

2. CONTRACT NUMBER	3. SOLICITATION NUMBER TIB-2008-R-001	4. TYPE OF SOLICITATION <input type="checkbox"/> SEALED BID (IFB) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEGOTIATED (RFP)	5. DATE ISSUED 4/30/2008
--------------------	--	--	-----------------------------

7. ISSUED BY Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board 1250 H Street, N.W., Suite 200 Washington, DC 20005	8. ADDRESS OFFER TO (If other than Item 7)
--	--

NOTE: In sealed bid solicitations "offer" and "offeror" mean "bid" and "bidder".

**SOLICITATION**

9. Sealed offers in original and 5 copies for furnishing the supplies or services in the Schedule will be received at the place specified in Item 8, or if handcarried, in the depository located in Block 7 until 04:00 local time 6/30/2008  
(Hour) (Date)

CAUTION - LATE Submissions, Modifications, and Withdrawals: See Section L, Provision No. 52.214-7 or 52.215-1. All offers are subject to all terms and conditions contained in this solicitation.

10. FOR INFORMATION CALL:	A. NAME Robert Battersby	B. TELEPHONE (NO COLLECT CALLS) AREA CODE NUMBER EXT. 202 942-1693	C. E-MAIL ADDRESS RBatter@tsp.gov
---------------------------	-----------------------------	--	--------------------------------------

**11. TABLE OF CONTENTS**

(X)	SEC.	DESCRIPTION	PAGE(S)	(X)	SEC.	DESCRIPTION	PAGE(S)
PART I - THE SCHEDULE				PART II - CONTRACT CLAUSES			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A	SOLICITATION/CONTRACT FORM	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I	CONTRACT CLAUSES	25-30
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B	SUPPLIES OR SERVICES AND PRICES/COSTS	2-3	PART III - LIST OF DOCUMENTS, EXHIBITS AND OTHER ATTACH.			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C	DESCRIPTION/SPECS./WORK STATEMENT	4-16	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	J	LIST OF ATTACHMENTS	31
	D	PACKAGING AND MARKING		PART IV - REPRESENTATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	E	INSPECTION AND ACCEPTANCE	16	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	K	REPRESENTATIONS, CERTIFICATIONS AND OTHER STATEMENTS OF OFFERORS	31-36
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	F	DELIVERIES OR PERFORMANCE	16-17	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	L	INSTRS., CONDS., AND NOTICES TO OFFERORS	36-41
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G	CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION DATA	17-20	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	M	EVALUATION FACTORS FOR AWARD	41-47
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H	SPECIAL CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS	20-25				

**OFFER (Must be fully completed by offeror)**

NOTE: Item 12 does not apply if the solicitation includes the provisions at 52.214-16, Minimum Bid Acceptance Period.

12. In compliance with the above, the undersigned agrees, if this offer is accepted within \_\_\_\_\_ calendar days (60 calendar days unless a different period is inserted by the offeror) from the date for receipt of offers specified above, to furnish any or all items upon which prices are offered at the price set opposite each item, delivered at the designated point(s), within the time specified in the schedule.

13. DISCOUNT FOR PROMPT PAYMENT (See Section I, Clause No. 52.232-8)	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 CALENDAR DAYS (%)	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 CALENDAR DAYS (%)	<input type="checkbox"/> 30 CALENDAR DAYS (%)	CALENDAR DAYS (%)
---	---	---	---	-------------------

14. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF AMENDMENTS (The offeror acknowledges receipt of amendments to the SOLICITATION for offerors and related documents numbered and dated):	AMENDMENT NO.	DATE	AMENDMENT NO.	DATE

15A. NAME AND ADDRESS OF OFFEROR	CODE	FACILITY	16. NAME AND TITLE OF PERSON AUTHORIZED TO SIGN OFFER (Type or print)
----------------------------------	------	----------	---

15B. TELEPHONE NUMBER AREA CODE NUMBER EXT.	15C. CHECK IF REMITTANCE ADDRESS IS DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE - ENTER SUCH ADDRESS IN SCHEDULE. <input type="checkbox"/>	17. SIGNATURE	18. OFFER DATE
--	--	---------------	----------------

**AWARD (To be completed by Government)**

19. ACCEPTED AS TO ITEMS NUMBERED	20. AMOUNT	21. ACCOUNTING AND APPROPRIATION
-----------------------------------	------------	----------------------------------

22. AUTHORITY FOR USING OTHER THAN FULL AND OPEN COMPETITION: <input type="checkbox"/> 10 U.S.C. 2304(c) ) <input type="checkbox"/> 41 U.S.C. 253(c) ( )	23. SUBMIT INVOICES TO ADDRESS SHOWN IN (4 copies unless otherwise specified) <span style="float: right;">ITEM <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">▶</span></span>
---	---

24. ADMINISTERED BY (If other than Item 7) CODE	25. PAYMENT WILL BE MADE BY CODE
---	----------------------------------

26. NAME OF CONTRACTING OFFICER (Type or print)	27. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  (Signature of Contracting Officer)	28. AWARD DATE
---	--	----------------

# Part I - The Schedule

## Section B - Supplies or Services and Prices/Costs

### B.1. COST OF BASE YEAR AND OPTIONS

The services listed in Section C below of this contract are priced on the basis of a transitional period from current contractor, a three-year base period, and three one-year options. The contractor shall insert prices below for each period of performance listed.

Transitional Period (Date of Award through March 3, 2009)	
0001 Call Center Operations Cost	_____
0002 Fee	_____
Total Transitional Period Costs & Fee	_____
Base Year One (March 4, 2009 through March 3, 2010)	
0001 Call Center Operations Cost	_____
0002 Fee	_____
Total Base Year One Costs and Fee	_____
Base Year Two (March 4, 2010 through March 3, 2011)	
0001 Call Center Operations Cost	_____
0002 Fee	_____
Total Base Year One Costs and Fee	_____
Base Year Three (March 4, 2011 through March 3, 2012)	
0001 Call Center Operations Cost	_____
0002 Fee	_____
Total Base Year One Costs and Fee	_____
Option Year One (March 4, 2012 through March 3, 2013)	
0001 Call Center Operations Cost	_____
0002 Fee	_____
Total Option Year One Costs and Fee	_____
Option Year Two (March 4, 2013 through March 3, 2014)	
0001 Call Center Operations Cost	_____
0002 Fee	_____
Total Option Year Two Costs and Fee	_____
Option Year Three (March 4, 2014 through March 3, 2015)	
0001 Call Center Operations Cost	_____
0002 Fee	_____
Total Option Year 3 Costs and Fee	_____
<b>Total (Transitional Period, Base Period, and All Option Years including fee)</b>	_____

### B.2 Travel

Estimated travel expenses shall be shown separately. Travel expenses for contractor personnel must have prior Agency approval and will be reimbursed in accordance with FAR 31.205-

46, Travel Costs, and in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations at 41 C.F.R. Part 301.

### B.3. Agency Travel

Estimated travel for Agency employees to the proposed call center site will be added to proposed costs and fees for evaluation purposes. The Agency anticipates, at a minimum, 8 trips per year by a two-person team to the call center site selected by the contractor. Travel costs to this relatively nearby call center are generally less than \$5,000 per year. In order to fulfill its fiduciary duty to the participants and beneficiaries of the TSP, the Agency will evaluate offers including reasonable agency travel costs. The Agency will construct travel assuming the agency office in Washington, D.C. as the point of trip origination and conclusion. Airfares will be calculated using the travel costs negotiated by GSA for its "Airline City Pairs" program which can be found at <http://apps.fss.gsa.gov/citypairs/search/>. In those instances where no city pair exists, a 14-day nonrefundable fare will be used for estimating purposes. Hotel costs and meals will be calculated using the established per diem rates which can be found at <http://www.gsa.gov>. Car rental rates will be calculated using midsize vehicle rate. For shorter distances, travel will be calculated at the established Privately Owned Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement rate found at <http://www.gsa.gov>. All travel will be assumed to occur during normal business hours, however, longer trips involving hours beyond normal business hours will have those additional hours included at the Agency average hourly locality rate established as a GS-13, Step 5 for Washington D.C. (rate table located at [http://www.opm.gov/oca/08tables/html/dcb\\_h.asp](http://www.opm.gov/oca/08tables/html/dcb_h.asp)).

### B.4. Transition Costs

Estimated transition costs for Agency employees providing training and information technology support changes will be added to proposed costs and fees for evaluation purposes. These costs will consist of employees' hourly rates for each hour worked on the transition and travel costs associated with the transition. Travel costs will be calculated in accordance with Section B.3. Agency Travel.

## Section C - Description/Specifications/Statement of Work

### Part A - Introduction

A.1. Introduction. The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (Agency) administers a retirement savings and investment plan for Federal employees and members of the uniformed services called the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). The TSP was established by the Federal Employees' Retirement System Act of 1986 (FERSA), and is codified primarily at 5 U.S.C. §§ 8351 and 8401-8479. The TSP offers its participants the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private sector corporations offer their employees under 401(k) plans. The TSP currently has 3.9 million participants, with assets of over \$220 billion.

A.2. Background. The TSP program is currently serviced through two call centers run by two different contractors. Each center handles approximately 50% of the telephone traffic during core hours and 100% of the traffic during its designated non-core hours. One center is situated in Frostburg, Maryland, and is operated by InfoSpherix. The other is located in Clintwood, VA, and is operated by SI International. The center in Frostburg, MD began operations on March 4, 2004, and is under contract until March 3, 2009.

A.3. Purpose of Statement of Work. This statement of work defines the requirements for the services currently performed in Frostburg. Included with the call center functions are the closely related functions of responding to written communications (e-messaging and paper) and providing fulfillment services related to participant inquiries. In times of high volumes or disaster recovery situations, the call center may also provide basic data entry support for forms processing.

A.4. Business continuity requirement. In addition to the functions described in A.3, the Agency requires this parallel call center to provide coverage of all calls and related transactions in the event of a disaster that affects the Clintwood, VA site. Consequently, in order to ensure that this parallel call center is not susceptible to the same weather-related or other conditions that could halt operations at the Clintwood call center, it must be located at least 250 miles from Clintwood, VA.

## Part B - Scope

B.1. The Agency is soliciting proposals from qualified firms possessing the background and expertise necessary to provide external call center support services. The Agency is looking for an Offeror that will provide adequate telephone coverage (12 hours a day, Monday through Friday) while maintaining a superior service level, strong customer service, and accurate, timely reporting.

B.2. The Agency will use this call center to complement current services in a parallel operation. Therefore, the Agency is seeking an Offeror that can provide experienced and professional call center agents. Under this contract, the agents, designated as participant service representatives (PSRs), will respond to incoming calls from participants, beneficiaries, and other third parties that concern (but are not limited to):

- Account Maintenance
- Loan Issuances and Repayments
- Withdrawal Information
- Service Requests (e.g., transaction processing, fulfillment inquiries)

Although first call resolution is desired, in some instances, call center personnel must research the participant's account to determine the resolution of the problem and call backs are required.

B.3. The four most common subcategories of call types include:

- Withdrawal questions (both in-service and post-employment) - 35%
- Loan questions (application and repayment)- 27%
- Account information/status - 20%
- Investment information (investment advice is not provided) - 2%

B.4. Information about the TSP and its benefits, operations, and communication materials can be found on the TSP Web site, [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov). The PSR Application Training Manual which is included as Attachment E of this Request for Proposal provides an excellent overview of the various functions of the PSRs and the IT applications, primarily the PSR application and imaging/workflow application, which support the PSRs in their work.

**Part C - Description/Specifications/Work Statement**

C.1. Questionnaire for External Call Center Services. Offerors must respond to all portions of the Questionnaire for External Call Center Services, Attachment A, thereby providing a comprehensive business solution to the Agency. If an Offeror believes that its capabilities are limited to specific portions of the solicitation's requirements, the Offeror should so state. However, this will adversely affect its chances for award.

C.2. General information

C.2.a. On a regular basis, Offerors are expected to handle incoming calls and related outgoing follow-up calls, outgoing customer satisfaction survey calls, e-messaging, and manual fulfillment requests generated by calls and correspondence.

C.2.b. Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System. All inbound calls are first presented to an IVR system that provides self service options for plan participants. Past history indicates that 35% to 40% of this initial volume is contained within the IVR system, with the remaining 60% to 65% of callers opting out for PSR (phone agent) support. The Agency will be providing and maintaining the IVR system hardware and software for this application.

C.2.c. Call volumes related to contract period. The *transition period* begins at the time of award and ends on March 3, 2009. During the final three months of this period, the Offeror will incrementally assume the handling of calls. During the transition period, Offerors are expected to handle 20% of the TSP's total call volume during core and designated non-core hours for December 2008, 30% for January 2009, and 40% for February 2009. Call volume estimates for this time period are provided below:

Month	Estimated Total Call Volume to Agents	% of Program Traffic to Offeror	Total Call Volume to Offeror	Average Handle Time (minutes)
December 2008	192,405	20%	38,401	7.5
January 2009	233,287	30%	69,986	7.0
February 2009	174,751	40%	69,900	6.5

The contract's *period of performance* begins March 4, 2009. Call volume estimates for the first twelve months of this contract

are included in the table below - note that all of this volume is post-IVR, and therefore represents calls that must be answered by a "live" PSR (phone agent). (See C.3. for information about core and designated hours of operations and associated volumes.)

