only and are not considered restrictive for proposal purposes." Considering this will be an indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity task order contract, should offerors overlook this statement, or has the Government determined an estimated level of effort.

Response: See response to question number 16.

Question No. 121: Other than the Pricing Schedule of estimated maximum loaded rates by labor category (Attachment E) and any supporting indirect cost rate documentation, could you please clarify what additional items, if any, are required in the Business Proposal?

Response: In addition to what you stated in your question, please see item number 17 above and Attachment I of amendment 002.

Question No. 122: Section L.6.a.1. of the solicitation details the Additional technical Proposal Instructions to be included in the offeror's proposal. Two items, listed for inclusion in the Technical Proposal, are: 1) Section K Representations and Certifications; and, 2) Small Business Participation/Subcontracting Plan. Are we correct in assuming this is an oversight, and that these items should instead be included in our cost proposal?

Response: Section K is to be included in the cost proposal and the Small Business Participation is to be included in the Technical Proposal.

Question No. 123: Section L.4. ADP Security Compliance states, "Technical Proposals must include a separately detailed plan for meeting these requirements, including any necessary subcontract applications." Is it sufficient for offerors and subcontractors to state in their proposals whether the firm is in compliance with the stated requirements?

Response: No, see response to questions numbered 91 and 105.

Question No. 124: Will a numerical value be assigned when evaluating cost proposals and, if so, what is the relationship of that figure to the technical evaluation score and total?

Response: No numerical value will be given to the cost proposals. Cost is always a factor in the source selection process.

Question No. 125: In Attachment A Statement of Work, Part IV Section I details that contractors shall establish a performance measurement system that includes the "use of a performance system to report contract status." Are we correct in assuming this refers to periodic reports to be prepared by the contractor on prescribed dates contained in the contract, which are due after contract commencement, and is not an item for our technical proposal?

Response: It is not an item for the Technical Proposal.

Question No. 126: In the Pricing Schedule contained in Attachment E, the labor categories listed include Subject Matter Expert Level I and Subject Matter Expert Level IV; However, there is no category listed for both Subject Matter Experts Level II and III. Could you please confirm whether these labor categories were inadvertently omitted?

Response: These labor categories were not inadvertently omitted.

Question No. 127: We presume that the above-captioned solicitation is a re-competition. Is this assumption correct? Does ED plan to reserve any number of the expected multiple awards resulting from the re-competition for either 8(a) or small business firms?

Response: This procurement is not a re-competition. ED is not planning to set aside any task orders.

Question No. 128: Section H.3, "Computer System Design and Implementation Requirements." As we interpret this requirement, it applies primarily to the development of customized software and applications using programming languages. While there could be significant requirements for data analysis, tabulation and storage related to the four major task areas defined in the Statement of Work, we believe the systems requirements could be met primarily through the use of commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) applications systems. Please clarify the application of the cited clause of the solicitation in these circumstances.

Response: This clause applies to customized software and programming languages.

Question No. 129: Both Section H.6 and Section L.6.a reference definitions of Key Personnel to be found in Section V of the Statement of Work. we are unable to find such a section, and the pagination of the Statement of Work jumps from page 12 to page 15. Can the Government provide replacement pages?

Response: See item number 13, 14, 25, and 26 above.

Question No. 130: Section H.8 "Year 2000 Compliance". We presume this article has been rendered moot by the passage of time and the technical changes made to all IT products since this requirement was originally added to Government contracts. Will the Government delete this requirement?

Response: No, this Clause is still in effect.

Question No. 131: Section H. 17, (Performance Incentive Plan). The cited article provides in pertinent part that, "the determination of an incentive will be made unilaterally and in writing by the CO. This decision is not subject to appeal under the Disputes Clause of this contract." We are not quite sure what this statement entails. Please clarify the intent of the subject language.

Response: The government will unilaterally decide if a contractor's performance warrants an incentive. This decision is not subject to appeal under the Disputes Clause of this contract.

