

# COMPETITIVE SOURCING/A-76

## *QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS*

### COMPETITIVE SOURCING

#### *What is the President's Competitive Sourcing Initiative?*

The President stated, as part of his Management Agenda, that "Government should be market-based – we should not be afraid of competition, innovation, and choice. I will open government to the discipline of competition." He charged each agency with conducting a review of at least fifty percent of its federal workforce performing commercial activities to determine if any of the activities being performed could be provided by the private sector at less cost to the government. Agencies are being asked to study fifteen percent of their commercial activity inventories by the end of FY 2003.

President Bush's mandate follows the enactment of the Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act of 1998, commonly referred to as the "FAIR Act." This statute requires Federal agencies to develop an annual inventory of all positions that are not inherently governmental, e.g., those positions and activities that could be performed by the private sector. In 2001, each Departmental Element reviewed their activities and identified those FTEs performing functions which were not inherently governmental. As a result of this review, the Department of Energy identified an adjusted level of approximately 6,500 FTEs performing functions throughout the DOE complex that could be performed by a commercial source.

In furtherance of the Administration's policy, DOE will be immediately initiating studies on approximately 1000 FTEs identified in the 2001 review located throughout headquarters and field organizations. These studies will involve formal competitive sourcing reviews and direct conversions under the provisions of Office of Management and Budget Circular A-76, Performance of Commercial Activities.

#### *How does the President's Initiative affect members of the DOE federal workforce?*

While it is still too early to know the impacts with certainty, the DOE federal workforce will be affected. During FY 2002/2003, we will be comparing ways of performing the services under study, including continued use of the DOE workforce, contracts with private firms, or arrangements with other federal agencies. No matter what happens, current DOE employees will have specific rights under any of the possible outcomes, and the Department is committed to ensuring and upholding those rights.

Has the Department already decided to contract out (outsource) functions?

No. A-76 studies will be chartered to define the performance requirements and develop a Performance Work Statement (PWS) for the functions under review. A proposal called a Most Efficient Organization (MEO) will identify the most efficient way the Department's employees can achieve these performance goals. Private contractors and other Federal agencies will be invited to submit proposals based on the PWS. Only after a thorough review of the proposals will a decision be made on whether to retain the function in-house (accept the government's MEO/bid) or outsource these functions based on a comprehensive cost comparison. Ultimately, DOE is looking for the best value/best price service for the U.S. taxpayers.

What is the Department's plan for conducting the A-76 studies?

Functional Area Study Team Leaders will be identified for each major function that will be reviewed. These Team Leads will work with respective organization heads in clarifying which particular positions will be involved in the studies. Most of calendar 2002 will be devoted to the development of a Performance Work Statement and related documents that will detail the functions and workload being reviewed. Functional Teams will undertake actual comparisons of alternative ways of providing the studied services in-house along with the associated costs. By early 2003, DOE expects to solicit proposals from private contractors and other federal agencies to potentially perform the identified services. The final choice on a service provider (in-house, contractor, or another federal agency) will be made in late 2003.

Will there only be one round of studies?

The President's Initiative will continue, with more FTEs performing commercial functions to be studied after this first set. The long-term requirement is to conduct reviews on fifty percent of the Department's inventory of FTEs performing commercial functions that are not inherently governmental. However, no decisions have been made on which functions will be studied in the out years.

How much is the A-76 Review expected to cost?

Approximately \$4 million over the FY 2002/2003 period for the roughly 1000 positions that will be studied (based on an estimate of \$4,000 per position studied).

How much does the Department expect to save?

Based upon historical data, an average of up to 30 percent savings may result from an A-76 competition.

How often does the government typically win the bid?

Recently, about 60% of the competitions have been won by the agency's government provider, but at a lower cost than would have resulted had there been no competition.

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## A-76 GENERAL

What is A-76?

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular No. A-76, Performance of Commercial Activities, was first issued during the Eisenhower Administration. At the core of A-76 is the fundamental precept that government should not compete with the private sector in providing services considered "commercial activities," i.e., work that is not considered inherently governmental and can be provided by the private sector.

The A-76 Circular identifies procedures to be used in conducting managed competitions between the public and private sectors for commercial activities. Ultimately, these competitions determine whether it is more efficient for a function to be performed by the private sector, by an in-house government workforce, or via an inter-service support agreement with another government entity.