Month	Estimated Total Call Volume to Agents	% of Program Traffic to Offeror	Total Call Volume to Offeror	Average Handle Time (minutes)
March 2009	192,025	50%	96,013	5.5
April 2009	191,213	50%	95,607	5.5
May 2009	216,704	50%	108,352	5.5
June 2009	210,948	50%	105,474	5.5
July 2009	218,927	50%	109,463	5.5
August 2009	225,425	50%	112,712	5.5
September 2009	178,141	50%	89,071	5.5
October 2009	224,773	50%	112,387	5.5
November 2009	200,622	50%	100,311	5.5
December 2009	200,101	50%	100,051	5.5
January 2010	242,619	50%	121,309	5.5
February 2010	181,741	50%	90,871	5.5

Under normal operating circumstances, the Offeror will be expected to handle only that volume indicated in the column labeled "Total Call Volume to Offeror". The Offeror must, however, be able to handle total program traffic (as indicated in the column labeled "Estimated Total Call Volume to Agents") within 24 hours of notification of a disaster or service interruption at the Clintwood site. The call center may also be asked to handle additional volumes on an *ad hoc* basis if the other call center is conducting training or other activities that will reduce the number of agents available to take calls. The courtesy will also be extended to this center. The above volume estimates are based on past experience and may change due to the implementation of new programs and services in the future.

For the remaining two years of the base contract and the three one-year renewable options of this contract, the Offeror should assume an annual growth rate of 6 percent and should anticipate handling 50 percent of the total program traffic.

C.2.d. Performance Standards. The Offeror is expected to answer 90% of the calls offered from the IVR System within 20 seconds (telephone service factor), and 2% or less of the phone calls should receive a busy signal. The full list of performance standards is provided in Attachment B.

C.3. Days and Hours of Operations.

C.3.a. Days of Operations. The call center is open from Monday through Friday. The estimated percent of volume received by day is:

Day of Week	Percent of Traffic
Monday	24.99%
Tuesday	20.79%
Wednesday	19.13%
Thursday	18.02%
Friday	17.07%

C.3.b. Hours of Operations. The operation is currently open from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. eastern time, but each contractor works only a portion of this time. For this contract, the Offeror will work from 9:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m.; core hours are 9:00 to 6:00. Current call volume percents by interval throughout the day are:

Time Interval Beginning at	Avg. Percent of Total Daily Phone Traffic	Percent of interval traffic to Offeror
7:00	0.74%	0%
7:30	1.02%	0%
8:00	1.92%	0%
8:30	2.72%	0%
9:00	3.73%	50%
9:30	4.30%	50%
10:00	5.06%	50%
10:30	5.43%	50%
11:00	5.53%	50%
11:30	5.50%	50%
12:00	5.25%	50%
12:30	5.25%	50%
1:00	5.10%	50%
1:30	5.04%	50%
2:00	5.01%	50%
2:30	4.95%	50%

Time Interval Beginning at	Avg. Percent of Total Daily Phone Traffic	Percent of interval traffic to Offeror
3:00	4.97%	50%
3:30	4.88%	50%
4:00	4.61%	50%
4:30	4.06%	50%
5:00	3.23%	90%
5:30	2.80%	90%
6:00	2.20%	100%
6:30	1.85%	100%
7:00	1.55%	100%
7:30	1.31%	100%
8:00	1.06%	100%
8:30	0.93%	100%

C.4. Holidays. All calls and transactions are handled Monday through Friday, with the exception of the following holidays (as observed by the Federal Government):

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King's Birthday
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

C.5. E-Messaging activities. The Offeror will also handle e-messaging processing for the program. This communications channel is not currently available to participants, but we expect to introduce it some time in late 2008/early 2009. It is the Agency's intention to enable participants to leave messages on the Account Access (secure) portion of the TSP Web site ([www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov)) and then have these messages routed through an E-mail Response Management System that will be owned and maintained by the Agency. The Offeror's staff will log on to this system to access and process e-message inquiries from participants. The responses will be routed back to the Account Access message board for delivery to the participant. The expected workload for this channel is provided in the table below:

Month	Estimated E-messaging Volume to Agents	Average Handle Time (minutes)
March 2009	960	10.0
April 2009	956	9.0
May 2009	1,084	8.0
June 2009	2,109	7.5
July 2009	2,189	7.5
August 2009	2,254	7.5
September 2009	3,563	7.5
October 2009	4,495	7.5
November 2009	4,012	7.5
December 2009	6,003	7.5
January 2010	7,279	7.5
February 2010	5,452	7.5

Percentages of volume received by day and by interval are assumed to be the same as provided above for telephone volume. For years two and beyond of this contract, the Offeror should assume that e-messaging volumes will be 4% of telephone volumes, and that the average handle time will remain steady at 7.5 minutes per e-message.

Inquiries received via e-messaging are expected to include, but are not limited to, general questions regarding the TSP program, benefits and account activity, requests for forms, publications, and statements, requests for assistance with loans and withdrawals, etc. Responses will generally be sent back electronically to the participant through a secure environment. However, in some cases, they may include an outbound call, letter, and/or fax.

C.6. Fulfillment activities. The processing of calls and e-messages may generate the need to manually send fulfillment materials to participants. Although most requests are handled through the automated Participant Service Representative (PSR) application, past history has shown that 0.85% of telephone calls will yield fulfillment requests. We are estimating that 12% of e-messaging inquiries will yield a fulfillment request. Given that, we estimate the following manual fulfillment requests for the first year of this contract:

Month	Estimated Volume of Manually Generated Fulfillment Requests
March 2009	931
April 2009	927
May 2009	1,051
June 2009	1,150
July 2009	1,193
August 2009	1,229
September 2009	1,185
October 2009	1,495
November 2009	1,334
December 2009	1,571
January 2010	1,905
February 2010	1,427

C.7. TSP Quality Assurance Program. The Agency has an established TSP Quality Assurance Program for its call centers which the Offeror must incorporate into its quality assurance activities. A copy of this program is provided as Attachment C, and includes guidelines on the number of calls that the Offeror must monitor per agent per month. The Offeror is required to complete no less than this number and to provide the reports contained in the attachment. The Offeror must also attend and participate in the monthly calibration sessions discussed in the attachment. NOTE: These sessions are generally handled via video-teleconferences and the Agency expects the Offeror to be an active participant in the ongoing evolution of the QA program.

C.8. TSP Customer Satisfaction Program. The Agency has an established customer satisfaction survey program. A copy of the procedures for this program is provided as Attachment D. The Offeror is required to successfully complete 300 outbound survey calls every six months and report the results to the Agency. Past history has shown that 20% of the outbound attempts made for this program result in a completed survey. Both call centers receive copies of the combined survey results which, if necessary, are used for quality assurance improvements, training, etc.

C.9. Training activities. The Agency has a documented training program that will be provided to the Offeror before start-up;

however, past experience has shown that each call center then supplements the core training program with its own materials. The Offeror must demonstrate the capability to provide training on-site. The Board will provide "Train the Trainer" services for the 15-day program and PSR application training, after which the Offeror will be fully responsible for completing this training. (A copy of the PSR Application Training Manual is provided at Attachment E.) The Offeror is expected to provide routine computer-related skills training for all associates assigned to the telephones, along with customer service skills training. This training must be submitted to and approved by the Agency. Our current experience has shown that the complete new hire training program, including side-by-side call handling, takes from four and a half to five weeks.

Approximately once a quarter, the Agency will send a specialist to the call center for more in-depth training on a specific component of the program. Some of these sessions are given annually and others may be related to the introduction of a new benefit. All staff members are expected to attend these sessions, and they typically last two hours. The number of telephone agents off the phone at any time to attend these sessions should never be greater than fifteen. The Offeror is also expected to establish a quarterly refresher program independent of the Agency's training activities.

C.10. Knowledge Database. The Agency has an electronic knowledge management database that houses policies and procedures related to the program, helpful hints, etc. All Offeror staff will have "read" access to the application. A process has been developed to have changes approved and entered in the knowledge database. The Offeror is expected to provide suggestions for updates to the database on a regular basis, and to attend monthly meetings to discuss policies, procedures, and upcoming events for inclusion in the database.

C.11. Forecasting and staffing. The Agency will provide daily telephone call volume projections prior to the start of the month. The Offeror is required to review these forecasts and make any necessary adjustments throughout the month as volumes rise and fall. The Offeror must produce its own telephone call handle time forecasts, and must determine staffing needs required to meet service level goals on a consistent basis. The Offeror is expected to monitor real-time traffic closely and take necessary action when needed to resolve issues of under- and over-staffing on the telephones. The Offeror is also responsible for any forecasts and resource planning for e-

messaging, satisfaction surveys, fulfillment volume, and other tasks.

C.12. Helpline. The Offeror must implement and staff a second-level helpline that will be responsible for, at a minimum, the following activities:

- Accepting take-over calls transferred from frontline Participant Service Representatives (PSRs). These calls will include participant complaints as well as complex issues, such as distribution guidelines for participants age 70½ or older. These calls need to be handled to conclusion and documented within the desktop application and on a basic Excel spreadsheet.
- Providing frontline PSRs with "helpline" guidance on technical TSP program and account issues as needed to complete calls.

Past history has shown that take-over and guidance calls will represent approximately 250 to 350 calls per week and will take about six minutes on average to complete and document.

C.13. TSP Program support activities. Utilizing the expertise available from supervisors, trainers, helpline staff, and other program experts, the Offeror will be expected to participate in the following activities:

- Testing new IVR, PSR and imaging applications, and web site modules and reviewing communication materials. Because TSP program and system changes (e.g., changes to the TSP Web site) inevitably affect the call centers, the Agency routinely involves the centers in testing activities. These activities include reviewing communications materials and testing changes to the PSR, imaging, IVR, and web applications. In addition to providing feedback to the Agency, the Agency expects that the experience gained through the testing process will be incorporated into training for the PSRs (phone associates), thereby facilitating the adoption of the new program, benefit, application change, etc. Generally, the workload associated with this activity is minimal.
- Attending a 60-minute weekly operations call (attended by all of the operational units supporting the TSP) as well as *ad-hoc* training sessions (on-site or by video-teleconference or conference calls). These are generally targeted towards trainers, supervisors, researchers, etc., who, in turn, are expected to relay the information to the PSRs.

The Offeror's staff is expected to actively participate in these sessions.

- Completing all background work associated with the 100 to 125 research cases that are handled monthly (approximately 100 hours per month). The work required to complete these cases includes contacting multiple Agency operations units, presenting exception requests, locating copies of old forms, etc.

C.14. Outbound calls. The Offeror will need to complete outbound calls in association with research, e-messaging, or a special event or unusual situation. We expect outbound call volume to be no greater than 100 per month, and each outbound call will take, on average, five minutes to complete.

C.15. Information technology. The Agency will provide and maintain IVR hardware and software to the Offeror, and will also provide access to the E-mail Response Management application that will be used for the e-messaging activity. The Offeror must supply and maintain all other telecommunications equipment and personal computer workstations that meet the minimum technical specifications as outlined in Attachment F.

C.16. Call recording. The Offeror must have the capability to record 100% of incoming and outbound calls and must safely and securely store copies of all recording media (tapes, CDs, or DVDs) both on and off site (for disaster recovery) for the life of the contract. The Offeror must also be able to access any archived recorded call within 24 hours of request. Call recordings (and live calls) must be accessible by Agency staff at the Agency offices in Washington, DC. All records media will be provided to the Agency at the end of the contract or upon request.

C.17. Ancillary tasks. Under "volume surge" and disaster recovery scenarios, the Offeror may be asked to take on additional assignments. These include, but are not limited to, handling written correspondence and completing data entry transactions. These would be considered atypical situations and would be addressed on an *ad-hoc* basis at the time of occurrence. For example, in 2007, the call centers assisted in indexing forms into the TSP imaging system and in forwarding returned notices from a special mailing. Both activities were handled with existing staff on an overtime basis.

C.18. Security. Work under this contract will involve access to systems and facilities containing personal information pro-

tected by the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. § 552a). As such, the Offeror will be responsible for ensuring that all information disclosed is handled consistent with the Privacy Act and instructions provided by the Agency and for all aspects of both physical and information technology (IT) security for information, data, assets, and access to systems under its control.

#### C.18.a. Physical Security

The Offeror shall provide and maintain a separate physical space for the performance of all work performed under this contract. This space should be secured in such a way as to ensure that only staff assigned to work on the contract has access to the physical space and view of Agency/TSP data and materials. Entry and exit from the physical space should be controlled in such a manner as to ensure ingress and egress by only authorized personnel. Additional physical security guidelines/requirements can be found in Attachment G. Offerors should be sensitized as to the importance of security under this contract, and proposed processes and solutions should reflect that sensitivity. The Agency will provide guidelines and security training, and the Offeror will be expected to develop its own policies and procedures as necessary.

#### C.18.b. Information Technology (IT) Security

The Agency has classified the information from data files on participant accounts as Personally Identifiable Information (PII). As such, the Agency and its contractors bear the responsibility to ensure that TSP systems are defended against unauthorized access, that IT assets are accounted for, protected against loss or theft, and disposed of properly, and that security incidents are reported/acted upon in an appropriate manner. Appropriate guidelines/requirements regarding IT security can be found in Attachment H. Offerors should be sensitized as to the importance of security under this contract, and proposed processes and solutions should reflect that sensitivity.

#### C.18.c. Personnel Security

Personnel working on this contract must be United States citizens. In addition, all job candidates must pass a background investigation and credit check (see review guidelines in Attachment I), and sign a non-disclosure statement (Attachment J) prior to receiving authorization to access Agency/TSP systems. Appropriate procedures for determining, authorizing,

and terminating access to the physical space and TSP systems (e.g., for an employee who is leaving the contract) must be developed by the Offeror consistent with the Agency guidelines.

## **Section D - Packaging and Marking**

Not applicable.