Question No. 132: Small Business Participation Program. If the Prime Contractor and all subcontractors are small businesses or 8(a) firms, clearly 100% of the value of any contract award will involve small business participation. Is this sufficient to merely so state under this factor in a proposal? If a small/8(a) team includes a large business/teaming partner as a subcontractor how should this be described under the Small Business Participation Program section of the proposal?

Response: In Section L.6.a (5), Technical Proposal Instructions, page 72-73; it states that small businesses under NAICS code 541618 do not need to submit a subcontracting plan.

Question No. 133: Proposal Staffing. As we understand it, an offeror is allowed to select the labor categories upon which to bid, and may bid on not all categories included in the Pricing Schedule (Attachment E) or may add categories in addition to those found in the Pricing Schedule? Is this correct? In this regard, may an offeror choose to bid on some of the major task areas cited in the Statement of Work or must each offeror bid on all task areas?

Response: Yes, an offeror may bid on some categories in the Pricing Schedule or add to the list of categories. An offeror may choose to bid on various tasks; however, they must provide evidence of their capabilities in that area.

Question No. 134: Proposal Submission Requirements. Are we correct in assuming the original and eleven copies of both volumes are to be submitted? If not what is the correct requirement? Is the stated requirement for an original and one copy of the Past Performance set forth in Section L.6 correct?

Response: See item number 10 above. See response to question number 22 above.

Question No. 135: Level of Effort. Is the space provided for the Government's estimate of the level of effort in Section L, page 67 is left blank. We assume this is because this subject solicitation is for an ID/IQ contract in which level of effort will be determined on a task order by task order basis. Is this assumption correct?

Response: See response to question number 16.

Question No. 136: Resume/Project Staffing. On page 71, the Technical Proposal Instructions state the pertinent part that, "the offeror shall provide a resume for all Key Personnel, as well as all proposed staff in Classes I through IV." Given that the project is to be a task ordered-based IDIQ effort, this seems to us to be a rather open-ended requirement. We request that this requirement be clarified. Please provide elaboration on the number of resumes required.

Response: ED requires resumes for all key staff and all proposed staff in Classes I through IV.

Question No. 137: Business Proposal Format and Content. Section L does not specific instructions with respect to the format and content of the Business Proposal. Can the Government provide specific instructions for the format and content of the Business Proposal in response to this solicitation.

Response: See item number 17 above and Attachment I of amendment 002.

Question No. 138: Performance Measurement Systems. Section IV.I of the Statement of Work references a "reporting system to report contract status". can the Government furnish the referenced information or direct us to it?

Response: See item number 22 above.

Question No. 139: Please clarify if an Offeror is only bidding on tasks included in Section E. Is the Offeror required to complete Appendix I.

Response: An offeror is required to complete Appendix I. It will be used by ED in the evaluation process, see M.1.(A).II. Also, see item number 27 above.

Question No. 140: What percentage of task orders issued under this contract will be performance based.

Response: It is not possible at this time to provide a percentage on the amount of performance based task orders.

Question No. 141: Is the past performance report volume included in the 100 page limit?

Response: No.

Question No. 142: We request an extension due date for the contractor performance information form to be returned to the Government beyond the stated 10 days.

Response: See item number one of this amendment. The Government feels 10 days is adequate given the extension in this amendment.

Question No. 143: Will an offer be acceptable and considered for award, if the Offeror submits a proposal to provide task order support to selective task areas.

Response: An Offeror does not need to submit a proposal to support all activities listed in Sections A through E of the Statement of Work. However, ED evaluates proposals based upon the criteria listed in Section M.1.

Question No. 144: What labor categories are key and/or relevant to support each task area?

Response: It is up to the Offerors to know which labor categories go with their particular areas of expertise.

Question No. 145: Will there be a Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) for the overall contract? Will there be a COR for each task order?

Response: There will be a COR for each task order.

Question No. 146: Is the Section V of the Statement of Work missing or is it misnumbered?

Response: See item number 13, 14, 25, and 26.

Question No. 147: Offerors must provide a copy of their Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or if not available, a justification of its Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. The Offeror will propose its GSA multiple award labor hour pricing, which is based on commercial pricing, will this be acceptable justification?