Is A-76 the same as privatization?

No. The A-76 process permits the government to compete with private enterprise in the conduct of a commercial activity if the government can do so more economically than the private sector. The government retains ownership and control of the commercial activity; even when contracting-out the activity to the private sector, regardless of the service provider. Privatization, on the other hand, refers to a decision by the government to get out of a given line of business altogether. The Government divests itself of ownership and control of the activity and may turn over assets to the contractor.

How does competitive sourcing differ from outsourcing?

Competitive sourcing is the process for determining whether the private sector or an in-house provider can perform a given commercial activity for the best value to the government. Outsourcing is the actual contracting out of an activity.

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## A-76 PROCESS OVERVIEW

### *What happens in an A-76 Study?*

The A-76 process has several essential steps. The process starts with a public announcement that the government will perform an A-76 cost comparison.

Subsequently, an A-76 Study Team is chartered to review an activity and draft a Performance Work Statement (PWS). The PWS is the heart of the contract solicitation and will outline the tasks that must be accomplished by the service provider. The PWS is similar to a statement of work used by contracting offices to solicit bids for selected activities. The A-76 Study Team also prepares a Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) which is eventually used by the government to gauge the performance of the selected service provider.

A government in-house bid team is established to design and create a comprehensive Management Plan. The Management Plan describes the government's Most Efficient Organization (MEO) that would be employed to provide the needed service(s) detailed in the PWS. The MEO includes estimates on the number and type of government personnel required to perform the work. The In-House Cost Estimate is the MEO's price tag for providing the service and is used as the basis for comparison with the outside offers.

At the same time the in-house offeror is working on its bid (the MEO), a contract solicitation is issued by the Department using the PWS as the core set of requirements that must be met by all outside offerors. Other non-DOE Federal agencies may submit offers, called Inter-Service Support Agreements (ISSA), in response to the solicitation; these offers are evaluated along with the private sector offers.

Once all outside offers are received, they are evaluated and rated by a Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP). The TEP reviews outside proposals using best value guidelines and submits their evaluation to the Source Selection Authority (SSA), the approving official. The SSA then selects the most advantageous offer to compete against the in-house offer.

The Independent Review Official (IRO) performs an Independent Review of the MEO proposal. The IRO is a qualified person from an impartial activity organizationally independent of the function being competed and the group that developed the in-house offer. The IRO reviews the in-house offer to ensure that the data contained in the Government Management Plan reasonably establishes the in-house offeror's ability to perform the requirements of the PWS. The IRO ensures that all costs are noted, fully justified, and calculated in accordance OMB Circular A-76's guidelines.

The actual comparison of costs between the in-house and contract/ISSA offer is the "cost comparison." The government will make its decision between the outside offer (contractor or ISSA) and the inside offeror (MEO) based solely on price. The best outside offeror must beat

the in-house bid by the lesser of ten percent in personnel costs or \$10 million over the performance period to win the competition.

After a tentative cost comparison decision is made, the cost comparison form and all supporting documentation is provided to the affected parties and a public review period begins. During this public review period, the affected parties may submit an appeal of the tentative decision. An Administrative Appeal Process is used to determine the final cost comparison decision. After a final cost comparison decision has been made, implementation of the MEO or conversion to contract occurs.

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## A-76 IMPLEMENTATION AT DOE

### How will the Department determine which functions to review?

Senior management will select functions for the initial studies based on review of each Departmental Element's FAIR Act Inventory submission and a determination of which activities present shorter-term opportunities for deriving efficiencies and costs savings. Additionally, the Department will focus attention on areas of interest to the Administration and the Congress

### How do we know when a function meets the definition of a commercial activity?

A commercial activity is any recurring function that could be provided by the private sector. DOE Elements have self-identified non-inherently governmental functions as part of their FAIR Act Inventory submissions.

### Who conducts the A-76 study?

An A-76 Study Team Leader, with the assistance of the DOE Competitive Sourcing/A-76 Office and A-76 team members, will conduct the study. This team has the responsibility to carry out the A-76 competition. These team members will work either full or part-time on the competition as needed. Representatives from functional areas will work closely with the team to prepare the Performance Work Statement and provide input to the management study. The A-76 process may also be supplemented with experienced contractor support.