## **Section E - Inspection and Acceptance**

### E.1 52.252-2 Clauses Incorporated By Reference (Feb 1998)

This contract incorporates one or more clauses by reference, with the same force and effect as if they were given in full text. Upon request, the Contracting Officer will make their full text available. Also, the full text of a clause may be accessed electronically at this address:

<http://www.acqnet.gov/far/>

52.246-5 Inspection of Services-Cost-Reimbursement.  
(Apr 1984)

## **Section F - Deliveries or Performance**

### F.1 52.252-2 Clauses Incorporated by Reference (Feb 1998)

This contract incorporates one or more clauses by reference, with the same force and effect as if they were given in full text. Upon request, the Contracting Officer will make their full text available. Also, the full text of a clause may be accessed electronically at this address:

<http://www.acqnet.gov/far/>

52.242-15 Stop-Work Order. (Aug 1989) Alternate I (Apr 1984)

### F.2. Reporting.

F.2.a. Operational reports. The Offeror shall provide monthly progress reports that summarize significant accomplishments, statistics, and explanations of deviations from the performance metrics for each calendar month. Additional management reports

(e.g., that provide actual daily call volumes, call durations, service factors attained, hang-ups, and other statistics) that must also be provided by the Offeror are shown in Attachment K. The Agency must have real-time access to the center's performance activity so that it can monitor typical call center statistics such as call handle times, agents staffed, agents available, service level, average wait time, etc.

F.2.b. Program reports. In addition, the Offeror shall provide the following security/business continuity related documents within 90 days of contract award:

- Facility and network security plan
- Business continuity plan
- Incident response plan

F.3. Period of performance. The term of this contract is a base three-year term, with three one-year renewable options. The Period of Performance begins March 4, 2009. The Transition Period begins at the time of award and lasts until March 3, 2009.

F.4. Place of performance. The site(s) and all associates assigned to the telephones selected to handle these calls must be within the United States, defined for this purpose as the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The site must be at least 250 miles from Clintwood, VA, so as to function as a viable disaster recovery option if the Clintwood site is for any reason incapacitated.

F.5. Language. English is the only language required to be supported for this program.

F.6. Hours of operation. Under normal conditions, the contractor will be expected to operate from 9:00 a.m. eastern time to 9:00 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday, except on those holidays designated in Section C.4. However, at any time when the Clintwood site is unavailable, the Offeror will be expected to cover the phones from 7:00 a.m. eastern time until 9:00 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday.

## **Section G - Contract Administration Data**

### G.1 Contractual Information

Contractual interpretation and assistance may be obtained by contacting:

Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Agency  
1250 H Street, N.W., Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20005-3952

Attn: Robert Battersby  
Phone: (202) 942-1693  
E-Mail: [RBATTER@tsp.gov](mailto:RBATTER@tsp.gov)

G.2. Contracting Officer's Technical Representative

G.2.a. The Contracting Officer hereby designates the below-named individual as the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR):

Name: Pamela-Jeanne Moran  
Address: Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Agency  
1250 H Street, N.W., Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20005-3952  
Phone: (202) 942-1460

G.2.b. The COTR is responsible for administering the performance of work under this contract. In no event, however, will any understanding, agreement, modification, change order, or other matter deviating from the terms of this contract be effective or binding upon the Agency unless formalized by proper contractual documents executed by the Contracting Officer. The COTR is responsible for:

- (1) Monitoring the Contractor's progress, including the surveillance and assessment of performance, and recommending to the Contracting Officer changes in requirements;
- (2) Interpreting the scope of work;
- (3) Performing inspections and acceptances required by this contract; and,
- (4) Assisting the Contractor in the resolution of technical problems encountered during the performance of the contract.

G.2.c. The Contracting Officer is responsible for directing any changes in the terms, conditions, or amounts cited in the contract.

G.2.d. In order for the Contractor to rely upon guidance from the COTR, the guidance must:

- (1) Be consistent with the description of work set forth in the contract;
- (2) Not constitute new assignments of work or a change to the expressed terms, conditions, or specifications incorporated into the contract;
- (3) Not constitute a basis for an extension to the period of performance or contract delivery schedule; and,
- (4) Not constitute a basis for any increase in the contract cost.

G.2.e. The COTR may be changed by the Agency at any time without prior notice to the Contractor. Written notice to the Contractor will be given by the Contracting Officer to effect any change in COTR.

G.2.f. If in the opinion of the Contractor, any instruction or direction issued by the COTR is not provided for in any of the provisions of the Contract, the Contractor shall not proceed but shall notify the Contracting Officer in writing within five (5) working days after the receipt of any such instruction or direction and shall request the Contracting Officer to modify the contract accordingly. Upon receiving such notification from the Contractor, the Contracting Officer shall issue an appropriate contract modification or advise the Contractor in writing that, in his/her opinion, the technical direction is within scope of this clause and does not constitute a change under the Changes Clause of the contract. The Contractor shall thereupon proceed immediately with the direction given.

G.2.g. A failure of the parties to agree upon the nature of the instruction or direction or upon the contract action to be taken with respect thereto shall be subject to the provisions of the contract clause titled "Disputes."

### G.3. Submission of Invoices

Invoices submitted for payment shall conform to the following requirements:

- G.3.a. All invoices must contain contractor's EIN number.
- G.3.b. All invoices must contain a "remit to" address.
- G.3.c. Submit all invoices to:

Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board  
1250 H Street, N.W., Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20005-3952  
Attn: Office of Finance

G.4. Submission of Audited Financial Statements

Each year of the contract the Offeror will submit *audited* financial statement(s) to the Agency's Office of Finance.

G.5. Incorporation of Contractor's Proposal

It is understood and agreed that the Contractor shall, in meeting the requirements of this contract, perform the work in accordance with its proposal to the Agency provided however, that to the extent that any provisions of the Clauses set forth herein are in conflict or inconsistent with any provision of said proposal, the provisions of this contract shall be controlling and shall supersede the provisions of said proposal.

**Section H- Special Contract Requirements**

H.1. Business Practices and Contract Requirements

It is expected that the practices described by the Contractor in its response to the Request for Proposals shall be employed in its performance of the requirements of Section C of this contract. Written notice must be received in advance by the Contracting Officer for approval of any changes to these practices.

H.2. Advertising and Releasing Of Information

The contractor must not publicize, advertise, or otherwise announce its selection by the Agency without the prior written approval of the Agency. Also, the Contractor may not release information or report on its performance under the contract without the prior written approval of the Agency.

H.3. Key Personnel

The Contractor must include in its proposal, by name and capacity, the key personnel to be assigned to perform and carry out all phases of work under this contract. The Contractor's key personnel include the following:

Name	Capacity
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

The individuals named above are considered key personnel and are essential for the successful completion of all work assigned under this contract. If you cannot at this time identify the key staff members (Project Manager, Call Center Manager, IT Manager, etc.), indicate the positions (capacity) you consider will be occupied by key personnel. These individuals must be approved by the Agency and this section completed prior to the award of this contract.

In the event any individual on the list of key personnel is to be removed or diverted from this contract, the Contractor must (1) notify the COTR; (2) supply written justification as to why the individual(s) is being removed or diverted; and, (3) provide the resume of the proposed substitute or replacement including the education, work experience, etc., of each new person for Agency approval. All notifications and other information must be submitted to the COTR at least 14 calendar days in advance of the action.

The Contractor must not, under any circumstances, remove or divert key personnel unless prior written authorization has been granted by the COTR. The person replacing the key person must have the same or higher qualifications and experience as the person replaced.

H.4. Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

Travel expenses incurred under this contract and invoiced may not exceed the applicable Federal Travel Regulations.

H.5. Confidential Information

All information received by the contractor as a result of performance of this contract is confidential and is subject to the Privacy Act. The Contractor and contractor personnel shall maintain this information in strict confidence and shall not disclose this information, or any information obtained as the result of its performance of this contract, to any person or

entity, other than employees or bonafide contractors of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, without the prior written approval of the Agency.

The contractor and contractor personnel shall not disclose this information to any person or entity or otherwise make any improper use of this information during or after the performance period of this contract. The contractor and contractor personnel shall maintain this information in strict confidence and shall make no changes to the information except as necessary in the performance of the contract. The contractor and contractor personnel and their successors are prohibited forever from using this information for their personal or business gain, personally or for another, directly or indirectly, without prior written approval of the Agency. This provision, or a provision with an identical effect, shall be placed in any subcontracts.

#### H.6. Disputes (July 2002)

(a) Reserved.

(b) All disputes arising under or relating to this contract shall be resolved under this clause.

(c) "Claim," as used in this clause, means a written demand or written assertion by one of the contracting parties seeking, as a matter of right, the payment of money in a sum certain, the adjustment or interpretation of contract terms, or other relief arising under or relating to this contract. However, a written demand or written assertion by the Contractor seeking the payment of money exceeding \$100,000 is not a claim until certified. A voucher, invoice, or other routine request for payment that is not in dispute when submitted is not a claim. The submission may be converted to a claim, by complying with the submission and certification requirements of this clause, if it is disputed either as to liability or amount or is not acted upon in a reasonable time.

(d)(1) A claim by the Contractor shall be made in writing and, unless otherwise stated in this contract, submitted within 6 years after accrual of the claim to the Contracting Officer for a written decision. A claim by the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (Agency) against the Contractor shall be subject to a written decision by the Contracting Officer.

(2)(i) The Contractor shall provide the certification specified in paragraph (d)(2)(iii) of this clause when submitting any claim exceeding \$100,000.

(2)(ii) The certification requirement does not apply to issues in controversy that have not been submitted as all or part of a claim.

(2)(iii) The certification shall state as follows: "I certify that the claim is made in good faith; that the supporting data are accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief; that the amount requested accurately reflects the contract adjustment for which the Contractor believes the Agency is liable; and that I am duly authorized to certify the claim on behalf of the Contractor."

(3) The certification may be executed by any person duly authorized to bind the Contractor with respect to the claim.

(e) For Contractor claims of \$100,000 or less, the Contracting Officer must, if requested in writing by the Contractor, render a decision within 60 days of the request. For Contractor-certified claims over \$100,000, the Contracting Officer must, within 60 days, decide the claim or notify the Contractor of the date by which the decision will be made.

(f) The Contracting Officer's decision shall be final unless the Contractor requests reconsideration by the Executive Director (or designee), the decision on which shall be final.

(g) If the claim by the Contractor is submitted to the Contracting Officer or a claim by the Government is presented to the Contractor, the parties, by mutual consent, may agree to use alternative dispute resolution (ADR). If the Contractor refuses an offer for ADR, the Contractor shall inform the Contracting Officer, in writing, of the Contractor's specific reasons for rejecting the offer.

(h) The Agency shall pay interest on the amount found due and unpaid from (1) the date that the Contracting Officer receives the claim (certified, if required); or (2) the date that payment otherwise would be due, if that date is later, until the date of payment. With regard to claims having defective certifications, as defined in FAR 33.201, interest shall be paid from the date that the Contracting Officer initially receives the perfected claim. Simple interest on claims shall be paid at the rate, fixed by the Secretary of the Treasury as provided in the Act, which is applicable to the period during which the Contracting Officer receives the claim and then at the rate applicable for each 6-month period as fixed by the Treasury Secretary during the pendency of the claim.

(i) The Contractor shall proceed diligently with performance of this contract, pending final resolution of any request for relief, claim, appeal, or action arising under or relating to the contract, and comply with any decision of the Contracting Officer.

## H.7. Submission of Financial Statements

(a) Financial statements shall be submitted to the Agency's Office of Finance on a quarterly basis.

(b) Financial statements submitted to the Agency must be audited or reviewed and prepared on the accrual basis of accounting by an independent certified public accountant licensed by the state of incorporation to perform such services. If the contractor is required by federal or state law to submit audited financial statements, the contractor is required also to submit audited financial statements to the Agency. Otherwise, the contractor may submit reviewed financial statements to the Agency. Audited or reviewed financial statements are to be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). The format of the financial statements must comply with generally accepted accounting principles. Balance sheets, income statements, a statement of retained earnings, supporting schedules and notes, and the opinion of the independent auditor must accompany the financial statement. The balance sheet must, at a minimum, break down current assets, fixed assets, other assets (if appropriate), current liabilities, long-term liabilities, and equity (or appropriate nonprofit categories), a statement of cash flows, and appropriate accounting notes. If a contractor is organized as a corporation and the corporation is part of a consolidated group, supplemental data must be included showing a breakout of all corporate subsidiaries including a balance sheet and income statement for the individual contractors.

(c) Most recent financial statements are to be submitted with the proposal.

#### H.8. Maintaining Alternative Sources

In accordance with FAR Part 6.202, the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board may exclude a particular source from this contract action. This is done to maintain a reliable, alternative source for these critical call center services to ensure their continuous availability. Thus, SI International Inc., the provider of call center services under contract TIB-2008-C-002, is excluded from this contract action.

#### H.9. Periodic Software Upgrades

The contractor shall provide periodic upgrades to the QA monitoring/coaching software/hardware, recording software/hardware, reporting software/hardware, and any other software

determined by the COTR to be critical to operations. Upgrades to the most current version of such software shall occur within 1 year of the latest release by the software vendor, as coordinated with the COTR.