Response: This is acceptable justification.

Question No. 148: Does ED plan to hold a pre-proposal conference?

Response: No.

Question No. 149: This RFP indicates that small businesses will be evaluated separately from large businesses and that multiple awards are anticipated. Has ED made an estimate as to how many awards will be made and how many will be small business?

Response: This will be a full and open competition, so it is impossible to predict how many awards will be made or how many will be to small businesses.

Question No. 150: The Pricing Schedule to the RFP indicates that the Offeror may propose categories other than those set forth on the schedule. Is it acceptable to offer a potential contractor's GSA multiple award schedule labor categories as long as the Technical Proposal clearly indicates all requirements are met in the capabilities of the personnel and the organization.

Response: Yes.

Question No. 151: We are interested in working with ED in school related projects, but wanted to first explore whether formal expertise in the area of education was a necessary requirement for consideration of this solicitation.

Response: ED will respectfully evaluate all proposals according to the criteria established in section M.1 of the RPF.

Question No. 152: In computing the loaded rates for labor categories and in completing the staff ability chart, do you have a particular start date in mind for this start date? We will need to have a start date to figure in raises for loaded rates as well as time availability given current commitments.

Response: See response to question number 23.

Question No. 153: Do charts and graphs have to be 12 point fonts, or can we make charts and graphs a smaller font?

Response: Graphs and charts do not have to be 12 point fonts; however they must be readable.

Question No. 154: Do page numbers have to be inside the one-inch margins of each page or can it be outside the one-inch margin?

Response: Page numbers may be outside the one-inch margin.

Question No. 155: Page 67, Section L,... the number of copies required for submission is not given.

Response: See item number 10.

Question No. 156: It is my understanding from the specifications is that even if awarded a contract under this agreement, the contract is no guarantee of future work. All future work orders will be issued by ED, and the contractors must prepare another proposal and compete for the work? In addition, the contractor does not have to be proficient in all areas specified by the RFP, but can be selective about the type of work it can do.

Response: You are correct on both counts.

Question No. 157: Does the multiple task contract substantially change the way that ED will handle contract solicitations? Specifically, if we are not on the "list" as a provider under this solicitation will we not be able to apply to all contract solicitations? The alternate question is: Would we be given preferred treatment because we are approved under this contract for solicitations under which we choose to apply?

Response: If a contractor is on the list they may compete on the task orders. If not, they can not compete on the task orders; however, they may compete on other ED RFPs.

Question No. 158: In preparing the proposal for this solicitation, do we need to demonstrate our own capacity for all items incorporated in the Statement of Work? If we don't have the capacity in a certain area, is it legitimate under this solicitation to discuss actual or potential partnership arrangements?

Response: See response to question number 110. Offerors may discuss actual or potential partnership arrangements.

Question No. 159: The Technical Proposal requirements are well defined. Please advise what is required for the Business Proposal.

Response: See item 17 above and Attachment I of this amendment.

Question No. 160: Pages 13 and 14 from the Statement of Work are missing, is that correct?

Response: See item number 26 above.

Question No. 161: Will the Department be extending the due date?

Response: See item number one of this amendment.

Question No. 162: How many copies of the Technical and Business proposal are required?

Response: See item number 10 above.

Question No. 163: It appears that all income will be derived from task orders. Is the cost of the Project Director and other direct support personnel to be applied to each task order or is some other mechanism possible?

Response: All income will be derived from task orders.

Question No. 164: Will assignment of task orders be based on competitive bids or sole source contracts?

Response: Please see Section C.3, Ordering Provisions, of the solicitation.

Question No. 165: Page 70 of the solicitation states, "A copy of all subcontractor agreements shall be provided for approval in accordance with FAR Clause 52:244-2." Would you provide a more detailed expectation of what you expect to be included as subcontractor agreements?

Response: This agreement is between you, the Prime, and your subcontract(s).

Question No. 166: As small businesses are evaluated separately from large ones under this competition, may bona fide small businesses submit proposals as prime contractors and still be included in the subcontracting plans of large businesses submitting proposals?