### What are the benefits of an A-76 study?

One of the goals of an A-76 study is to define, examine and improve the functions studied and make them more cost-effective. It will also create the measures and systems that will identify which functions are being effectively performed. Accordingly, an A-76 study creates the basis for accountability and competition. It is through competition that innovation, streamlining, reinvention, restructuring and reengineering thrive.

What about work being done at other government agencies in this functional area? Could another government agency actually come in and take over this work?

Yes. OMB Circular No. A-76 allows other federal government entities to bid on the work. In A-76, an offer from another federal agency is called an Inter-Service Support Agreement.

Who monitors the A-76 process?

The DOE Competitive Sourcing/A-76 Office will serve as the corporate sponsor and will monitor all A-76 studies. Additionally, the A-76 process ensures fairness through an independent review process, as well as a defined appeals process.

What safeguards will there be in the selection process to ensure impartiality and objectivity on the part of the government selection body, which might be predisposed to the government or the contractor candidate?

In addition to the protections provided for in the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), the A-76 Circular provides additional safeguards such as the appointment of an Independent Review Officer (IRO) to certify the government's cost estimate. The IRO should be an individual qualified to conduct the review and who is from an impartial activity, organizationally independent of the commercial activity being studied. It is a “check and balance” on the process.

When will the solicitation (request bids/proposals) be issued?

Issuance of a request for proposals occurs when the Performance Work Statement has been completed and approved by the Higher Level Review Authority (typically the Deputy Secretary or his designee).

How will the comparative evaluations of proposals be conducted?

The Performance Work Statement (PWS) defines what is being requested, the performance standards and measures, and time frames required. The procurement will be conducted in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulations and OMB Circular No. A-76. The designated technical evaluation panel will evaluate all contractor proposals and select the most advantageous, considering technical and cost evaluation factors. Then, after all necessary adjustments have been made to ensure that the government's in-house cost estimate and the other offers are based on the same scope of work and performance standards, a contracting officer will review the government's in-house cost estimate and conduct the cost comparison.

What are the criteria/evaluation factors that will be used to analyze and compare proposals?

The contractor's technical and cost proposals and the government's management plan will be evaluated. The government's contract solicitation will clearly define the evaluation criteria.

How will differences in such things as accounting systems, costs, employee benefits, etc., be reconciled or converted into common denominators for comparison purposes?

The Revised Supplemental Handbook to OMB Circular No. A-76 recognizes that the public and private sectors account for costs in different ways. These differences necessitate cost comparison requirements that equalize the systems to reflect the total costs to the government and the taxpayer. Accordingly, the Handbook provides procedures to establish a practical level of consistency. In addition, an IRO certifies the government's cost estimates in writing as being in compliance with the procedures and requirements described in the A-76 Revised Supplemental Handbook.

How is overhead allocation applied to the government's bid under A-76?

The Most Efficient Organization will identify how the government plans to accomplish the work specified in the PWS, including the number and grades of employees. From this data, the cost of labor in the government's offer is determined. Pursuant to OMB Circular No. A-76, the overhead allocation rate currently applied to the government's offer is 12 percent of these labor costs.

Who can compete against the in-house offer?

In a negotiated acquisition, the Source Selection Authority makes a determination among contract and Inter-Service Support Agreement (other agency) offerors who will compete against the in-house offer. There will only be one selected outside offeror that will compete against the in-house offer.

Who makes the decision as to the successful bidder?

The selected source selection authority (SSA) or his/her designee is responsible for determining which entity, private or Most Efficient Organization, is the successful bidder. SSA Officials have not yet been appointed for the studies DOE will be starting.

How will the Department gauge the successful bidder's performance?

A Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) will detail what standards are to be met in the performance of the work. The QASP will be used and administered by government employees to determine if performance is satisfactory.

What is an MEO? How do you determine what makes an organization 'most efficient'?

MEO means the government's Most Efficient Organization, which is the basis for the government's in-house cost estimates. It is the organizational structure, staffing and operating procedures, equipment, transition and inspection plans necessary to carry out the work detailed in the Performance Work Statement. The MEO is developed by the A-76 Study Team, and it may include plans for consolidation, reengineering, personnel reclassification, and other restructuring efforts.

Can employees bid on their own work? If employees can form groups and bid on their own work, don't they have the advantage over a contractor bidding on the same work? Is this fair?

