

Providing Customer Service for a National Secure Data Service through a Data Concierge

(PCS-DCS-25) FAQ

	Question	Answer
1	What is the anticipated award range in USD?	There is not a target level of funding. We would look to the offerors to propose a cost that will meet the objectives stated in the RFS.
2	Is there an existing environment or will we need to set one up?	The vendor should propose the best solution to meet the objectives stated in the RFS.
3	Is the environment on premises or in the cloud?	The vendor should propose the best solution to meet the objectives stated in the RFS.
4	If no environment exists, would you be open to creating an environment on the cloud?	The vendor should propose the best solution to meet the objectives stated in the RFS.
5	What is the expected utilization time?	We do not have an average estimate and expect that utilization time will vary significantly by user/user type. The vendor should propose a solution that meets the needs of expected users.
6	Is it acceptable to offer a solution focused specifically for infrastructure services or is there an expectation that a company must implement a solution from start to finish?	The vendor should propose the best solution to meet the objectives stated in the RFS.
7	Is teaming considered to be a required component for the RFS? It is explicitly called out in the RFS: PCS-DCS-25 as #2 in the order of importance in 3.1 - Full Proposal Evaluations and Ratings. However, in ATT-2_Full-Proposal-Format-PCS-DCS-25 the cover page has a notation that says to include "Project partners, <i>if any</i> ".	Teaming is strongly recommended.
8	For the chatbot we're proposing to develop, can you confirm whether the dataset metadata, FAQ content, and agency contact lists are considered public-use information or whether any part of this material is restricted or sensitive?	The vendor should propose the best solution to meet the objectives stated in the RFS. Please refer to current work in support of the National Secure Data Service Demonstration Project found here: Awards - ADC America's Datahub Consortium

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9	<p>The non-traditional entity definition requires entities that have 'not performed under any NSF procurement contract or NSF instrument of financial assistance' for three years. For clarification:</p> <p>a) Does ANY prior work with NSF (whether as a prime contractor, subcontractor at any tier, or consultant) disqualify an entity from being considered non-traditional?</p> <p>b) Does this restriction apply only to direct contractual relationships with NSF, or does it include any flow-down funding from NSF through other contractors?</p>	<p>a) Traditional status would apply if the contractor had a direct contract with NSF as the prime contractor; this does not include subcontractors or consultants</p> <p>b) This would only apply to the direct contractual relationship with NSF.</p>
10	<p>The 8-page limit for the Technical Proposal must include Executive Summary, Statement of Work (with schedule and deliverables), Capabilities and Experience, and Intellectual Property Rights. Given that the Statement of Work alone requires scope, major tasks, subtasks, milestones, schedule, and deliverables description, how should offerors prioritize content? Should the Statement of Work be abbreviated to bullet points, or would NCSSES accept an expanded page limit?</p>	<p>The vendor should provide the requested information within the stated page limit.</p>
11	<p>Article XI of the Base Agreement states that consortium members 'may be designated as agents' requiring CIPSEA compliance within one month of PA award. For the data concierge service:</p> <p>a) Will ALL team members require agent status and security clearances?</p> <p>b) Does the concierge service itself handle restricted-use statistical data, or does it only facilitate connections to data custodians?</p> <p>c) Should our cost proposal include the time/expense for CIPSEA training, security clearances, and the required Confidentiality Plan and Data Security Procedures (CPDSP) development?</p>	<p>If CIPSEA compliance is required, all team members will require training and agent assignment status. The solution should meet the objectives in the RFS. The vendor should propose a timeline that includes all training and security development requirements.</p>
12	<p>Section 3.1.1.1 lists four evaluation factors totaling 100% (25%+25%+30%+20%). However, Technical Approach is only one of three evaluation criteria alongside Teaming and Cost. What is the actual weighting between Technical Approach vs. Teaming vs. Cost for final selection?</p>	<p>All compliant submissions will be evaluated based on the following criteria which are listed in order of importance: (1) Technical Approach, (2) Teaming, and (3) Cost. There is not a prescribed weighting for each of these criteria</p>
13	<p>The RFS objective mentions facilitating 'access to and appropriate use of federal and state data.' What does 'access' mean? Is it Direct data downloads through the concierge platform or API connections to existing agency systems or Metadata catalogs with referrals to data custodians? Or other? Please specify.</p>	<p>Data access means supporting users to navigate the data ecosystem and assisting them in finding the data they need and supporting them in their efforts to be able to access the data. Vendors may propose support services consistent with this objective and the rest of the RFS. The data concierge is not expected to host federal/state datasets that can be downloaded.</p>
14	<p>Can ADC provide any information on the allocated funding or anticipated level of effort for this opportunity?</p>	<p>Please see the response to question #1.</p>