Response: Yes.

Question No. 167: Can a small business also receive points for including a small business participation plan in its proposal submission?

Response: Since a small business receives the maximum points for the small business participation because they are a small business, they can not earn the scores twice.

Question No. 168: Is a customary fee permissible in the maximum loaded labor rates?

Response: If it is in line with the offerors usual business practice; however, it must be included in the breakout of loaded labor rates and justified.

Question No. 169: So that all Offerors are bidding the same Class for each of the labor categories, could ED provide for each of the labor categories detailed in Attachment E their specific class designation?

Response: See response to question number 2, 3, and 107.

Question No. 170: How many copies of the proposal do we need to mail?

Response: See item number 10 above.

Question No 171: What exactly needs to be included in the Business Proposal?

Response: See item number 17 above and Attachment I of amendment 0002.

Question No 172: Does ED require one original and 11 copies of both the technical and business proposals?

Response: See item number 10 above.

Question No. 173: Has ED established a "level of effort" estimate for the term of the contract, and if so, what is it?

Response: See response to question number 16 above.

Question No. 174: Section L.6.a (page 68) states the technical proposal should be limited to 100 pages. Does this limit apply to the technical proposal only or to all three volumes?

Response: See response to question number 75.

Question No. 175: Should Section K be part of the technical proposal or part of the business proposal?

Response: See response to question number 122 above.

Question No. 176: Section L.13 314-1 (page 75) requires that major subcontractors that subcontract for a minimum of 25% of the total contract amount may be included in the Past Performance Report. Due to the uncertain scope of the task orders to be issued under this contract, it is difficult to know exactly which subcontractors might qualify as "major subcontractors" using this specific definition. Given this uncertainty, would it be acceptable for an offeror to make a reasonable determination of approximately two subcontractors that are likely to be major subcontractors under the overall contract?

Response: It is acceptable to ED.

Question No. 177: What should the business proposal include?

Response: See item number 17 above and Attachment I of this solicitation.

Question No. 178: Various places in the solicitation reference a "Section V" in the Statement of Work. Is this a misprint or if not, could we obtain Section V?

Response: See Item number 13, 14, 25, and 26.

Question No. 179: Please explain more fully the Personnel Qualification matrix regarding 1) the reference to "Section V" on page 71; and 2) the criteria to be used in responding to the areas of expertise to be addressed in the Personnel Qualifications in Education.

Response: See Item number 13, 14, 25, and 26. The column headings used in the personnel matrix (Appendix I) are those areas of expertise listed in Section M.1. (A) II, Personnel Qualifications/Key Personnel.

Question No. 180: Please clarify how many copies of the proposal are to be submitted.

Response: See item 10 above.

Question No. 181: Would it be advantageous in ED's opinion to have IRB affiliation prior to the Contract Award?

Response: There is not enough time before the closing of the solicitation.

Question No. 182: How will ED evaluate offers proposing under select specialty areas, as opposed to offers for the full range of services listed in the Statement of Work?

Response: All proposals will be evaluated by the criteria listed in Section M.1 of the solicitation.

Question No. 183: Section L.6 does not specify the number of copies required for each proposal volume, but the SF33 indicates that the appropriate number is eleven. Please verify that this number applies to all three volumes of the proposal.

Response: See item number 10 and response to question number 90 above.

Question No. 184: Will the clauses and special provisions, which do not apply to a particular offeror, e.g., clauses for non-profits and Universities, be considered self-deleting in the resultant contract and task orders, and will a provision to that effect be included into the resultant contract?

Response: Yes.

Question No. 185: Is the number of copies to be submitted related to the number of types of tasks to be performed?

Response: No.

Question No. 186: Please provide a level of estimate so that all offerors are preparing proposal on a "level playing field" basis for this IDIQ contract.

Response: See response to question number 16.

Question No. 187: We did not find any specific instructions regarding the Business Proposal.

Response: See item number 17, Attachment I of this amendment, and Attachment E of the solicitation n.