No. Employees cannot bid individually on their own work. However, in essence, the A-76 process already allows employees to bid, as organizations, on their own work through the process of designing a Most Efficient Organization and formulating an In-house Cost Estimate. The procedures in Circular A-76 are designed with safeguards to ensure fairness to all affected parties. There is also the possibility that employees may wish to form their own company and bid on the work. If that were the case, certain government ethics limitations and Federal Acquisition Regulations restrictions would apply and would need to be addressed. Employees should contact their ethics counselor for further information. Headquarters employees should contact the Office of the Assistant General Counsel for General Law (202-586-1522); field employees should contact their servicing Office of Chief Counsel.

What if a potential contractor asks an employee about future employment during the cost comparison or contracting process?

Generally, if a contractor or potential contractor approaches someone regarding employment, the employee should immediately contact his/her ethics counselor for guidance. Headquarters employees should contact the Office of the Assistant General Counsel for General Law (202-586-1522); field employees should contact their servicing Office of Chief Counsel.

How can employees safeguard information that may give prospective contractors an unfair advantage?

During the course of the study, employees should only discuss their job and the nature of their work with those who have a genuine need to know. While the study is underway, prospective contractors may try to find out about the work being conducted through casual conversation and employees may not be aware that a person asking the question is associated with a contractor. In short, everyone should be aware of whom they are talking and why. All persons with any knowledge of the functions under study are obligated to safeguard work related information.



How much information can be released to potential contractors?

In the area of public/private competitions, government employees will likely receive requests for information, some of which may be exempt from disclosure. All employees, whether involved in an A-76 study or not must use caution in releasing information to persons without a "need to know." The unauthorized release of certain types of information, such as source selection information subject to the Procurement Integrity Act, or personal information about employees, subject to the Privacy Act, can subject offending employees to civil and/or criminal penalties, or may result in an unfair competitive advantage to a particular offeror. Unless the requester can obtain the information requested from a publicly available source, such as the Web Page or other publications, he or she should be referred to the Public Affairs Office. If the requester has questions about the A-76 competition or specific records, then they should be referred to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Office.

Are there any other processes for selecting an outside offeror?

The government may make a Direct Conversion decision, in lieu of a Cost Comparison (A-76 Study) in several situations, including when an in-house commercial activity is performed by ten (10) or fewer employees. Other situations are described in the A-76 Supplemental Handbook, Exhibit 1, page 7. Under a Direct Conversion, the agency may prepare a statement of work and a contract solicitation as well as an estimate of the current in-house operating cost. Ultimately, the government will determine if conversion from the in-house provider to a contract offeror is financially prudent. A Direct Conversion generally takes less time than a Cost Comparison since it does not involve the development of an in-house Most Effective Organization proposal.

Is it possible to return an outsourced commercial activity to the government?

The government can return contracted workload to in-house performance if it is later determined that the activities being conducted, or that need to be conducted, are inherently governmental.

What is the role of Federal unions in the process?

The Department will fulfill all collective bargaining obligations throughout the A-76 process. The Department will actively work with its Federal unions in the Competitive Sourcing effort.

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## EMPLOYEE ISSUES

When and how do people performing the work learn they are affected by a cost comparison?

The Department will notify the workforce as soon as Congress is notified of a decision to compete a function.

When will employees know the outcome of the study?

A-76 studies are usually 18 months long but depending on the function, complexity and number of geographical locations involved, studies can take more than 24 months from announcement of candidates to completion. Specific milestone dates will be determined by the A-76 Study Team and will be made available to employees as soon as possible.

*How do employees learn the tentative and final decision?*

In the case of a tentative cost comparison decision, employees and their representatives may submit an appeal during the Public Review Period. After the Public Review Period ends, the Administrative Appeal Authority reviews any appeals and makes a final cost comparison decision. The Department will announce its tentative and final decisions and notify affected parties. In the case of contract decisions, Congressional notification will be made prior to making the formal final cost comparison decision.

*What happens if the government wins the bid?*

If the government wins, action will be taken to implement the Most Efficient Organization (MEO) as it was described in the management study. If the MEO is less than the current number of FTEs performing the function, management will have to look at its options to meet the MEO — e.g. attrition, buyouts, Voluntary Early Retirement Authority, reduction-in-force.