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15	Is an initial listing (with accompanying metadata) of all data that will be accessed through the Data Concierge complete, or will part of the design phase of the Data Concierge project be to compile a listing of applicable datasets?	A listing of all the data that a data concierge could provide support for is not available. Vendors can propose the mechanism for how a data concierge service could encompass all relevant datasets.
16	Can you provide an estimate of how many users are expected to interact with the Data Concierge?	The vendor should propose the best solution to meet the objectives stated in the RFS, including current or future demand.
17	In prior RFS, a maximum or target award value has been provided. This allows teams submitting solutions to understand the target LOE for the project scope. Can you please provide a not to exceed or target award value for this RFS?	Please see the response to question #1.
18	In ATT-1, Page 3, <i>Deliverables</i> , bullets 3 and 4 - Bullet 3 states we have 4 months from project award to produce a framework and roadmap. Bullet 4 states we have 6 months from project award to implement the data concierge, a total project duration of 6 months to delivery that only leaves two months for implementation. Did the bullet intend to say delivery of the base NSDS data concierge within 6 months of roadmap completion?	Delivery of the base NSDS data concierge should be within six months of the project award date.
19	The RFS describes a base data concierge to be implemented within six months of contract award. Is this version of the concierge service expected to be fully functional and public facing or for testing purposes?	The base data concierge service should be ready for implementation within six months of the project award date.
20	Do concierge ticket/request service level expectations like hours of operation, response time, resolution time etc., exist and if so, can these be provided?	The vendor should propose the best solution to meet the objectives stated in the RFS, including current or future demand.
21	Are there any existing preferred enterprise level software licenses that should be leveraged like support ticket systems (ServiceNow, etc.), Documentation Repositories (Confluence), Version Control (GitHub) etc.?	The vendor should propose the best solution to meet the objectives stated in the RFS.
22	Should common software licenses like support ticket systems (ServiceNow, etc.), Documentation Repositories (Confluence), Version Control (GitHub) etc. be priced for this response as Overhead Direct Costs (ODC)s?	ODCs stand for Other Direct Costs. If these are overhead costs, they should be included as part of your organization's indirect rates. If they are costs directly associated with the project, they can be proposed as ODCs.
23	Does the ADC have a priority for which Federal Data assets will likely be supported first (Census, NOAA, Public Health Etc.)?	The vendor should propose a mechanism for supporting Federal and state data sources that includes but is not limited to existing resources, such as the Standard Application Process (SAP), the FSRDCs, and agency web pages.
24	Does the ADC have any measures on the total volume or amount the Data Concierge may need to deal with during the first year?	The vendor should propose the best solution to meet the objectives stated in the RFS, including current or future demand.