## **Part II - Contract Clauses**

### **Section I - Contract Clauses**

#### I.1 52.252-2 Clauses Incorporated By Reference (Feb 1998)

This contract incorporates one or more clauses by reference, with the same force and effect as if they were given in full text. Upon request, the Contracting Officer will make their full text available. Also, the full text of a clause may be accessed electronically at this address:

<http://www.acqnet.gov/far/>

- 52.202-1 Definitions. (July 2004)
- 52.203-3 Gratuities. (Apr 1984)
- 52.203-5 Covenant Against Contingent Fees. (Apr 1984)
- 52.203-6 Restrictions on Subcontractor Sales to the Government. (Sept 2006)
- 52.203-7 Anti-Kickback Procedures. (Jul 1995)
- 52.203-8 Cancellation, Rescission, and Recovery of Funds for Illegal or Improper Activity. (Jan 1997)
- 52.203-10 Price or Fee Adjustment for Illegal or Improper Activity. (Jan 1997)
- 52.203-12 Limitation on Payments to Influence Certain Federal Transactions. (Sept 2007)
- 52.203-13 Contractor Code of Business Ethics and Conduct. (Dec 2007)
- 52.204-4 Printed or Copied Double-Sided on Recycled Paper. (Aug 2000)
- 52.204-7 Central Contractor Registration. (July 2006)
- 52.204-9 Personal Identity Verification of Contractor Personnel (Sept 2007)
- 52.209-6 Protecting the Government's Interest When Subcontracting with Contractors Debarred, Suspended, or Proposed for Debarment. (Sept 2006)
- 52.215-2 Audit and Records-Negotiation. (June 1999)
- 52.215-8 Order of Precedence-Uniform Contract Format. (Oct 1997)
- 52.215-10 Price Reduction for Defective Cost or Pricing Data (Oct 1997)

- 52.215-11 Price Reduction for Defective Cost or Pricing Data—Modifications (Oct 1997)
- 52.215-12 Subcontractor Cost or Pricing Data (Oct 1997)
- 52.215-13 Subcontractor Cost or Pricing Data—Modifications (Oct 1997)
- 52.215-15 Pension Adjustments and Asset Reversions (Oct 2004)
- 52.215-18 Reversion or Adjustment of Plans for Postretirement Benefits (PRB) Other Than Pensions (July 2005)
- 52.215-21 Requirements for Cost or Pricing Data or Information Other Than Cost or Pricing Data—Modifications. (Oct 1997)
- 52.216-7 Allowable Cost and Payment. (Dec 2002)
- 52.216-8 Fixed Fee. (Mar 1997)
- 52.217-8 Option to Extend Services. (Nov 1999)
- 52.217-9 Option to Extend the Term of the Contract. (Mar 2000)
- 52.222-1 Notice to the Government of Labor Disputes (Feb 1997)
- 52.222-2 Payment for Overtime Premiums. (July 1990)
- 52.222-21 Prohibition of Segregated Facilities. (Feb 1999)
- 52.222-26 Equal Opportunity. (Mar 2007)
- 52.222-35 Equal Opportunity for Special Disabled Veterans, Veterans of the Vietnam Era, and Other Eligible Veterans. (Sept 2006)
- 52.222-36 Affirmative Action for Workers with Disabilities. (June 1998)
- 52.222-50 Combating Trafficking in Persons. (Aug 2007)
- 52.223-6 Drug-Free Workplace. (May 2001)
- 52.224-1 Privacy Act Notification. (Apr 1984)
- 52.224-2 Privacy Act. (Apr 1984)
- 52.225-13 Restrictions on Certain Foreign Purchases. (Feb 2006)
- 52.227-14 Rights in Data—General. (Dec 2007)
- 52.227-17 Rights in Data—Special Works. (Dec 2007)
- 52.227-23 Rights to Proposal Data (Technical). (June 1987)
- 52.228-7 Insurance—Liability to Third Persons. (Mar 1996)
- 52.229-10 State of New Mexico Gross Receipts and Compensating Tax (Apr 2003)
- 52.230-2 Cost Accounting Standards (Apr 1998)
- 52.230-3 Disclosure and Consistency of Cost Accounting Practices (Apr 1998)
- 52.230-6 Administration of Cost Accounting Standards (Mar 2008)
- 52.232-9 Limitation on Withholding of Payments (Apr 1984)
- 52.232-17 Interest. (June 1996)
- 52.232-22 Limitation of Funds (Apr 1984)
- 52.232-23 Assignment of Claims. (Jan 1986)
- 52.232-25 Prompt Payment. (Oct 2003) Alternate I (Feb 2002)
- 52.232-33 Payment by Electronic Funds Transfer—Central Contractor Registration. (Oct 2003)

- 52.233-3 Protest After Award (Aug 1996) (Alternate I) (June 1985).
- 52.233-4 Applicable Law for Breach of Contract Claim. (Oct 2004)
- 52.237-3 Continuity of Services. (Jan 1991)
- 52.237-10 Identification of Uncompensated Overtime (Oct 1997)
- 52.239-1 Privacy or Security Safeguards. (Aug 1996)
- 52.242-1 Notice of Intent to Disallow Costs. (Apr 1984)
- 52.242-3 Penalties for Unallowable Costs (May 2001)
- 52.242-4 Certification of Final Indirect Costs. (Jan 1997)
- 52.242-13 Bankruptcy. (July 1995)
- 52.243-2 Changes–Cost–Reimbursement (Aug 1987) Alternate I (Apr 1984).
- 52.244-2 Subcontracts. (June 2007) Alternate I (June 2007).
- 52.244-5 Competition in Subcontracting. (Dec 1996)
- 52.244-6 Subcontracts for Commercial Items. (Mar 2007)
- 52.245-1 Government Property (June 2007)
- 52.245-9 Use and Charges (June 2007)
- 52.246-25 Limitation of Liability–Services. (Feb 1997)
- 52.248-1 Value Engineering. (Feb 2000)
- 52.249-6 Termination (Cost–Reimbursement). (May 2004)
- 52.249-14 Excusable Delays. (Apr 1984)
- 52.251-1 Government Supply Sources. (Apr 1984)
- 52.253-1 Computer Generated Forms. (Jan 1991)
  
- 52.215-19 NOTIFICATION OF OWNERSHIP CHANGES (OCT 1997)

(a) The Contractor shall make the following notifications in writing:

(1) When the Contractor becomes aware that a change in its ownership has occurred, or is certain to occur, that could result in changes in the valuation of its capitalized assets in the accounting records, the Contractor shall notify the Contracting Officer (CO) within 30 days.

(2) The Contractor shall also notify the CO within 30 days whenever changes to asset valuations or any other cost changes have occurred or are certain to occur as a result of a change in ownership.

(b) The Contractor shall–

(1) Maintain current, accurate, and complete inventory records of assets and their costs;

(2) Provide the CO or designated representative ready access to the records upon request;

(3) Ensure that all individual and grouped assets, their capitalized values, accumulated depreciation or amortization, and remaining useful lives are identified accurately before and after each of the Contractor’s ownership changes; and

(4) Retain and continue to maintain depreciation and amortization schedules based on the asset records maintained before each Contractor ownership change.

(c) The Contractor shall include the substance of this clause in all subcontracts under this contract that meet the applicability requirement of FAR [15.408](#)(k).

(End of clause)

#### 52.222-39 Notification of Employee Rights Concerning Payment of Union Dues or Fees (Dec 2004)

(a) *Definition.* As used in this clause—

"United States" means the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Wake Island.

(b) Except as provided in paragraph (e) of this clause, during the term of this contract, the Contractor shall post a notice, in the form of a poster, informing employees of their rights concerning union membership and payment of union dues and fees, in conspicuous places in and about all its plants and offices, including all places where notices to employees are customarily posted. The notice shall include the following information (except that the information pertaining to National Labor Relations Board shall not be included in notices posted in the plants or offices of carriers subject to the Railway Labor Act, as amended ([45 U.S.C. 151-188](#))).

#### Notice to Employees

Under Federal law, employees cannot be required to join a union or maintain membership in a union in order to retain their jobs. Under certain conditions, the law permits a union and an employer to enter into a union-security agreement requiring employees to pay uniform periodic dues and initiation fees. However, employees who are not union members can object to the use of their payments for certain purposes and can only be required to pay their share of union costs relating to collective bargaining, contract administration, and grievance adjustment.

If you do not want to pay that portion of dues or fees used to support activities not related to collective bargaining, contract administration, or grievance adjustment, you are entitled to an appropriate reduction in your payment. If you believe that you have been required to pay dues or fees used in part to support activities not related to

collective bargaining, contract administration, or grievance adjustment, you may be entitled to a refund and to an appropriate reduction in future payments.

For further information concerning your rights, you may wish to contact the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) either at one of its Regional offices or at the following address or toll free number:

National Labor Relations Board  
Division of Information  
1099 14th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20570  
1-866-667-6572  
1-866-316-6572 (TTY)

To locate the nearest NLRB office, see NLRB's website at <http://www.nlr.gov>.

(c) The Contractor shall comply with all provisions of Executive Order 13201 of February 17, 2001, and related implementing regulations at 29 CFR Part 470, and orders of the Secretary of Labor.

(d) In the event that the Contractor does not comply with any of the requirements set forth in paragraphs (b), (c), or (g), the Secretary may direct that this contract be cancelled, terminated, or suspended in whole or in part, and declare the Contractor ineligible for further Government contracts in accordance with procedures at 29 CFR Part 470, Subpart B—Compliance Evaluations, Complaint Investigations and Enforcement Procedures. Such other sanctions or remedies may be imposed as are provided by 29 CFR Part 470, which implements Executive Order 13201, or as are otherwise provided by law.

(e) The requirement to post the employee notice in paragraph (b) does not apply to—

(1) Contractors and subcontractors that employ fewer than 15 persons;

(2) Contractor establishments or construction work sites where no union has been formally recognized by the Contractor or certified as the exclusive bargaining representative of the Contractor's employees;

(3) Contractor establishments or construction work sites located in a jurisdiction named in the definition of the United States in which the law of that jurisdiction forbids enforcement of union-security agreements;

(4) Contractor facilities where upon the written request of the Contractor, the Department of Labor Deputy Assistant Secretary for Labor-Management Programs has waived the posting

requirements with respect to any of the Contractor's facilities if the Deputy Assistant Secretary finds that the Contractor has demonstrated that—

(i) The facility is in all respects separate and distinct from activities of the Contractor related to the performance of a contract; and

(ii) Such a waiver will not interfere with or impede the effectuation of the Executive order; or

(5) Work outside the United States that does not involve the recruitment or employment of workers within the United States.

(f) The Department of Labor publishes the official employee notice in two variations; one for contractors covered by the Railway Labor Act and a second for all other contractors. The Contractor shall—

(1) Obtain the required employee notice poster from the Division of Interpretations and Standards, Office of Labor-Management Standards, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N-5605, Washington, DC 20210, or from any field office of the Department's Office of Labor-Management Standards or Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs;

(2) Download a copy of the poster from the Office of Labor-Management Standards website at <http://www.olms.dol.gov>; or

(3) Reproduce and use exact duplicate copies of the Department of Labor's official poster.

(g) The Contractor shall include the substance of this clause in every subcontract or purchase order that exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold, entered into in connection with this contract, unless exempted by the Department of Labor Deputy Assistant Secretary for Labor-Management Programs on account of special circumstances in the national interest under authority of 29 CFR 470.3(c). For indefinite quantity subcontracts, the Contractor shall include the substance of this clause if the value of orders in any calendar year of the subcontract is expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold. Pursuant to 29 CFR Part 470, Subpart B—Compliance Evaluations, Complaint Investigations and Enforcement Procedures, the Secretary of Labor may direct the Contractor to take such action in the enforcement of these regulations, including the imposition of sanctions for noncompliance with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order. If the Contractor becomes involved in litigation with a subcontractor or vendor, or is threatened with such involvement, as a result of such direction, the Contractor may request the United States, through the Secretary of Labor, to enter into such litigation to protect the interests of the United States.

(End of clause)

## **Part III - List of Documents, Exhibits, and Other Attachments**

### **Section J - List of Attachments**

- Attachment A - Questionnaire for External Call Center Services
- Attachment B - Performance Standards
- Attachment C - TSP Quality Assurance Program Documentation
- Attachment D - TSP Customer Satisfaction Program Documentation
- Attachment E - Participant Service Representative Application Training Manual
- Attachment F - IT Technical Specifications
- Attachment G - Physical Security Guidelines/Requirements
- Attachment H - IT Security Requirements/Guidelines
- Attachment I - Agency Background and Credit Check Evaluation Criteria
- Attachment J - Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board Non-disclosure Statement
- Attachment K - Reporting Metrics
- Attachment L - Financial Viability Requirements and Reporting

## **Part IV - Representations and Instructions**

### **Section K - Representations, Certifications, and Other Statements of Offerors or Respondents**

52.204-8 Annual Representations and Certifications (Jan 2006)

(a)(1) The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code for this acquisition is 561421.

(2) The small business size standard is \$6.5 million.

(3) The small business size standard for a concern which submits an offer in its own name, other than on a construction or service contract, but which proposes to furnish a product which it did not itself manufacture, is 500 employees.

(b)(1) If the clause at [52.204-7](#), Central Contractor Registration, is included in this solicitation, paragraph (c) of this provision applies.

(2) If the clause at [52.204-7](#) is not included in this solicitation, and the offeror is currently registered in CCR, and has completed the ORCA electronically, the offeror may

choose to use paragraph (c) of this provision instead of completing the corresponding individual representations and certifications in the solicitation. The offeror shall indicate which option applies by checking one of the following boxes:

(i) Paragraph (c) applies.

(ii) Paragraph (c) does not apply and the offeror has completed the individual representations and certifications in the solicitation.

(c) The offeror has completed the annual representations and certifications electronically via the Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA) website at <http://orca.bpn.gov>. After reviewing the ORCA database information, the offeror verifies by submission of the offer that the representations and certifications currently posted electronically have been entered or updated within the last 12 months, are current, accurate, complete, and applicable to this solicitation (including the business size standard applicable to the NAICS code referenced for this solicitation), as of the date of this offer and are incorporated in this offer by reference (see FAR [4.1201](#)); except for the changes identified below [*offeror to insert changes, identifying change by clause number, title, date*]. These amended representation(s) and/or certification(s) are also incorporated in this offer and are current, accurate, and complete as of the date of this offer.

FAR CLAUSE #	TITLE	DATE	CHANGE
_____	_____	_____	_____

Any changes provided by the offeror are applicable to this solicitation only, and do not result in an update to the representations and certifications posted on ORCA.

(End of provision)

#### 52.230-1 Cost Accounting Standards Notices and Certification (June 2000)

Note: This notice does not apply to small businesses or foreign governments. This notice is in three parts, identified by Roman numerals I through III.