Question No. 188: Please advise if you wish completed Representations & Certifications to appear in both the Technical Proposal and the Business Proposal.

Response: The Representations & Certifications should be submitted with the Business Proposal only.

Question No. 189: L.13 on page 74 contains a certification that appears to be neither Federal Acquisition Regulation nor Department of Education Acquisition Regulation material. It appears to apply only to prime contractors who are 8(a) firms. Please confirm this understanding. More specifically, as a small business offeror, as long as the work is being performed by either our own employees and associates or by subcontractors that are small business concerns (Meeting the size standard criteria), would we need to obtain "SBA approval ... prior to entering into a subcontract with any other concern?"

Response: Section L. 11 313-1, Certification of Subcontracting (August 1998) only applies to 8(a) companies.

Question No. 190: The 11/22 issued SF33 states your requirements for submission to be an original and one copy. Please confirm.

Response: See item number 10 above.

Question No. 191: Section C.3. Ordering Provisions - FAR 52.216-8 (Fixed Fee) is referenced. This is normally used in a cost reimbursement scenario. How does the government intend to apply fixed fee on a fixed price or T & M task?

Response: This would apply only to a cost reimbursement task order; see response to question number 30.

Question No. 192: Section G.2. 306-2 Additional Requirements for Control of Government Property. The clause addresses government property related reporting. This is severely administratively burdensome. Will the government consider making this requirement non-applicable to Contractor's Purchaser System Review (CPSR) Approved vendors?

Response: No.

Question No. 193: Section H.6. 307-2 Key Personnel Designation. Are "key personnel" designated only on a task-by-task basis?

Response: See response to question number 10.

Question No. 194: Section H.17. Performance Incentive Plan. Please describe the form, range and scope of the incentives being considered. If financial, are they strictly in addition to the T&M or FFP task order as bid?

Response: The incentives for each task order will be spelled out in the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) contained in the Request for Task Order (RFTO) see Section C.4, Task Order Procedures of the solicitation.

Question No. 195: The bottom of page 67 states, "The estimated level of effort is ____." Please provide estimated level of effort expected to be purchased annually through this contract.

Response: See response to question number 16 above.

Question No. 196: Technical proposals are required to include a "Detailed Plan" for meeting ADP Security compliance. Would the government consider moving the plan to the Business Proposal? If not, does the plan count against the page limitation?

Response: The plan does not count against the page limitation. See response to question number 91 and 105.

Question No. 197: Section L.6.a Technical Proposal Instructions. The note under "Additional Technical Proposal Instructions" allows offerors to propose on one, all or any combination of areas set forth in Section IV. Can the government provide more guidance on how it intends to evaluate, for example, one offeror who proposes on a single area of Section IV to another offeror who proposes on all areas of Section IV? Certainly price comparisons for dissimilar services and labor mixes are difficult. How will the government evaluate price?

Response: The government will evaluate all proposals by the criteria referenced in Section M.1 of the solicitation. The government will evaluate price reasonableness of the proposed hourly labor rates. Award of a contract is access to the opportunity for later bidding on specific task orders.

Question No. 198: Section L.6.a. Technical Proposal Instructions. (Middle of page 70) Subcontractor agreements are required to be provided. The last paragraph on page 72 requires subcontractor "letters of commitment." Are we correct in assuming that subcontractor letters of commitment are required as part of the proposal submission and that the fully executed subcontractor agreements are required for incorporation into a contract after award?

Response: Yes.

Question No. 199: Please confirm our assumption that the references to Section V" of the Statement of Work made in the first paragraph on page 71 and the second paragraph on page 72 are meant to refer to "Section IV" of the Statement of Work.

Response: You are correct.

Question No. 200: Can an individual staff person be included in the labor rates developed for our cost proposal without their resume being submitted as part of the technical proposal?

Response: Yes.

Question No 201: How many copies must be submitted?

Response: See item number 10 above.

Question No. 202: Can you provide an estimated number of satellite hours for C-band and Ku-band per month and/or per year?