*What will happen to the affected employees?*

If a DOE organization wins the A-76 competition, a reorganization would most likely be required to implement the Most Effective Organization (also see answer above). If a contractor wins the A-76 competition, reduction-in-force (RIF) procedures would likely be necessary to implement the result. In any scenario, placement of adversely affected employees would be made in accordance with federal civil service personnel policies and procedures. To the maximum extent possible, the Department will use available incentives to reduce involuntary separations. In addition, those employees facing separation would be eligible for DOE and Inter-agency Priority Placement Programs and provided maximum outplacement assistance. Employees at all affected sites will be kept fully informed as this process continues.

*What are the criteria for a reduction-in-force (RIF)?*

Generally the criteria for a RIF are:

- lack of work;
- shortage of funds;
- insufficient personnel ceiling; or
- reorganization.

How does a reduction-in-force (RIF) work?

Management has a responsibility to implement RIF procedures when there is a surplus of employees at a particular location and/or a particular line of work.

In implementing a RIF, the agency must establish: Competitive Areas (the organizational and geographical boundaries in which employees compete in a reduction-in-force); Competitive Levels (a group of positions in the same grade and classification series that have similar duties and other requirements); and Retention Registers (a list of competing employees within a competitive level who are grouped by tenure, veteran's preference, and length of service augmented by performance credit). Competing employees are released from Competitive Levels in the inverse order of their retention standing beginning with the employee having the lowest standing. Determinations are made as to whether eligible employees released from a Competitive Level have assignment rights to available positions (e.g., bumping rights or retreating rights).

Management must give affected employees a 60-day advanced written notice, or longer if collective bargaining agreement specifies, before taking any RIF action.

Employees have appeal rights to the Merit Systems Protection Board or under negotiated grievance procedures if a bargaining unit covers them, and the agreement includes reduction-in-force provision.

What compensation can employees receive in connection with a reduction-in-force (RIF)?

Generally, employees separated through RIF procedures are eligible for:

- severance pay;
- payment for any annual leave remaining in the employee's account; and,
- unemployment compensation based on the laws and regulations applicable in the State in which employment is terminated.

Employees can also receive career transition assistance (e.g., outplacement and job search assistance).

What role does the union play in a reduction-in-force (RIF)?

While agency management has a right to determine if a RIF is necessary, unions must be notified as far in advance as possible and given an opportunity to represent affected employees in the bargaining union and to propose methods for alleviating adverse impacts.

How much time is there before the impacts occur on employees?

The timing of transition depends on the specific transition plan. Transition begins immediately to contract, Inter-Service Support Agreement or Most Efficient Organization performance once the final cost comparison decision is announced. Personnel impacts begin as soon as there is a final cost comparison decision. To the extent possible, voluntary actions will be used to reduce the need for involuntary actions. In all RIF actions, the Department will provide at least a 60-day notice to all adversely impacted employees. However, the Department will continue to aggressively pursue internal and external placements in other Federal jobs via the Priority Placement Program to minimize the impacts on employees.

If there is a Contract or Inter-Service Support Agreement (ISSA) decision, can employees or their representatives' appeal?

Yes. Upon the announcement of the tentative cost comparison decision, the A-76 Administrative Appeal Process begins. This process is available to employees and their representatives as well as contractors who have submitted formal offers. Appeals must be submitted within 20 calendar days after the public announcement (or within 30 calendar days if the cost comparison is particularly complex). The Administrative Appeal Authority should make a final decision within 30 days of receipt of the appeal. The tentative decision becomes a final cost comparison decision upon the resolution of the appeal.

Who is the Administrative Appeal Authority?

The Administrative Appeal Authority is the official designated by the agency to serve as an appeal authority for that appeal. This individual must be at the Assistant Secretary or equivalent level, in accordance with OMB Circular A-76, paragraph 9a.

If a contractor ends up winning the competition, how will the people switch from working for the government to working for the contractor? Will displaced A-76 workers have a right of first refusal to any resultant jobs with the selected contractor?

If a contractor were to win the competition, the contract will require that adversely affected government employees receive the right of first refusal for available jobs for which they are qualified. The transition plan will stipulate provisions for determination of right of first refusal for adversely affected government employees.

What about employees who don't get jobs with a contractor? What happens to them?

Any employee separated from DOE as a result of an A-76 competition, regardless of whether it goes private or public, will be provided full placement/outplacement services. The DOE Priority Placement Program (PPP) will be available to eligible employees. The Department of Energy may request Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) and use of Voluntary Separation

Incentive Payments (VSIP) to reduce or eliminate involuntary separations, and will pursue aggressive placement efforts for affected employees.