Offerors shall examine each part and provide the requested information in order to determine Cost Accounting Standards (CAS) requirements applicable to any resultant contract.

If the offeror is an educational institution, Part II does not apply unless the contemplated contract will be subject to

full or modified CAS coverage pursuant to 48 CFR 9903.201-2(c)(5) or 9903.201-2(c)(6), respectively.

I. DISCLOSURE STATEMENT—COST ACCOUNTING PRACTICES AND CERTIFICATION

(a) Any contract in excess of \$500,000 resulting from this solicitation will be subject to the requirements of the Cost Accounting Standards Board (48 CFR Chapter 99), except for those contracts which are exempt as specified in 48 CFR 9903.201-1.

(b) Any offeror submitting a proposal which, if accepted, will result in a contract subject to the requirements of 48 CFR Chapter 99 must, as a condition of contracting, submit a Disclosure Statement as required by 48 CFR 9903.202. When required, the Disclosure Statement must be submitted as a part of the offeror's proposal under this solicitation unless the offeror has already submitted a Disclosure Statement disclosing the practices used in connection with the pricing of this proposal. If an applicable Disclosure Statement has already been submitted, the offeror may satisfy the requirement for submission by providing the information requested in paragraph (c) of Part I of this provision.

Caution: In the absence of specific regulations or agreement, a practice disclosed in a Disclosure Statement shall not, by virtue of such disclosure, be deemed to be a proper, approved, or agreed-to practice for pricing proposals or accumulating and reporting contract performance cost data.

(c) Check the appropriate box below:

(1) *Certificate of Concurrent Submission of Disclosure Statement*. The offeror hereby certifies that, as a part of the offer, copies of the Disclosure Statement have been submitted as follows:

(i) Original and one copy to the cognizant Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) or cognizant Federal agency official authorized to act in that capacity (Federal official), as applicable; and

(ii) One copy to the cognizant Federal auditor.

(Disclosure must be on Form No. CASB DS-1 or CASB DS-2, as applicable. Forms may be obtained from the cognizant ACO or Federal official and/or from the loose-leaf version of the Federal Acquisition Regulation.)

Date of Disclosure Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Address of Cognizant ACO or Federal Official Where Filed: \_\_\_\_\_

The offeror further certifies that the practices used in estimating costs in pricing this proposal are consistent with the cost accounting practices disclosed in the Disclosure Statement.

[ ] (2) *Certificate of Previously Submitted Disclosure Statement.* The offeror hereby certifies that the required Disclosure Statement was filed as follows:

Date of Disclosure Statement: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and Address of Cognizant ACO or Federal Official Where Filed: \_\_\_\_\_

The offeror further certifies that the practices used in estimating costs in pricing this proposal are consistent with the cost accounting practices disclosed in the applicable Disclosure Statement.

[ ] (3) *Certificate of Monetary Exemption.* The offeror hereby certifies that the offeror, together with all divisions, subsidiaries, and affiliates under common control, did not receive net awards of negotiated prime contracts and subcontracts subject to CAS totaling \$50 million or more in the cost accounting period immediately preceding the period in which this proposal was submitted. The offeror further certifies that if such status changes before an award resulting from this proposal, the offeror will advise the Contracting Officer immediately.

[ ] (4) *Certificate of Interim Exemption.* The offeror hereby certifies that (i) the offeror first exceeded the monetary exemption for disclosure, as defined in (3) of this subsection, in the cost accounting period immediately preceding the period in which this offer was submitted and (ii) in accordance with 48 CFR 9903.202-1, the offeror is not yet required to submit a Disclosure Statement. The offeror further certifies that if an award resulting from this proposal has not been made within 90 days after the end of that period, the offeror will immediately submit a revised certificate to the Contracting Officer, in the form specified under paragraph (c)(1) or (c)(2) of Part I of this provision, as appropriate, to verify submission of a completed Disclosure Statement.

Caution: Offerors currently required to disclose because they were awarded a CAS-covered prime contract or subcontract of \$50 million or more in the current cost accounting period may not claim this exemption (4). Further, the exemption applies only in connection with proposals submitted before

expiration of the 90-day period following the cost accounting period in which the monetary exemption was exceeded.

## II. COST ACCOUNTING STANDARDS—ELIGIBILITY FOR MODIFIED CONTRACT COVERAGE

If the offeror is eligible to use the modified provisions of 48 CFR 9903.201-2(b) and elects to do so, the offeror shall indicate by checking the box below. Checking the box below shall mean that the resultant contract is subject to the Disclosure and Consistency of Cost Accounting Practices clause in lieu of the Cost Accounting Standards clause.

The offeror hereby claims an exemption from the Cost Accounting Standards clause under the provisions of 48 CFR 9903.201-2(b) and certifies that the offeror is eligible for use of the Disclosure and Consistency of Cost Accounting Practices clause because during the cost accounting period immediately preceding the period in which this proposal was submitted, the offeror received less than \$50 million in awards of CAS-covered prime contracts and subcontracts. The offeror further certifies that if such status changes before an award resulting from this proposal, the offeror will advise the Contracting Officer immediately.

Caution: An offeror may not claim the above eligibility for modified contract coverage if this proposal is expected to result in the award of a CAS-covered contract of \$50 million or more or if, during its current cost accounting period, the offeror has been awarded a single CAS-covered prime contract or subcontract of \$50 million or more.

## III. ADDITIONAL COST ACCOUNTING STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO EXISTING CONTRACTS

The offeror shall indicate below whether award of the contemplated contract would, in accordance with paragraph (a)(3) of the Cost Accounting Standards clause, require a change in established cost accounting practices affecting existing contracts and subcontracts.

Yes  No

(End of provision)

52.230-7 Proposal Disclosure—Cost Accounting Practice Changes  
(Apr 2005)

The offeror shall check "yes" below if the contract award will result in a required or unilateral change in cost accounting practice, including unilateral changes requested to be desirable changes.

[ ] Yes [ ] No

If the offeror checked "Yes" above, the offeror shall—  
(1) Prepare the price proposal in response to the solicitation using the changed practice for the period of performance for which the practice will be used; and  
(2) Submit a description of the changed cost accounting practice to the Contracting Officer and the Cognizant Federal Agency Official as pricing support for the proposal.

(End of provision)

## **Section L - Instructions, Conditions, and Notices to Offerors or Respondents**

L.1. Submission of Proposal. The Offeror must provide an original and five (5) paper copies and one (1) electronic copy of the technical proposal (in Microsoft Word format), and an original and three (3) paper copies and one (1) electronic copy of the price proposal (in Microsoft Word format). Audited financial statements for the last three years must be submitted with each copy of the cost proposal. Cost/price data must not be included in the technical proposal. The price proposal must be submitted under a separate cover. This will be a best value award.

L.1.a. Technical Proposal. The Technical Proposal must be limited to 75 pages (text to be single spaced, no less than 10-pitch font), 8½" X 11" white paper (no less than 20 lb. copy paper). Any pages beyond the 75<sup>th</sup> will not be reviewed (resumes are included in this count).

Attachment A provides all the questions you are required to answer in your Technical Proposal. Present your comprehensive response to the questions based on information contained in this Statement of Work. Explain your approach to establishing all aspects of the new call center, as well as location(s). All questions should be addressed completely and concisely and in the order presented in Attachment A. If an alternative method is proposed to a requirement, provide the proposed change and the rationale. Appendices should be used prudently and only

when a detailed response is impractical. Ambiguous statements such as "all reasonable efforts..." will not be acceptable.

L.1.b. Cost/Price Proposal. The Cost/Price Proposal must be limited to 25 pages (see further specifications in paragraph a. above). All financial documentation as outlined in Attachment L should be included with the cost proposal, and does not count toward the page limit.

L.1.b.i. Identify the schedule of fees as it relates to the services to be provided. The cost structure should indicate cost of services and include a cost breakout for any optional program components available.

L.1.b.ii. Provide all prices (transition and ongoing) associated with your services. List any and all costs and provide an explanation for the basis of the cost (e.g., if the charge is "per hour", explain exactly how an hour is calculated, what is included in it, and where the information comes from). Provide the costs for the transition period (from time of award to March 3, 2009.) This should include all start-up and training costs, as well as costs to handle the transitional call volume as outlined in section C.4. Also provide the costs for years one through six of the project, with year one beginning March 4, 2009.

L.1.b.iii. Include a table listing your best estimate of overall costs by month for the first year of this contract. Include other direct costs associated with estimated costs for long-distance telephone calls to the Agency, and the Clintwood Call Center to conduct business and resolve issues. Note that the Agency will consider postage associated with fulfillment as "other direct costs". The Agency will also provide overnight delivery services for materials that must be sent from this call center to the Agency or the other TSP operational units.

L.1.b.iv. Include travel and related charges that may be incurred during this project. All travel must be approved by the COTR in advance and will be reimbursed in accordance with Government travel regulations.

L.2. Due Date. Submit the proposal package to the Agency for receipt no later than 4:00 p.m., eastern time, June 30, 2008. Address the package as follows:

Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board  
Attn: Mr. Robert Battersby

1250 H Street, NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20005-3952

To ensure the proposal package arrives at the proper place on time and to prevent opening by unauthorized individuals, your proposal package must be identified on the wrapper as follows:

Proposal Submitted in Response to Solicitation  
No. TIB-2008-R-001  
Package No. \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

L.3. Bid and Proposal Costs. The Agency will not reimburse Offerors for any expenses incurred in the preparation of proposals submitted in response to this RFP.

L.4. Billing. The Awardee will be permitted to submit invoices monthly for incurred costs.

L.5. RFP Questions. All inquiries pertaining to this RFP must be made in writing via e-mail or letter and must be received by May 13, 2008. No other method will be accepted. The point of contact for all RFP inquiries is Robert Battersby, (202) 942-1693, Fax: (202) 942-1674, e-mail: Robert.Battersby@tsp.gov.

L.6. Other Considerations. The Agency may conduct on-site visits during the evaluation process. The purpose of the on-site visits would be to:

- Substantiate proposal representations.
- Supplement information obtained through the proposal questionnaire.
- Increase the Agency's understanding of the services and operations of the Offeror.
- Meet the key personnel who will have a significant role in this contract.
- Review systems capabilities and security.
- Inspect the proposed facility.

L.7. THE FEDERAL RETIREMENT THRIFT INVESTMENT BOARD MAY, BY WRITTEN NOTICE TO THE OFFEROR, TERMINATE THE RIGHT OF THE OFFEROR TO PROCEED UNDER ANY CONTRACT THAT ARISES AS A RESULT OF

THIS SOLICITATION, IF IT IS FOUND THAT GRATUITIES, IN THE FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT, GIFTS OR OTHERWISE, WERE OFFERED OR GIVEN BY THE OFFEROR, OR ANY AGENT OR REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OFFEROR, TO ANY OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE OF THE FEDERAL RETIREMENT THRIFT INVESTMENT BOARD WITH THE INTENT TO SECURE FAVORABLE TREATMENT.

L.8. 52.252-1 Solicitation Provisions Incorporated by Reference (Feb 1998)

This solicitation incorporates one or more solicitation provisions by reference, with the same force and effect as if they were given in full text. Upon request, the Contracting Officer will make their full text available. The Offeror is cautioned that the listed provisions may include blocks that must be completed by the Offeror and submitted with its quotation or offer. In lieu of submitting the full text of those provisions, the Offeror may identify the provision by paragraph identifier and provide the appropriate information with its quotation or offer. Also the full text of a solicitation provision may be accessed electronically at this address:

<http://www.acqnet.gov/far/>

52.215-1 Instructions to Offerors—Competitive. Acquisition (Jan 2004) Alternate I (Oct 1997).

52.215-16 Facilities Capital Cost of Money. (June 2003)

52.222-24 Preaward On-Site Equal Opportunity Compliance Evaluation (Feb 1999)

52.222-46 Evaluation of Compensation for Professional Employees (Feb 1993)

52.237-10 Identification of Uncompensated Overtime. (Oct 1997)

52.215-20 Requirements for Cost or Pricing Data or Information Other Than Cost or Pricing Data (Oct 1997)

(a) Exceptions from cost or pricing data.

(1) In lieu of submitting cost or pricing data, offerors may submit a written request for exception by submitting the information described in the following paragraphs. The Contracting Officer may require additional supporting information, but only to the extent necessary to determine whether an exception should be granted, and whether the price is fair and reasonable.

(i) *Identification of the law or regulation establishing the price offered.* If the price is controlled under law by periodic rulings, reviews, or similar actions of a governmental

body, attach a copy of the controlling document, unless it was previously submitted to the contracting office.

(ii) *Commercial item exception.* For a commercial item exception, the offeror shall submit, at a minimum, information on prices at which the same item or similar items have previously been sold in the commercial market that is adequate for evaluating the reasonableness of the price for this acquisition. Such information may include—

(A) For catalog items, a copy of or identification of the catalog and its date, or the appropriate pages for the offered items, or a statement that the catalog is on file in the buying office to which the proposal is being submitted. Provide a copy or describe current discount policies and price lists (published or unpublished), e.g., wholesale, original equipment manufacturer, or reseller. Also explain the basis of each offered price and its relationship to the established catalog price, including how the proposed price relates to the price of recent sales in quantities similar to the proposed quantities;

(B) For market-priced items, the source and date or period of the market quotation or other basis for market price, the base amount, and applicable discounts. In addition, describe the nature of the market;

(C) For items included on an active Federal Supply Service Multiple Award Schedule contract, proof that an exception has been granted for the schedule item.

(2) The offeror grants the Contracting Officer or an authorized representative the right to examine, at any time before award, books, records, documents, or other directly pertinent records to verify any request for an exception under this provision, and the reasonableness of price. For items priced using catalog or market prices, or law or regulation, access does not extend to cost or profit information or other data relevant solely to the offeror's determination of the prices to be offered in the catalog or marketplace.