Response: It is impossible to provide that information at this stage. That information will be provided at the task order level.

Question No. 203: Section B.1, Paragraph (a), it reads "amount of this contract is \$_____". Should there be a dollar amount in this blank?

Response: This will be filled in at the contract award stage.

Question No. 204: There are no Key Personnel designated in section H.6 307-2 of the RFP. Please clarify.

Response: This information is for offerors to propose in their proposals.

Question No. 205: In Section L.6. 311-2a, on page 67, last sentence prior to address, it states: "You must submit an original and ___ copies of your technical proposal and an original and ___ copies of your business proposal". Would the government please define the number of copies?

Response: See item number 10 above.

Question No. 206: In the same section as stated in question number 205, next to the last sentence, would the government define the level of effort?

Response: See response to question number 16 above.

Question No. 207: The Government does not define a format for Resume. Is this intentional or will the Government provide a format?

Response: The Government will not provide a format for resumes.

Question No. 208: Request an extension of the due date for this proposal.

Response: See item number one for this amendment.

Question No. 209: SF33 states that the government requires an original and one copy of each of the technical, business, and past performance documents. Please confirm this requirement.

Response: See item 10 above and response to question number 22 above.

Question No. 210: Over the life of this five-year effort, will contractors be permitted to add subcontractors and consultants who were not included in their original proposal?

Response: See response to question number 35 above.

Question No. 211: Should offerors prepare separate, fully-loaded labor category rates for their staff and each of their subcontracts and consultants or should offerors' proposed rate for each labor category include prime contractor staff as well as subcontractor staff and consultants?

Response: See response to question number 95.

Question No. 212: Will contractors be able to add labor category rates after contract award?

Response: Yes. ED will handle the request on a case by case basis.

Question No. 213: Please clarify Section L, Additional Technical Proposal Instructions, (2) Management and Staffing Plan, paragraph 11, page 70, which refers to advance understanding with subcontractors. Given that it is unusual to award subcontracts prior to the award of the prime contract, does the submission of a subcontractor's cost proposal, completed representations and certifications, and letter of commitment qualify for consideration as an "Advance Understanding"?

Response: Yes.

Question No. 214: Section L, Additional Technical Proposal Instructions, (2) Management and Staffing Plan, paragraph 11, page 70 refers to the subcontracting plan, and cites Section 2 (c) (4) of the RFP? Where in the RFP is this section?

Response: Section 2 (c) (4) refers to: Section L.6.a, Technical Proposal Instruction, Additional Technical Proposal Instructions, Section 2, Technical Proposal, Item (5) Small Business Participation Program, Subcontracting Plan.

Question No. 215: What contract start date should offerors assume for budgeting purposes?

Response: See response to question number 23 above

Question No. 216: Would the government accept a small business subcontracting goal based on participation for all proposed subcontractors as opposed to a goal for each individual subcontractor?

Response: It may be acceptable; however, offerors will be evaluated based on the criteria listed in Section M.1. IV., Small Business Participation.

Question No. 217: Over the five-year life of this contract, some staff members will earn merit promotions that qualify them for a higher labor category. Will the government allow staff to move to higher labor categories?

Response: Yes, if it does not increase the cost of the contract.

Question No. 218: How many copies of the Technical, Business, and Past Performance proposal do we need to submit?

Response: See item number 10 and response to question 29 above.

Question No. 219: Can we submit a VHS tape of sample production work along with our proposal?

Response: ED will accept videotapes submitted as addenda to proposals, and reserves the right not to view them or factor them into the evaluation process. Videos may or may not be viewed depending on time and other factors.

Question No. 220: Should Section K be included in the Technical or Business Proposal?

Response: See response to question number 29.

Question No. 221: I couldn't find a description of what should be included in the Business Proposal. Where can I find this information?

Response: See item 17 and Attachment I of this amendment.

Question No. 222: Where should I include Attachment E, and where should I include the company's organizational chart?

Response: Attachment E is to be included in the cost proposal and the company's organizational chart should be included in the Technical Proposal.

