

This is a running list of questions received and answered prior to release of the ORNL RFPs for staff augmentation services. Questions related directly to the RFP will be answered at the pre-solicitation and pre-proposal meetings.

General Basic Ordering Agreement (BOA) Details

1. At some time, can you provide more details on the labor categories for each Basic Ordering Agreement (BOA) for assembling a team?
Answer: Yes, this will be discussed at the pre-bid meeting and each statement of work (SOW) will have examples of labor categories.
2. What is the expected annual value?
Answer: The estimated range is \$5M - \$8M annually for each BOA. The maximum for each BOA for the base 2 years plus option year will be <\$25M.
3. What will be the duration of the new BOAs? Are they 5-year agreements?
Answer: Each will be a 2-year base with one option year.
4. Is there going to be a max ceiling for each of the 4 BOAs?
Answer: The estimated range is \$5M - \$8M annually for each BOA. The maximum for each BOA for the base 2 years plus option year will be <\$25M.
5. How will you handle sponsor by-name requests for services under this model?
Answer: We are not certain of the meaning of this question. If this refers to individuals identified by ORNL (such as retirees), the solicitation will address this scenario.
6. Can you provide a list of all existing BOAs incumbent contractors under the four categories?
Answer: It is not our standard practice to provide lists of incumbents. We are doing business with around 80 suppliers currently across the four categories.
7. Did ORNL consider a Managed Service Provider model?
Answer: We benchmarked commercial industry and government and developed this strategy based on ORNL's specific needs and requirements. We did evaluate a traditional Managed Service Provider as an alternative.
8. Will both Fixed Price and "staff aug" tasks be issued under the BOAs?
Answer: Yes.
9. How long after RFP release will the proposals be due?
Answer: This will be answered in each solicitation. Generally, proposal development time is expected to be 6 weeks. We recognize that more time may be required and will consider due date extensions after the RFP is released.

10. If we have a current employee on a subcontract that ends prior to the new BOA's being awarded (i.e. contract ends in Feb., but BOA isn't awarded until May). Will there be an opportunity to extend until the new BOA if employee is still needed or will there be a gap until the new BOA is awarded?

Answer: We won't have a gap in service, but because each situation is unique, we can't generalize an answer. For all current subcontracts or task orders, contact the cognizant UT-Battelle Procurement Officer. The Procurement Officer will address any needed actions on the orders they administer.

11. How is a contractor to know exactly which of the 4 BOAs their current work will fall under in the future?

- Answer: The solicitations for the BOA's will provide additional detail regarding what is included in each. At a high level:
 - **Project Management/Business** is traditional project management and business functions. Administrative assistants are in this scope. Project manager, project assistant, project controls analyst, etc. Procurement, finance, accounting, HR, auditors, etc.
 - **Engineering** includes all engineering, design, and drafting functions (except software engineering)
 - **IT** includes all traditional IT functions.
 - **Science and Technical Support** covers research assistants, as well as ES&H, quality, and technician type labor categories.

12. Is software development under IT or engineering?

Answer: Software Development labor categories, such as software engineers, will be included in the scope of the Information Technology solicitation. Specific software development work is often deliverable-based and would not be within the scope of these staff augmentation procurements.

13. Will the BOA winners have to perform 50% of the work?

Answer: To meet the requirements of a set-aside, at least 50% of the cost of performance for personnel shall be for employees of the small business (or service-disabled veteran-owned small business (SDVOSB) for the IT BOA awardee). Under SBA rules, the small business prime contractor can utilize similarly situated subcontractors to meet these performance requirements. A similarly situated subcontractor is a subcontractor that has the same required size and small business program status as the prime contractor.

14. Wasn't there a BOA in late 2020 for Architectural and Engineering (AE) services, is that null and void or still open?

Answer: AE services are deliverable-based and therefore not within the scope of these staff augmentation procurements.

15. We have submitted recently for an AE BOA. Where does this solicitation fall in the current strategy?

Answer: AE services are deliverable-based and therefore not within the scope of these staff augmentation procurements.

16. What are the NAICS codes?

Answer: This will be answered at each pre-solicitation meeting.

17. Will a recently awarded BOA, last November, be honored?

Answer: Subcontracts and task orders will not be ended early under this strategy. However, periods of performance will not be extended. Following implementation, new task orders will not be issued under existing BOAs.