(b) *Requirements for cost or pricing data.* If the offeror is not granted an exception from the requirement to submit cost or pricing data, the following applies:

(1) The offeror shall prepare and submit cost or pricing data and supporting attachments in accordance with [Table 15-2](#) of FAR [15.408](#).

(2) As soon as practicable after agreement on price, but before contract award (except for unpriced actions such as letter contracts), the offeror shall submit a Certificate of Current Cost or Pricing Data, as prescribed by FAR [15.406-2](#).

(End of provision)

52.216-1 Type of Contract (Apr 1984)

The Government contemplates award of a cost plus fixed fee contract resulting from this solicitation.

(End of provision)

52.233-2 Service of Protest (Sept 2006)

(a) Protests, as defined in section 31.101 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation, that are filed directly with an agency, and copies of any protests that are filed with the Government Accountability Office (GAO), shall be served on the Contracting Officer (addressed as follows) by obtaining written and dated acknowledgment of receipt from Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, 1250 H Street, N.W., Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005.

(b) The copy of any protest shall be received in the office designated above within one day of filing a protest with the GAO.

(End of provision)

## **Section M - Evaluation Factors for Award**

M.1. Evaluation of Offers. This section sets forth the criteria to be used for the evaluation of each timely offer to determine the successful Offeror. The evaluation of offers will consist of technical and cost evaluation. Only proposals deemed to be technically acceptable will receive further consideration. The Agency is committed to providing the highest level of customer service and satisfaction to its TSP participants and their beneficiaries. Offerors should be aware of the fact that only the highest caliber of quality and service will be accepted. This commitment to customer satisfaction and service will serve as a significant evaluation factor as well as serving as the justification for continuing the contract.

M.2. Procedure. The Agency will select an Offeror for award in accordance with the guidance in FAR Part 15, the Agency's Directive No. 12A, and the terms of this solicitation.

M.3. Minimum Technical Requirements. The technical proposal must demonstrate compliance with the minimum technical factors listed below in order to be considered for award. Proposals which do not conform to the technical requirements of this

section will be rejected by the Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) before technical evaluation. NOTE: The financial viability minimum qualification (M.3.j.) will be evaluated only for those proposals that are selected for the competitive range.

Through the answer provided to question 1 in Attachment A, Offerors must demonstrate and certify compliance with the following minimum criteria:

- a. That any and all sites used to process the calls and all other work on this project by the Offeror be within the continental United States and at least 250 miles from Clintwood, VA in order to ensure that this parallel call center is not susceptible to the same weather-related or other conditions that could halt operations at the Clintwood call center.
- b. That the Offeror provide a dedicated customer service unit that under normal operating conditions uses staff working solely on the contract with the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board.
- c. That the Offeror has prior experience in operating similar call center programs in the financial services industry (e.g., 401(k) or similar retirement benefits or investment services). Credit card fulfillment or basic banking services do not satisfy this criterion.
- d. That the Offeror has prior experience running a call center project with volumes of at least 40,000 inbound calls per month.
- e. That the Offeror can comply with all elements of the TSP QA Program.
- f. That the Offeror can comply with all elements of the TSP customer satisfaction survey program.
- g. That the Offeror can meet the minimum technical requirements for PCs and telecom equipment.
- h. That the Offeror will provide and maintain a separate physical space for the performance of all work under this contract.

i. That the Offeror can meet Agency standards of financial viability and will demonstrate so by submitting the requested financial documents.

M.4. Technical Evaluation - 100 points

Upon determining Offeror compliance with the minimum technical criteria identified in M.3 above, the TEP will evaluate proposals for technical merit using the evaluation criteria identified below. Evaluation criteria are listed in descending order of importance.

A. Operational Management Capability - 64 points

This section of the evaluation focuses on the ability of the offeror to demonstrate knowledge of best practices for operating call centers and experience in applying these practices in the operation of its call centers. This experience must include financial (including 401(k) or similar retirement) programs and must involve call centers of approximately the same size as the proposed center. The offeror must demonstrate day-to-day expertise in three areas: people management, process management, and technology management. These areas are evaluated as follows:

1. *People Management* (20 Points)

Under this category, the offeror will be evaluated on its ability to select, train, and manage a team of individuals that meets or exceeds the expected levels of performance. Specific elements of people management include:

a. Hiring and retention (5 points). We will review the proposal to determine plans for recruiting and selecting staff for the program. We will evaluate such items as turnover rates and average tenure to determine success at hiring and retaining staff. We will also review total hiring capabilities to ensure that staffing requirements can be met on a timely basis.

b. Training (6 points). We will evaluate the training program the offeror is currently using for front line customer service representatives, as well as any enhancements that will be instituted for this program. Our review will include not only new hire training, but also the commitment made to the ongoing training of experienced

customer service representatives. We will also evaluate training plans for first-line supervisors and managers.

c. Coaching (4 points). We will review the offeror's plans for evaluating the performance of customer service representatives, coaching them to improve, and maximizing the performance of each individual.

d. Communication (5 points). We are seeking an offeror who takes a proactive approach in providing relevant and accurate information and expresses an interest and willingness to act as an integral member of the TSP's operations team. We will assess how the offeror routinely communicates internally throughout the organization, and will also review how communications with the Agency would take place. The clarity, neatness, completeness, presentation, lack of errors, etc., of the proposal will also reflect on the effectiveness of the offeror's communications abilities.

## 2. *Process Management* (20 Points)

A number of different processes are used in the best-run call centers to help deliver consistently high levels of service. In order to evaluate offeror capabilities in this area, we will review the following:

a. Workforce management (5 points). Workforce management processes include forecasting, staffing, scheduling, real time management, and service level management. We will evaluate these processes to determine how proactive the organization is and how strong its emphasis is on planning as opposed to reacting. Our review will focus on the ability to effectively manage phone calls, e-messaging, and fulfillment services.

b. Quality assurance (6 points). Quality assurance practices determine how consistently the organization delivers services. We will assess the processes used by the offeror to determine how effective the offeror will be at creating a consistent, responsive experience for all callers who use the service whether via phone or e-messaging. We will also evaluate the offeror's willingness to adopt the TSP's quality assurance program.

c. Complaint/escalation management (4 points). Complaints are a fact of life in call centers and the best ones recognize them as an opportunity to turn around customer perceptions and for improving processes. We will

assess the offeror's willingness to adopt the TSP's customer satisfaction survey program as well as the offeror's plans for handling complaints (both programmatic and service-oriented) and improving processes based on those complaints.

d. Project management (5 points). Starting up a new center requires a great deal of planning, coordination, and communication. We will review the approach that the offeror takes toward project management and evaluate how effectively this approach would meet Agency needs. We will assess the offeror's capabilities and implementation plan in terms of not only the timeliness of their tasks, but also in the amount of communication/ interaction the offeror expects to provide through the process.

### 3. *Technology and Facility Management* (24 Points)

In order for a call center to operate successfully, it must be able to provide and maintain an effective information technology infrastructure to support its customer service representatives and operations. Further, it must be sensitive to and conversant with the latest information and physical security technologies and challenges. We will evaluate the vendors on the following skills:

a. Reporting (5 points). Call centers take different approaches to reporting results. Our review will include an assessment of the offeror's reporting plans to ensure that it will provide the key metrics that produce a complete picture of performance. Reporting requirements will include typical call center metrics. Performance data on the operations of the call center will originate from the offeror's systems. Our preference is to have electronic access to this information whenever possible; consequently, an offeror providing electronic access will receive a higher score.

b. Technology support and management (5 points). We will evaluate how the offeror ensures high levels of availability, how applications and hardware are kept current, and whether technical support procedures are in place to document, resolve, and minimize down time. We will also evaluate the offeror's willingness to incorporate emerging call center technologies into their environment.

c. Back-up procedures and disaster avoidance/business continuity (5 points). We will review disaster recovery

procedures from two different perspectives. The first is the view of the offeror's operations and the systems and procedures it has in place to keep its operations up and running as consistently as possible. Our second view will be the ability of the offeror to act as the disaster recovery site if the Clintwood call center experiences a disaster. We will also review the offeror's methods of backing up data and systems as well as the procedures that are in place to avoid a disaster and ensure business continuity.

d. System and physical security (9 points). We will review the offeror's proposed physical and information technology (IT) security controls and procedures to ensure adequate safeguards will be in place to protect participant and Agency data, facilities, and systems. Physical and IT security guidelines are provided as appendices to the Request for Proposals. We will also evaluate the offeror's willingness to adopt Agency-recommended emerging security requirements.

B. Foundational Elements and Experience - 36 points

The items below represent background and structural items in the call center which are required for a successful operation and which cannot be easily changed in response to our requirements.

1. Facility (9 points). We will evaluate the location of the proposed facility to determine its ease of access for site visits, potential for weather-related disruptions, etc. We will also review the amenities and set-up of the center, and how space is used throughout the area.

2. Leadership (9 points). We will review the resumes of the proposed key members of the management team for the Agency's call center to ensure they have the background and experience required to successfully direct the operation and meet program objectives. We will also confirm the offeror's acknowledgement that the Agency must approve any replacements for the key members of the management team.

3. Experience (9 points). We will review past programs and clients of the offeror to determine how familiar the offeror is with servicing a similar participant base in a

financial services setting. We will talk to references to obtain first-hand feedback.

4. Technology architecture (9 points). We will evaluate the technology that will be utilized by the offeror to determine how well it will meet Agency needs and how effectively it has been built in terms of redundancy and disaster recovery capability.

M.5. Cost/Price Evaluation. The Agency will make its award to the responsible vendor whose offer conforms to the solicitation and is most advantageous to the Agency, cost or price and other factors considered. For this solicitation, operational and account management expertise are more important than price. As proposals become more equal in operational and account management capabilities, cost or price will become more important.

M.6. Award.

a. The Agency may reject any or all offers, accept other than the lowest cost/price offer, and waive informalities and minor irregularities in offers received.

b. The Agency may award a contract on the basis of initial offers received, without discussions. Therefore, each initial offer should contain the Offeror's best terms from a cost/price and technical standpoint.

M.7. 52.252-1 Solicitation Provisions Incorporated by Reference (Feb 1998)

This solicitation incorporates one or more solicitation provisions by reference, with the same force and effect as if they were given in full text. Upon request, the Contracting Officer will make their full text available. The Offeror is cautioned that the listed provisions may include blocks that must be completed by the Offeror and submitted with its quotation or offer. In lieu of submitting the full text of those provisions, the Offeror may identify the provision by paragraph identifier and provide the appropriate information with its quotation or offer. Also the full text of a solicitation provision may be accessed electronically at this address:

<http://www.acqnet.gov/far/>

52.217-5 Evaluation of Options (July 1990)

## Attachment A. Questionnaire for External Call Center Services

1. Confirm that you can meet all the minimum technical requirements for this project as outlined in section M.3. Identify and explain your proposed alternative for any requirement that you cannot meet.
  
2. Indicate the address(es) of the site(s) you plan to use for this project. If you plan to use more than one site, indicate the percentage of total telephone traffic to be handled by site. Confirm that all phone associates will be located at this sites(s), and that no at-home, hoteling, or other remote location strategy will be used. Identify anticipated use of subcontractors by name, location, category of work, and proposed staffing levels. Describe its/their roles and responsibilities in performing any functions of the services described herein. If you plan on using any subcontractors, validate that you understand that all requirements established herein for the Offeror also apply to the subcontractor.
  
3. Describe the area to be used for this project.
  - a. What provisions have you made for ergonomic design?
  - b. How is noise level reduced throughout the work area?
  - c. How many fully functioning (telephone, PC, and adequate desk space) workstations will be in the training room? Is the training room walled off on all sides from the rest of the building? How is the training facility secured when not in use to prevent inappropriate access to Agency systems?
  - d. How long will it take an employee to get to:
    - A break or quiet room
    - A vending area
    - A cafeteria or similar full service food facility?
  - e. What is the square footage of an agent's workstation?
  - f. Are the workstations dedicated to an individual, or will your technology allow for use by different PSRs if necessary?

4. Provide a proposed, comprehensive organizational structure for this contract showing the number of staff per team and the number of support teams and roles assigned to the project.

5. Provide resumes of the key staff you expect to use for this project. If you cannot at this time identify the key staff members (Project Manager, Call Center Manager, IT Manager, etc.), provide resumes of those in similar roles in your company. Also, certify your understanding that if replacements to this team are made, the resumes of the incoming staff must be reviewed and approved in advance by the Agency's Contracting Officer's Technical Representative for this contract.

6. In the past ten years, how many financial services (401(k), similar retirement, or other type of investing, other than credit card/basic banking) clients have you provided inbound call handling support for? Describe (program size, call types, skill requirements, etc.) the three (3) programs you have supported over the past ten years that most closely resemble the description of the TSP program.

7. Provide references for three (3) clients recently added and two (2) recently lost. References should preferably be companies with call centers of 50 to 500 agents in the financial service sector. Include company name and contact telephone number and e-mail address, along with a brief description of your support for the program.

8. The Agency will supply all desktop applications for this program, and will also supply the IVR hardware, application, and support. Describe the systems and versions you will use for the following:

- a. Automatic Call Distribution (ACD)
- b. ACD Reporting
- c. Call Recording (of all calls)
- d. Call Monitoring (if different from Call Recording)
- e. Workforce Management

9. Describe how telecommunications lines (both data and voice) enter your facility, and what capabilities you intend to have in place to operate when power is out. Also

describe any redundancy in place for call processing/routing systems.

10. What is your turnover rate during the first three months of employment (number of agents leaving prior to 90-day mark/number of agents hired), and what is your overall annualized turnover rate for telephone representatives? What is the average tenure in months for your telephone staff at the site(s) where you propose that this project be handled? If there are no other programs at the proposed site, provide the average tenure in months for your telephone staff working the project most similar to the TSP program.