Question No. 223: In earlier announcements about this solicitation, it was stated that small business proposals would be evaluated separately. Will this still be the case? Will a certain number of awards be made to small businesses? If so, how many?

Response: Small business proposals will be evaluated separately. See response to question number 50 above.

Question No. 224: Who is eligible to apply for this contract? Specifically, is it restricted to businesses or are non-profit organizations eligible? Are institutions of higher education eligible?

Response: This solicitation is full and open to all responsible offerors. There are no restrictions.

Question No. 225: Is it acceptable to bid only on certain tasks (e.g., A and D, but not B, C or E) or must the offeror be capable and willing to perform and all of the services enumerated in the Statement of Work.

Response: See response to question number 45 above.

Question No. 226: Section B.3 301-22 (page 16-17). This section states that this is a performance based service contract under OMB policy letter 91-2 (April 9, 1999). However, the ARNET Virtual Library - Policy Letters, states that this policy letter was rescinded by Federal Register Notice, March 30, 2000. Is there an updated citation?

Response: It has been rescinded, and at this time there is no updated citation.

Question No. 227: How many copies of the technical and business proposal must be submitted?

Response: See item number 10 above.

Question No. 228: As a self-certified small business under NAICS Code 541618, we are not required to submit a subcontract plan. Are we required to submit the "letters of commitment" which appear to be part of the subcontracting plan?

Response: No.

Question No. 229: Attachment A, Statement of Work, page 4, The Types of Task Requirements, states that individual task orders will not extend for a period longer than two years. Section B.3.301-22 states that individual task orders will not exceed three years in duration. Please clarify.

Response: See item 2 and 24 above.

Question No. 230: Statement of Work, Section I. Please provide the reference for the Additional Proposal Requirements section cited in the paragraph.

Response: See item 22 above.

Question No. 231: About how many principal offices and independent organizations make up the Department of Education?

Response: Approximately 45.

Question No 232: Statement of Work, Section E, Translation and Interpretation tasks.

- a. Will translation documents and materials be sent to the contractor's office or will the work be done on-site at ED?
- b. What types of written materials will be translated (i.e., reports, manuals, ECT)? Can you state the languages most commonly required?
- c. Are face-to-face interpreting services required? What kind of interpretation is required (i.e., legal interpretation, technical interpretation, and news interpretation, ECT)?

Response: It is impossible to answer these questions at this time. The specific requirement will be spelled out at the task order level.

Question No. 233: Section L.4 311-17, page 66. This section requires a detailed plan for meeting the requirements in the clause entitled "Information technology System Security Requirements" Section H.2 307-13. The IT system Security Requirements section requires the contractor to comply with ED's Information Security - Manual, Handbook Number 6. This handbook states in Part 1, V. Applicability, A; that these policies are mandatory on contractors having access to and/or using the information technology resources of the Department of Education. Does this mean that the required security plan needs to address how the contractor will comply with the handbook requirements and protect both ED IT resources being accessed by the contractor at ED and how the contractor will comply and protect ED information and data on the contractor's IT resources?

Response: Yes.

Question No. 234: Would ED provide an example of an information technology installation and automated information system, Information Technology Security Plan as required in Part 2, II, D. Planning, 1 of the security handbook?

Response: The Office of the Chief Information Officer is reviewing this question at this time. The question does not effect the proposal.

Question No 235: In Part 2, II, E. Training Awareness, 1. of the security handbook it requires contractor staff to receive Computer Security Awareness training. Does it also require the contractor staff receive the Computer Security Training? Is this training provided by the Department or does the contractor provide the training using ED's IT Security Training Program?

Response: The Office of the Chief Information Officer is reviewing this question at this time. The question does not effect the proposal.

Question No. 236: Part 3, III, Personnel Security, A., of the handbook, "All positions that involve data processing activities of any kind may be considered sensitive to some degree." What percentage of the contractor's positions

are anticipated to e National Security positions: Special, critical, Noncritical, and NonSensitive? What percentage of the contractor's positions are anticipated to be Public Trust positions: High, Moderate, and Low Risk?