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25	What technologies, platforms, or tools are currently in place to deliver the required services?	As stated in the RFS, a data concierge service should point users to relevant existing components of the data ecosystem, including the Standard Application Process (SAP), the FSRDCs, data.gov, etc. This is illustrated in the Vision for a Future NSDS . NSDS Demonstration projects currently under development may provide additional services, tools and platforms that a data concierge service could leverage to support users' needs. A list of NSDS Demonstration projects is available here .
26	Would a hybrid Firm Fixed Price (FFP) and Time and Materials (T&M) contract be an acceptable agreement type, if proposed.	A hybrid agreement type would be considered. The specifics can be negotiated if selected for award. If proposing Time and Materials, there will be a not-to-exceed ceiling
27	Please confirm the cost proposal format table on page 3 is illustrative, and can be edited as needed based on the offerors proposed contract type.	The table describes the format and support required with the proposal. If a certain cost element does not apply, it does not need to be included.
28	<p>Details on data sources: Will examples of repositories and DBs be available?</p> <p>a) What are the estimated quantity, number of files, and sizes?</p> <p>b) Will sample content available?</p> <p>c) After award will we have information on data location, repositories, and formats of target data?</p>	<p>Examples of data are mentioned in the RFS and include the Standard Application Process (SAP) and the FSRDCs. They are also included in the Vision for a Future NSDS. Vendors should propose mechanisms to ensure the data concierge service can support user needs, as stated in the RFS.</p>
29	<p>What are the types of data to be leveraged \ ingested?</p> <p>a) What is balance of: Unstructured data files (PDFs, Tiffs, Word, PPT, schematics) and Structured data (DBs, JSON, XML)?</p> <p>b) Will data consist of video and audio files?</p> <p>c) Do files contain properties \ metadata which needs to be searchable? Or do we need to automate the creation of metadata?</p> <p>d) Will a subset of the data be at a classified level?</p>	<p>The data concierge service is expected to connect "data users with federal and state data," not to host the data. As a result, federal and state datasets will not be ingested as part of the development of the data concierge service. The goal is to help users navigate the federal/state data ecosystem and provide services to support data users. An example included in the RFS is: "developing requests for access to restricted data."</p>
30	Impact Level Requirements (IL) for internal (federal gov employee) use-case? Is separate instance expected for support to non-gov users?	A data concierge service should aim to help all data users.
31	Will access be required for external users or general public?	A data concierge service should aim to help all data users.
32	What are the Clearance Level requirements for deployment services?	The vendor should propose a solution that indicates understanding of applications and tools that are developed and deployed in a federal environment.

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33	Are there any examples questions (queries) and topics for data concierge?	The vendor should propose the best solution to meet the objectives stated in the RFS.
34	What are the quantity of queries expected (daily or monthly or annually)?	The vendor should propose the best solution to meet the objectives stated in the RFS, including current or future demand.
35	Does ADC expect proposed solutions in response to PCS-DCS-25 will be based on the proposed models included in the final report for the “Models for a Data Concierge Service DCS-23-N03” project? Or, are offerors free to explore other potential solution models?	The vendor should propose the best solution to meet the objectives stated in the RFS.
36	Are AI driven tools developed or utilized by the offeror required to be FedRamp approved or have an individual Authority to operate in accordance with Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA) and the OMB Circular A-130?	The vendor should propose a solution that indicates understanding of applications and tools that are developed and deployed in a federal environment.
37	Does ADC presume the offeror will “...implement a data concierge service at scale...” utilizing data hosted by the offeror on its secure, cloud-based platform? If yes, are proportionate costs for the implementation and user access as part of the initial use for the proposed data concierge service fully allowable under this opportunity?	See response to question 29. The data concierge service is not expected to host datasets.
38	Is prior experience in the data concierge services space or similar user-focused solution delivery a requirement for this opportunity?	The vendor should propose the best solution to meet the objectives stated in the RFS, including teaming.
39	Due to Memorial Day being observed on May 26, 2025 which is during the proposal draft & submission preparation period, would ADC extend the deadline, as most prospective applicants will be closed for this federally recognized holiday?	The vendor should submit the proposal by the indicated deadline.
40	Is there an incumbent for PCS-DCS-25?	Please refer to the RFS and visit: Awards - ADC America's Datahub Consortium for more information.