11. Please describe your hiring criteria and hiring process. Include information on the timeframe (from notification to start date) required to hire representatives for a program like the Agency's, and the maximum number of representatives you will be able to hire and train at one time at program implementation, and how many you can hire and train once operating for this program.

12. Briefly describe your new hire training programs. What processes do you have in place to maximize a new representative's performance as quickly as possible? How do you determine when a new hire is ready to take calls independently? How do you ensure that each agent has the proper "soft skills" required to succeed?

13. Describe your ongoing training program. How do you determine when an experienced representative needs more training in a particular area? How do you deliver on-going training to experienced representatives? What training exists for frontline supervisory/management teams to ensure they have the skills needed to run a call center?

14. Describe how you use coaching to optimize individual representative performance. How often do supervisors meet formally and informally with their staff? What is addressed during these meetings? How do coaches ensure that these meetings generate improvement in performance?

15. Describe your performance management program. What is your progressive discipline process; what steps are included and how long does each step take? How is progress monitored? For employees with exemplary performance, how do you provide positive recognition?

16. Describe how you communicate internally in the center. What tools are available to get a message quickly to frontline staff? What regular channels are in place to facilitate two-way communication? How often do you typically hold regular and/or *ad-hoc* meetings?

17. Describe how you manage communication with clients. Who is the main contact point with the client? Will the main TSP contacts have more than one individual they can call? How are invoicing questions handled?

18. Describe your processes for managing service levels, efficiency, and cost. How do you ensure that you have enough, but not too much, staff at each interval? How do you balance employee requests for time off and schedule changes with customer workload requirements? How do you evaluate your ability to be efficient?

19. Given the workload estimates for calls, e-messaging, and fulfillment activities provided in section C of this document, please fill out the table below indicating how many Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Participant Service Representatives (PSRs) you will have on staff by month for the first year of this contract. The number you provide below for FTE Phone PSRs (assume 40 hours per week for an FTE) should be based on the last two columns of the table in section C.2.

Month	# of FTE PSRs for Phones	# of FTE PSRs for Email	# of FTE PSRs for Fulfillment
March 2009			
April 2009			
May 2009			
June 2009			
July 2009			
August 2009			
September 2009			
October 2009			
November 2009			
December 2009			
January 2010			
February 2010			

20. If there is a disaster at the Clintwood site, you will be required to handle all telephone traffic as outlined in the table in Section C.2 under the column labeled "Estimated Total Call Volume to Agents". How many FTEs will you plan and staff for in the event of a disaster in the Clintwood site? How do you propose providing the extra staffing needed to handle the full call volume in the event of a Clintwood disaster? How long will it take you to go from your typical staff size to the number of trained representatives needed in the event of a prolonged disaster?

21. Validate that you understand and can fulfill the obligations outlined in the Quality Assurance Program documentation provided in attachment C. Are there any steps you plan to take over and above what the program calls for, and if so what are they?

22. Describe your process for handling complaint and helpline calls. How will your representatives differentiate a minor critical comment from a significant complaint about the TSP program/service? How will you select the staff to handle complaints and helpline requests, and how will they be trained? How will you know that complaint and helpline calls will be handled effectively?

23. Describe your approach to project management. How much experience do you have with call center start-ups? Do you have staff dedicated to project management or will this be handled by operational management? How long do you anticipate the start-up to take from the point where the contract is finalized until you can start taking calls?

24. Describe the systems you will use to provide reports on your performance. Confirm you are able to provide the daily metrics as outlined in Attachment K? If not, which ones can you provide? Will the Agency have direct remote access into reports that show real-time and historical metrics such as calls in queue, service level, agents logged in, calls answered, and average handle times?

25. Describe your IT technical support. How do you determine the severity of a systems problem? How are problems evaluated? How many technicians do you have on site?

26. How will you ensure availability, capacity, and throughput of hardware (e.g. workstations, servers, etc.) required to support this SOW. How will you handle technology refreshment? What will the process be for incorporating emerging call center technologies into your environment?
27. Describe your network and call recording backup procedures? Include the frequency of backups and the process for handling and storage of removable media.
28. Describe your disaster avoidance and recovery procedures for communications, computer, and other systems planned for use in supporting this activity. How would you handle a long-term disaster (i.e., 48 hours or more) at your site? What experience do your key personnel or staff have in business continuity/disaster recovery planning?
29. Explain how you would ensure against identity theft and compromise of confidential client/participant data, including, but not limited to:
- a. Employee training/awareness programs
  - b. Employee background checks
  - c. Management oversight
  - d. Documented corporate procedures
  - e. Media management policies and procedures
30. Explain your response and notification process in the event of a suspected loss/misplacement of Agency or participant data or other security incidents.
31. Describe how you will achieve network separation as outlined in Attachment F.
32. Describe your plan to isolate Agency support staff, data and equipment from any other operations at your facility.
33. Describe your plan for controlling and monitoring ingress/ egress from the Agency work and information technology areas. Include plans for visitor control, observation (e.g. video monitoring and recording, guards, etc.) and audit of ingress/egress activity.
34. Describe your policies and procedures for desktop and server management. Describe your process for incorporating

the Agency's recommendations for emerging security requirements.

Attachment B - Performance Standards

**Call Center Performance Standards**

<b>Calls</b>		
<b>Task</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Abandonment Rate</b>	Less than 2% daily	The number of calls that are abandoned before they are answered by a PSR must not exceed 2% of daily calls.
<b>Adherence</b>	Internal standard set by each call center	Internal metric only. Generally, PSRs must be available to receive calls for at least 90% of their work schedule.
<b>Average Handle Time</b>	270 – 390 seconds A Combination of Average Talk Time 210-270 seconds	Average Talk Time - The average amount of time that a PSR spends with a caller during a transaction should generally not exceed 270 seconds.
	After Call Work 60-120 seconds (less than 2 minutes)	After Call Work - The amount of time that a PSR is unavailable to receive calls due to work necessitated by an inbound call, e.g., entering data, filing out forms, should generally be less than 2 minutes.
<b>Blocked Calls</b>	Less than or equal to 2% daily	The number of calls that cannot be connected immediately because no circuit is available or because the ACD is programmed to block calls from the queue (the queue is backed up beyond a certain threshold) must not exceed 2% of daily calls.
<b>Occupancy</b>	Internal standard set by each call center	The standard for the percentage time that a PSR handles calls versus waits for calls will set by each call center.
<b>Telephone Service Factor</b>	90% within 20 seconds	90% of all calls must be answered within 20 seconds of receipt.

Attachment C - Quality Assurance Program



Thrift Savings Plan

Telephone Service Quality Assurance Program

## Table of Contents

Purpose.....	2
Ethical Monitoring Practices.....	3
Definitions.....	4
Frequency.....	5
Methodology.....	6
Calibration.....	8
Coaching.....	9
Monitoring Form and Rating Guidelines.....	9

## Purpose

There are many factors that impact the satisfaction that a customer has with an organization. At the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), one of those ways is through the many phone interactions that take place during the week with participants. It is our goal to ensure that these contacts are handled in a way that maximizes both the participant's experience and the value of the call to our agency. To determine our success at meeting this goal, we are instituting a Quality Assurance (QA) program that will measure our call handling performance.

The specific objectives behind the Quality Assurance (QA) program are to:

- Generate high levels of customer satisfaction from our callers, thereby increasing satisfaction with our service
- Ensure consistent service delivery regardless of where the call is handled
- Educate ourselves on participant needs and how to best fulfill those needs
- Identify ways to continuously improve the service being provided by our agency

We will achieve these goals through a call monitoring program. This program will allow us the ability to listen to both sides of the recorded call and score the call against previously developed standards. To ensure that the monitoring program meets the needs not only of our participants, but also of our agency and the individual employees that answer our calls, we will adhere to the ethical practices listed in the next section.

## Ethical Monitoring Practices

It is our intention to institute a monitoring program that meets our organizational objectives while also respecting the needs of our Participant Service Representatives (PSRs). To ensure the program does this, we will adhere to the following ethical practices:

1. Job candidates will be informed early on in the screening process about the call monitoring program.
2. We will inform PSRs that all calls are being recorded, and that any call can then be scored and used as a monitored call.
3. PSRs will be informed about what lines are recorded and monitored, and what lines are not recorded.
4. If a personal call comes in on a business line and is subsequently chosen for monitoring, we will stop listening to the call as soon as it is determined that it is of a personal nature and the PSR will be asked to let personal callers know which phone they should be using for these calls.
5. We will follow all applicable laws regarding notification to the callers about the recording of calls.
6. Our monitoring equipment will record only telephone calls, not what is said by PSRs between calls at their workstations.
7. The only people that will listen to recorded calls are those with a specific business need to hear the interactions. The only people that can grade the calls and give feedback on them are those specifically trained and qualified to do so.
8. Our PSRs will be notified about the purpose of the monitoring, how it is conducted, and how we will use the results.
9. We will not, under any circumstances, publicly post individual monitoring results by name or post any other monitoring related data that could identify an individual PSR's results.
10. We will not single out PSRs for unsatisfactory performance that is common to a group of PSRs.
11. We will use a standardized form to evaluate calls.
12. As more than one person will be monitoring and supplying feedback, we will institute a calibration program to ensure that those doing the monitoring are grading results as consistently as possible.
13. To the best extent possible, we will use objective criteria in evaluation forms and monitoring techniques.
14. We will summarize PSR results at a group level to determine where the performance of the group is centered.
15. New hires and PSRs struggling to meet call quality performance standards will be monitored more frequently.
16. PSRs will be encouraged to listen to calls that are monitored. If they disagree with an evaluation, a third party (selected internally by each call center) can be brought in to consult on the call.

## Definitions

Coaching – The act of providing feedback to a PSR regarding performance. For the purposes of the QA program, coaching is provided on the quality of call handling as determined by an evaluator when monitoring a call. Coaching is not limited to quality of service though, as PSRs can also be coached on performance as it relates to productivity, attendance, adherence to schedule, and other factors deemed important to the TSP.

Evaluator – A member of the call center team that has been trained in call monitoring and has demonstrated through calibration sessions the ability to rate calls in a fashion similar to the rest of the evaluators, and in accordance with established procedures.

Fully Experienced PSR - Also known as a veteran. This is a PSR who does not have any performance problems in regards to call handling. This individual demonstrates extensive TSP knowledge and consistently employs proper telephone technique and skills. Only regular monitoring is necessary. The determination to view a PSR as fully experienced is a decision made at the call center level.

Monitoring – The process of listening to a call and evaluating the performance of the PSR on that call. There are three different methods that can be used to monitor:

Side-by-side (SBS) – SBS occurs when the evaluator plugs into the PSR's phone, listens to both sides of a live conversation and observes the PSRs use of the system.

Silent – Silent monitoring occurs when the evaluator listens in on a live call away from the PSR workstation and without informing the PSR of the observation.

Record and review – Record and review is done when a previously recorded call is listened to and scored by an evaluator. This most often happens in a silent mode, but can also be done in a SBS fashion with the PSR. **Record and review is the only method to be used for the purposes of calibration.**

Extended Monitoring Program – The observing and evaluating of a predetermined number of calls for each newly hired PSR that is independently answering TSP calls and for PSRs with performance problems. The number of evaluated calls for individuals in this group is significantly higher than for those PSRs in the regular monitoring program. Call observations that take place throughout the month.

Regular Monitoring Program - The observing and evaluating of a predetermined number of calls for each PSR that is independently answering TSP calls. Monitoring is performed by evaluators selected by each call center, using the attached monitoring form approved by the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (Agency).

## Frequency

All of the calls coming in to the TSP customer service lines will be recorded. We will then select a random representative sample of these calls to evaluate.

The total sample size of calls to be evaluated is comprised of two elements:

a.) **Calls representing the “regular” monitoring program**, the data from which is used not only for individual feedback but also for the development of group reports and trending analysis.

For program start-up, regular monitoring will consist of five calls per PSR per month. The intention is to eventually lower this to three per PSR per month as the PSR becomes more experienced and demonstrates consistent service delivery.

The results from this sample will be used to generate the “official” organizational results and develop the summary reports. It will also comprise the full sample of individual results for those PSRs that are fully experienced and do not have any performance problems concerning call handling.

b.) **Calls representing the “extended” monitoring program** that will be done for new hires and PSRs with performance problems. The latter is defined as a PSR whose scores for three consecutive monthly reviews are consistently under 88% or if one month is below 80%. The amount of calls done for this sample **will vary based on PSR need**. Some months, when all staff are fully trained and there are no performance issues, there will be no extended monitoring. Other months, when a number of new staff members are on board, the extended sample will be greater than the regular sample.

For new hires taking calls independently, the following guidelines are to be used for frequency of monitoring:

- 1<sup>st</sup> week – 4-8 calls per week monitored
- 2<sup>nd</sup> week – 3-6 calls per week monitored
- 3<sup>rd</sup> week – 2-4 calls per week monitored
- 4<sup>th</sup> week – release to regular monitoring program

These frequencies should be viewed as minimum guidelines. If progress is not being made, a reduction in sample size should not occur. In fact, there are times when an increase will be most appropriate.

In generating individual quality performance results, data from both the regular and extended sample will be used. The higher number of calls used will increase the validity of the individual results and will provide those PSRs more in need of improvement with additional feedback to help increase performance levels more quickly. As noted above, the extended sample will not be used in generating organizational results.

Experienced staff members that are generating low quality scores will follow the same extended monitoring program. Here again, the number of calls monitored should be viewed as a minimum

guideline, and should be adjusted upward if performance dictates. If performance does not improve, alternative measures taken at the call center level need to be considered.

## Methodology

For the purposes of calibration between the two call centers, all regular monitoring will be done via recorded calls. An evaluator will either listen to the calls in a closed office, or will listen with headphones at a cubicle.

To ensure a valid sample, the evaluator will choose calls from a schedule determined in advance at the call center level. This schedule will spread out the calls throughout the day and month, and will be kept private so that no one knows when calls will be monitored. This helps to ensure the validity of the program.