Response: The Office of the Chief Information Officer is reviewing this question at this time. The question does not effect the proposal.

Question No. 237: Part 3, III, Personnel Security, B.1. of the security handbook requires "the screening of all individuals before they are allowed to participate in the design, operation, maintenance or use of sensitive automated information systems: or are granted access to sensitive data" Are waivers granted to contractors for the National Security positions: Special, Critical, Noncritical, and Non Sensitive? Are waivers granted to contractors prevented from accessing the Department's IT resources until the clearance are obtained?

Response: The Office of the Chief Information Officer is reviewing this question at this time. The question does not effect the proposal.

Question No. 238: Should the contractor's security plan follow the handbook format prescribed in Appendix B, Information Technology Security Plan Format in the security handbook?

Response: The Office of the Chief Information Officer is reviewing this question at this time. The question does not effect the proposal.

Question No. 239: Would ED provide an example copy of a security plan prepared be a successful contractor?

Response: No.

Question 240: Is EDNet still ED's computer network?

Response: Yes.

Attachment I of Amendment #0002

Clause: 311-4a

BUSINESS PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS (FEB 1996)

The offeror(s) business proposal must contain the following information. This RFP may contain additional RFP-specific business proposal instructions elsewhere in Section L or in Section J.

- A. Standard Form 33, "Solicitation, Offer and Award", the Special Provision article entitled "Contract Administrator," and "Representations, Certifications, and Other Statements of Offerors or Quoters of Section K" must be properly filled out and signed by an official authorized to bind the offeror. Your proposal must stipulate that it is predicated upon all the terms and conditions of this RFP.
- B. The information, if any, required by the provision FAR 52.215-20, "Requirements for Cost or Pricing Data or Information Other Than Cost or Pricing Data, Alternative IV" as incorporated in Section L of this solicitation.

- C. Property and equipment - It is ED policy that contractors provide all equipment and facilities necessary for performance of contracts; however, in some instances, an exception may be granted to furnish Government-owned property or to authorize purchase with contract funds. If additional equipment must be acquired, you must include in your proposal the description and estimated cost of each item, and whether you propose to acquire the item with your own funds.

The description shall include the following elements for individual items which will exceed \$1,000 in cost:

- (1) A brief statement of function;
- (2) manufacturer and manufacturer's brand name, model or part number; and
- (3) vendor and its proposed price.

You must identify all Government-owned property in your possession and all property acquired from Federal funds, to which you have title, that is proposed to be used in the performance of the prospective contract.

- D. Other Administrative Details:

- (1) The proposal shall list the names and telephone numbers of persons authorized to conduct negotiations.
- (2) Block 12 of Standard Form 33 must contain a Statement to the effect that your offer is firm for a period of at least 90 (ninety) calendar days from the date of receipt of offers specified by the Government.

- E. Responsibility of Prospective Contractor - In order for an offeror to receive a contract, the contracting officer must first make an affirmative determination that the prospective contractor is responsible in accordance with the provisions of FAR 9.104. To assist the contracting officer in this regard, the offeror shall supply sufficient categorical descriptions and statements to establish the following:

- (1) The offeror's financial capability; including detail for the accounting system and controls employed by the offeror;

- (2) the offeror's capability to meet delivery or performance schedules;
- (3) the offeror's record of past performance, including a listing of references with contract and grant numbers and the addresses and phone numbers of those with whom the offeror has most recently conducted business.
- (4) the offeror's record of business integrity;
- (5) the offeror's possession of necessary organizational experience, technical skills or the ability to obtain them;
- (6) the offeror's possession of necessary facilities; or the ability to obtain them;
- (7) the offeror's compliance with subcontract requirements; and
- (8) any other special considerations involved in the acquisition.

NOTE: THESE DESCRIPTIONS AND STATEMENTS SHOULD ALSO BE INCORPORATED IN THE TECHNICAL PROPOSAL, AS CONDUCIVE OF SEPARATE EXAMINATION BY THE TECHNICAL EVALUATORS DURING THE PROCESS OF TECHNICAL EVALUATION.