What is the Right of First Refusal?

It is a contract term, based on a statutory mandate, that requires the successful contractor to offer government employees, who have been or will be adversely affected or separated as a result of award of the competed work, employment openings under the contract, in positions for which they are qualified, if that employment is consistent with post-government employment conflict of interest standards. Employees are afforded the right of first refusal as stated in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 52.207-3 - The Right of First Refusal of Employment. The contractor shall give government employees who have been or will be adversely affected or separated as a result of award of this contract the right of first refusal for employment openings under the contract in positions for which they are qualified. If there are no employment openings, there can be no right of first refusal.

If a contractor wins the bid, can employees accept a job with the contractor under first right of refusal and remain in the Priority Placement Program [PPP]?

Yes. Accepting a job with the winning contractor will not waive an employee's right to remain in the PPP.

In hiring displaced A-76 workers, will the selected contractor be required to offer a compensation/benefits package comparable to the government's?

No. Under Circular A-76, there is no requirement that the selected contractor be required to include specifics in compensation or benefits. Adversely affected employees only have the right of first refusal for available contractor jobs for which they are qualified.

If a contractor wins the bid and the affected employee declines a job with the contractor under right of first refusal, will they be entitled to unemployment benefits?

This would be determined by the state in which the employee files for unemployment benefits. Servicing personnel offices can provide employees with more information on unemployment benefits.

If VERA is offered, will it be before or after RIF notices have been sent out?

If authority to offer Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) is requested and approved, the VERA window would occur before reduction-in-force notices are sent out to affected employees.

What effect will the A-76 competition have on employees in term and temporary positions?

If the government is successful in the A-76 competition, the Most Efficient Organization will determine the number and types of positions retained to accomplish the work. If a contractor is successful, personnel serving in temporary positions cannot be offered the right of first refusal. Employees occupying term positions may be offered the right of first refusal for any available position for which they are qualified.

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## CONTRACTOR ISSUES

Will there the same performance requirements for the government and the contractor bidders?

Yes. The Performance Work Statement (PWS) will define the contract requirements. The contractor and the government will be submitting bids based on the requirements stated in the PWS. The requirements will be the same for both the contractor and government. The PWS will express contractual requirements in terms of desired performance and outputs; in most cases, it will not prescribe the methods for accomplishing the work. Therefore, some local instructions, policies and guidance that are currently used in performing the work may or may not be incorporated into the PWS, or may be incorporated in a manner that makes their use elective. In those cases, both the Most Efficient Organization and the private sector offeror will be able to decide how to accomplish the work, which may or may not include use of current policies and instructions.

How long will the contract(s) run?

Contract duration will be determined as part of the acquisition planning process.

Would the contractor be subject to the same regulations and constraints as in-house personnel in performing the functions?

Both the contractor and government personnel must comply with the requirements in the PWS.

Will a contractor's performance be held to the same standards as government employees?

Yes. If a contractor wins the A-76 competition, its performance will be monitored under the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP), which is created by the government prior to award. The QASP is the basis by which Federal employees will supervise in-house (government) performance or monitor contract performance to ensure that the standards of the PWS are met.

*If the contractor wins the bid, how will the interface between the contractor and the government work?*

The Performance Work Statement will define the work required under the contract and identify interfaces between the contractor and the government. The contractor will be required to explain how these interfaces will work.

*What if the contractor wins the bid and then cannot accomplish the work?*

Contractors submitting offers to perform the work specified in the Performance Work Statement must clearly identify how they plan to accomplish the work. This information is closely scrutinized to determine if it meets the solicitation's standards and is feasible. All offers are subjected to this in-depth evaluation. The contractor's performance will be monitored according to the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan. In the unlikely event that a contractor should fail and the contract is terminated, there are numerous contingency measures that may be taken, including a re-procurement action.

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## SOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Where can more information on Competitive Sourcing be obtained?

For additional help or answers to questions not addressed here or on the Competitive Sourcing/A-76 Office Website ([www.ma.mbe.doe.gov/A-76](http://www.ma.mbe.doe.gov/A-76)), employees can contact their first line supervisor, servicing personnel office, the Competitive Sourcing Hotline (202-586-1761), or the Competitive Sourcing E-Mail Address (A76@hq.doe.gov).