18. How does the small business office fit in the process?

Answer: The ORNL Small Business office is a resource and advocate for small businesses navigating any ORNL procurement action.

19. When, how, and what criteria will be utilized for determining hire vs subcontract?

Answer: These BOAs are intended for labor needs with a duration of 18 months or less. Each new requirement for labor will be evaluated against a set of internal criteria and ORNL will take the action that supports our strategy for obtaining labor.

20. How soon after the pre-solicitation meeting will the RFPs be released?

Answer: This will be answered in the Pre-Solicitation meeting.

21. I am very curious about future opportunities for technical services, that are best provided as a task or one-time project basis, such as, Environmental Assessment, an engineering design, a Civil Survey, specialty study.

Answer: Statement of work-based actions with firm deliverables are not part of this procurement.

22. We are new vendors to ORNL and are still understanding the process. If each BOA is awarded to one company, where do smaller sub-contractors/vendors fit in?

Answer: This is a new acquisition strategy for ORNL, so whether a new or existing supplier, everyone is getting up to speed on the new approach at the same time. In our benchmarking we found that many successful awardees were teamed suppliers that brought the highest value to the table. To be clear, we do not favor one approach or the other and will evaluate each offer on its merits against the evaluation criteria in the solicitation. To facilitate teaming opportunities, we will share the attendee list of the pre-solicitation meetings.

50-Mile Radius

23. Can you elaborate further on the 50-mile criteria and which Basic Ordering Agreements (BOAs) they will pertain to?

Answer: The 50 mile radius will apply to: Project Management/Business, Engineering, and Science and Technical Support. The 50 mile radius will NOT apply to IT.

24. Is the 50 miles radius a hard requirement?

Answer: Yes.

25. How do you define “presence” within 50 miles? Office space, employees in the area etc.....?

Answer: We define “presence” as having a staffed and operating office within a 50-mile radius of ORNL that is ready to support the BOA at the time of award. The solicitation will have details on how this will be evaluated.

26. Can a business that does not have a presence within 50 miles of the laboratory be part of a larger BOA team if they are not the prime contractor?

Answer: Yes, subject to the Limitations On Subcontracting requirements of each award.

27. Wanted to get clarification on the 50-mile radius requirement. If a contractor has a satellite office within the 50 miles does that meet the requirement? Does the contractor employee need to reside in the 50-mile radius?

Answer:

We define “presence” as having a staffed and operating office within a 50 mile radius of ORNL that is ready to support the BOA at the time of award. The solicitation will have details on how this will be evaluated. Distance limitations do not apply to employees of the Seller.

IT BOA

28. Will ORNL still get service-disabled veteran-owned small business (SDVOSB)(Small business credit) if the awarded SDVOSB is acquired by a LB or they size out during the contract period?

Answer: The normal rules and regulations will apply for situations like this one. Suppliers do not “size out” during the period of performance of an agreement. If the small business is acquired by a different company it will be at ORNL’s discretion whether to proceed with the new supplier via a novation or follow another course of action.

29. Will there be a Foreign Ownership, Control or Influence (FOCI) requirement for clearances under the IT Basic Ordering Agreement (BOA)?

Answer: Yes, the proposal must demonstrate the offeror’s ability to obtain a favorable FOCI determination. However, a currently active FOCI is not required to bid.

30. What happens if a reseller has recently responded to a standalone RFP for IT staffing services or IT Training services?

Answer:

Subcontracts and task orders will not be ended early under this strategy. However, periods of performance will not be extended. Following implementation, new task orders will not be issued under existing BOAs. Training services are typically a deliverable-based subcontract and would not be part of this procurement.

31. With the many IT full-service providers in the local area, can you further explain why you believe the IT BOA does not need to require the company to be within a 50-mile radius?

Answer: ORNL establishes set-asides based on its small business subcontracting goals and performance.

32. The only SDVO small business that performs work outside of 50 miles from ORNL is in Huntsville, AL. If it’s set aside for an SB outside of Oak Ridge, why would any local SDVO bid on the opportunity?

Answer: There are many SDVO small businesses that provide IT services across the country. Any SDVO that is interested in this opportunity is welcomed and encouraged to submit a proposal on this procurement, including any local SDVOs.

33. For existing IT contractors, will there be a “badge swap”, or will this be a BOA for future projects only?

Answer: We think this question is regarding transitioning workers from one BOA to another. This will be addressed in the solicitation.

34. Why limit and restrict IT to only Disabled Veteran owned? That cuts a lot of small companies out of contention.

Answer: ORNL establishes set-asides based on its small business subcontracting goals and performance.

35. Was market research conducted to make the determination to solicit the IT BOA as SDVOSB?

Answer: Yes.

36. If there are 4 procurement awards. Looking at the one for IT. Then does that mean 1 company will be similar to a Prime and responsible for fulfilling all of Oak Ridge’s staff augmentation needs? Or there could be several IT staffing firms able to serve?

Answer: There will be one awardee for each of the four BOAs. How that awardee fulfills the requirements of the BOA will be based on the proposal offered. As has already been noted, firms are able to team together for this requirement.

Engineering BOA

37. If there is only 1 awardee per category how will the engineering BOA be awarded. I find it difficult to see one engineering company taking on all of the capabilities of Oak Ridge from transportation to nuclear fission work. Also, if 1 company is awarded the revenue from that award alone would bump them out of a small business category (roughly 35 million per procurement) small businesses are supposed to be under 7 million in revenue per year. Am I interpreting this incorrectly?

Answer: The SBA publishes rules for determining a business’s size status, It is up to each individual business owner to evaluate whether taking on new work will change their size classification and if so, how that fits in their own business growth strategy.

Project Management and Business BOA

38. Is the PM/Business Support a set-aside. What services are expected to be included?

Answer: Yes, it is a small business set-aside. Project Management/Business is traditional project management and business functions. Administrative assistants are in this scope.

39. When is the project management and business BOA solicitation expected to be released?

Answer: As early as February 2021.

40. Does only the prime small business have to be local?

Answer: The company awarded the BOA must be local.

18-Month Limitation

41. Will ORNL hire the small business person after 18 months if they are still needed? What if they are part time?
Answer: If a worker is needed for more than 18 months ORNL will hire for that position. All hiring is accomplished through a job posting and evaluation of candidates.
42. Is the contract length of 18 months inclusive of base year and option years?
Answer: These are two separate items: 1) the BOA's base term will be for 2 years with a one-year option and 2) any staff member provided will be limited to an 18-month term of service.
43. You have addressed the advantages of the combined BOA approach. What are the advantages of the 18-month cap on the contingent workforce?
Answer: This is an internal business decision made by ORNL based on our strategy for executing work. We plan to use contingent workers for short-term needs and hire employees for longer-term needs.
44. It sounds like at the end of the 18-month cap ORNL will want to change transition staff to ORNL permanent staff. Is that accurate?
Answer: No If a position needs to be filled by an ORNL employee, hiring is accomplished through a job posting and evaluation of candidates.
45. If the subcontractor has not finished his task in 18 months, can we get an exception to extend the subcontract (like engineers' time)?
Answer: No.
46. ORNL has described a scenario in which contingent (i.e. BOA) staff can be assigned for a maximum of 18 months, and then must be away for 6 months before returning to the assignment. During the 6 month "away" period, can the staff be working on another contract or contingent task at ORNL, or are they not allowed to work an ORNL activity during that time? We ask because the new 18-month cap on continuous work for contingent staff presents small businesses with a significant challenge.
Answer: During the 6-month "away" period the person could not work under another one of the staff augmentation BOAs for UT-Battelle. There are no restrictions on workers performing other work, such as under a separate fixed priced subcontract.
- Small business options are to release staff from employment after 18 months and find new staff (creating a greater challenge in hiring as "temp" work, creating a continual hiring loop, and increasing HR costs which are then passed on in the form of higher rates)
 - IF alternate employment options are available (very low probability for SB), SB's may retain staff.
 - Consider the potential need to increase rates to cover 24 months of employment over an 18-month period

- d. Given these challenges and options, what is ORNL's vision for how small businesses are expected to handle the new 18-month cap rule on contingent staff?

We appreciate this feedback and these concerns are noted. ORNL will evaluate offers and award the BOAs based on the source selection strategy. In all BOAs, technical factors will be of higher importance than price.