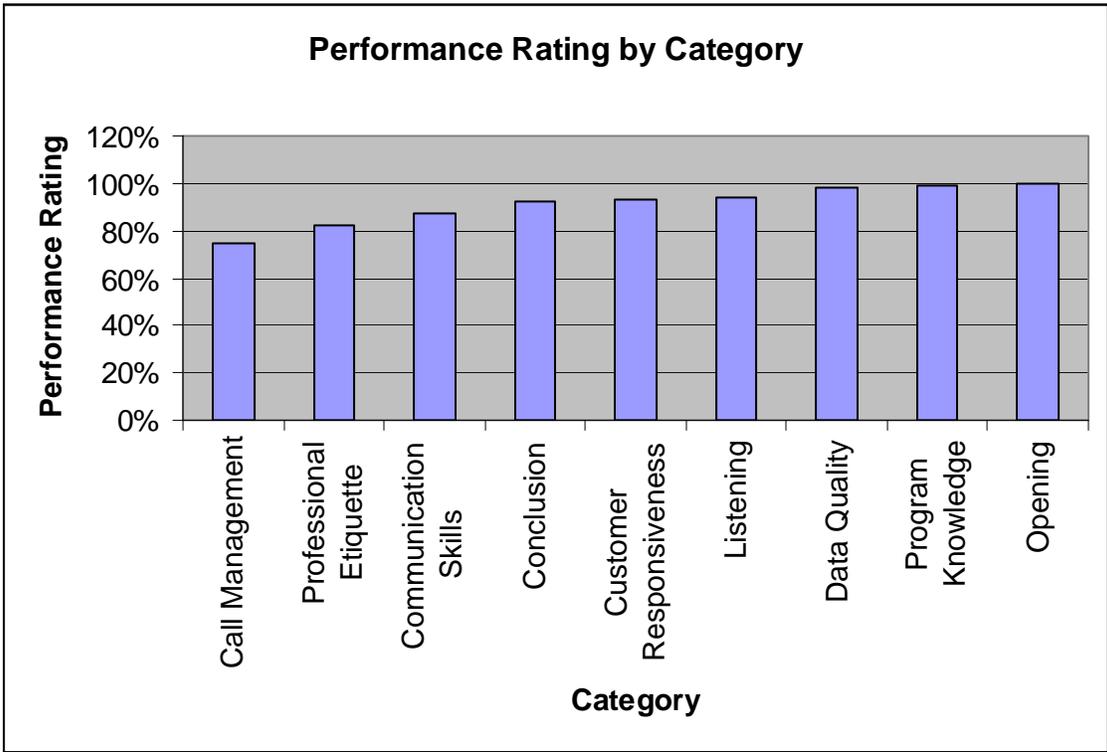
On a day where it is indicated that a call should be monitored, the evaluator (or the automated system) should choose a call from that day at random. While listening to the call, the evaluator will score it on the approved monitoring form. The form will then be given to the PSR within three business days except in cases where the call receives a severely low rating. In those cases, action will be taken immediately.

When the evaluator has listened to the call and completed the monitoring sheet, the PSR will be given the opportunity to listen to the call and then the evaluator and the PSR will sit down for a review and coaching session. In many cases, this session may just be a quick review of what was scored, especially when the call is satisfactory and the PSR is in agreement with the evaluation. Calls that are exceptionally good, or those that are unsatisfactory, will require additional discussion and/or coaching. Additional discussion is also required when a PSR's view of the call is substantially different from that of the evaluator.

At the end of the month, results will be rolled up into reports. Individual reports will be created for each PSR. The reports will provide the following type of information (though the format may differ):

### Monthly QA Report - Mary Jones Month of July 2004

<u>Category</u>	<u>Performance Rating</u>
-	-
-	-
<u>Foundational Skills</u>	
Opening	100%
Data Quality	98%
Professional Etiquette	82%
Conclusion	92%
<u>Finesse Skills</u>	
Customer Responsiveness	93%
Call Management	75%
Listening	94%
Program Knowledge	99%
Communication Skills	87%



This reporting provides the PSR with scores for the different categories of call quality, along with a graph to help illustrate where the best opportunities for improvement exist. The chart above is referred to as a Pareto chart. The categories are not listed in the same order as the table (which is the same order as the monitoring form). They are instead listed in a “worst to best” order, to make it easier to determine where the greatest improvement opportunities exist.

The Agency, in conjunction with the call centers, has established a total score of 88% or above as acceptable.

## Calibration

In order to generate the most valid results possible, evaluators will participate in a monthly calibration program. The purpose of this program is to ensure that evaluations are done correctly and consistently by everyone involved.

Formal calibration will be done on two levels – by individual call center and across both call centers. Within each call center, it is expected that at least ten calls per month will be simultaneously scored by all those doing the evaluating. (The scoring of all ten calls does not have to take place during one session.) The process for this is as follows:

- 1) Monitor without discussing - everyone in the room listens to the same call and evaluates it against the monitoring criteria.
- 2) Share ratings – everyone offers their scores to each criteria without reasons for each and without specific examples.
- 3) Agree to interpretation of the consistent items and those that are more objective – once everyone has shared results, “calibrate” the variances. Go around the room and agree on the items that apply in most every situation and how to rate the more “objective” items.
- 4) Monitor again and share ratings – use a new form and listen to the call again and evaluate it against the agreed rating structure.
- 5) Report on the findings – After the second round of ratings for a call, gather the forms from each evaluator and report the individual scores on an excel spreadsheet. Trend the variances over time.

It is reasonable to expect that an average call may take 20 to 30 minutes to calibrate. Consistent problems with an individual evaluator whose scores are significantly different from the norm must be addressed. If the differences cannot be eliminated, the center should consider reassignment and replacement.

Because calls for the TSP are handled at two different call center sites, it is equally important to calibrate across the sites. To do this, calls from each site will be randomly selected for review. The calls will be selected in accordance with a schedule determined in advance at the Agency level. The calls may be identified as a result of escalated activity or through a random sample (e.g., the nth call on the 5<sup>th</sup> business day of the month and the 5<sup>th</sup> call on the 15<sup>th</sup> business day of the month). Representatives from each evaluating team at each center will tele/videoconference in once each month to listen to the calls and perform steps one through four above. These calls will not be included in the monthly samples from each call center.

It is important that the calibration at the organizational level reveal only minor variances, because significant variances between centers will result in inconsistent service delivery to participants. Should the cross-center calibration indicate inconsistent ratings, additional monitoring will take place beyond the three calls per month.

In addition to the formal calibration program described above, we strongly encourage informal calibration take place. Exceptionally challenging calls that are discovered during the regular monitoring program should be flagged for calibration and discussed among evaluators at both the center and cross-center level. These discussions can often yield a substantial amount of learning and understanding.

## Coaching

Once calls are properly evaluated, the results are shared with the PSR during a review of the call. Coaching at the TSP focuses not just on problems, but also on successes. Our coaching program will be:

- Specific – When providing feedback, we’ll speak directly to what happened (e.g., “the way you responded to that participant’s complaint about the application process really put him at ease and helped clarify the situation for him”) and not make vague references (e.g., “you handled that complaint well”).
- Professional – Feedback will be based strictly on the calls at hand, and will be approached from the perspective of how to improve results over the long term.
- Positive and constructive – Even when discussing problems, we will assume that improvements can and will be made. We’ll also make sure that successes are noted and celebrated.
- Gentle but straightforward – We recognize that when constructive feedback is given the situation can become emotionally charged and we will recognize that by employing a gentle yet honest approach.
- Ongoing – This is not a temporary program.
- From the heart – Those doing the evaluating should be chosen to do so in part because they truly care about the work and the people doing it every day.
- Timely – All effort will be made to provide feedback within 24 hours of monitoring, with the understanding that there are times that call volumes may not allow it. Even during the busiest times, though, the time between the monitoring and the delivery of feedback will never exceed three business days.

The decision whether or not to integrate the review and coaching program into the center’s performance evaluation and progressive discipline program, will be made at the call center level.

## Monitoring Form and Rating Guidelines

The attached monitoring form and rating guidelines will be used. Over time, the form may be changed to improve the quality of the feedback given and to reflect changes in the working environment (including changes in expectations). Despite any changes that are made, we will always provide rating guidelines to help PSRs and evaluators understand what is expected. Over time, changes may also be made to these guidelines in response to recommendations by both call center sites as time and experience helps to clarify any points of confusion.

## PSR Telephone Monitoring Form – Thrift Savings Plan

**PSR Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **PSR ID#:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**FOUNDATION SKILLS**

*Rating: 2 = Yes, achieves foundation skill 0 = No, does not meet foundation skill N/A=no opportunity to demonstrate skill*

**OPENING**

Thanks customer for calling, states full name, offers assistance Yes = 2 No = 0 N/A

Gathers & verifies account number and current daytime telephone number, verifies customer identity Yes = 2 No = 0 N/A

**DATA QUALITY**

Provides accurate information Yes = 2 No = 0

**PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE**

Uses appropriate hold and/or transfer steps Yes = 2 No = 0 N/A

Uses "please", "thank you", caller's name when appropriate Yes = 2 No = 0

Does not interrupt caller Yes = 2 No = 0 N/A

**CONCLUSION**

Summarizes next steps/agreements Yes = 2 No = 0 N/A

Asks to be of further assistance Yes = 2 No = 0 N/A

Brands the call Yes = 2 No = 0 N/A

# Foundation Skills Achieved: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**FINESSE SKILLS**

*Rating: 0= unsatisfactory 1= needs improvement 2= satisfactory 3= outstanding*

*N/A=not applicable for this call*

**CALL MANAGEMENT/LISTENING**

Checks for understanding & restates for understanding 0 1 2 3 N/A

Manages silence well 0 1 2 3 N/A

Captures information the first time 0 1 2 3 N/A

Attempts to build relationship 0 1 2 3 N/A

**PROGRAM KNOWLEDGE**

Educates customer, demonstrates industry & product expertise 0 1 2 3 N/A

Asks appropriate questions & attempts call objective 0 1 2 3

Promotes TSP web site/ThriftLine 0 1 2 3 N/A

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS/  
CUSTOMER RESPONSIVENESS**

Uses polite manner, effective pace, volume & tone 0 1 2 3

Acknowledges customer's issue/problem, handles objections/gains customer's commitment 0 1 2 3 N/A

Provides accurate and pertinent inquiry/ 0 1 2 3

Notes:

## Monitoring Form Supporting Guidelines

### FOUNDATION SKILLS

*Rating: Yes=achieves foundation skill No=does not meet foundation skill N/A= no opportunity to demonstrate skill*

### OPENING

<i>Skill</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Guidelines</i>
<p><b>Thanks customer for calling.</b></p> <p>(All callers now contact the TSP through the ThriftLine. As a result, the caller is already aware that he/she has contacted the TSP when they begin speaking with a PSR. Therefore, it is no longer a requirement that the PSR verify that the TSP was called.)</p>	<p>Expresses gratitude for the contact.</p>	<p>In order to achieve a YES rating, PSRs must state, <i>"Thank you for calling."</i></p> <p>This greeting may be prefaced by a statement or greeting such as, <i>"good morning"</i> or <i>"good afternoon"</i>, but cannot be modified in any other way (e.g., <i>"Thanks"</i> instead of <i>" Thank you"</i>).</p> <p>N/A: This skill may be rated <i>Not Applicable</i> if the caller interrupts the PSR with their question/issue and the PSR cannot continue.</p>
<p><b>States First and Last Name, asks caller to identify themselves</b></p>	<p>Identifies the PSR to the caller and demonstrates willingness to take responsibility for the answer/resolution offered.</p>	<p>The PSR is required to state his or her first and last name as part of the greeting. The specific verbiage used may be modified (e.g., <i>" This is Greg Smith "</i>, <i>" Lisa Jones speaking "</i>) to allow for individual style, but must be stated after thanking the customer for calling and before offering assistance. The PSR must then ask the caller to identify themselves (e.g., <i>"May I ask who I'm speaking with please?"</i>)</p> <p>N/A: This skill may not be rated Not Applicable. The PSR is responsible for offering his or her first and last name during every contact.</p>
<p><b>Offers Assistance</b></p>	<p>To express willingness to assist the customer and signal the progression of the call.</p>	<p>In order to achieve a YES rating, the PSR <u>must offer to assist the caller</u>. The verbiage used may be modified (e.g., <i>"How may I help you?"</i>, <i>"How may I assist you?"</i>, <i>"What can I do for you today?"</i>) to allow for individual style, but must be stated immediately after the PSR states his/her name.</p> <p>N/A: This skill may be rated Not Applicable <u>only</u> if the caller interrupts the PSR with the question/issue and it would be illogical for the PSR to offer assistance.</p>
<p><b>Gathers &amp; verifies account number if not provided through ThriftLine (VRS), verifies daytime telephone</b></p>	<p>Determines the relationship to the policyholder and the information that can be provided.</p>	<p>When the record is retrieved, the customer's identity must be verified.</p> <p>Example: <i>"May I ask to whom I'm speaking?"</i></p>

<p><b>number &amp; customer's identity</b></p>		<p>If the caller cannot identify him or herself as an authorized account holder, he or she should be informed that while you may answer general questions regarding TSP products and services, you may not offer information or comment on the specifics of the account.</p> <p>The Privacy Act should be referenced if the caller asks why personal information cannot be released.</p>
<p><b><i>A final overall rating of zero may be given if the PSR releases account information without verifying the identity of the participant or obtaining the participant's verbal permission to release information to a third party. (This does not apply when speaking to the representative of the participant's new financial institution.)</i></b></p>	<p>Ensures that correct customer information is retrieved.</p> <p>Resolves outstanding service issues.</p>	<p>If not provided through the VRS, a social security number must be requested from each participant before the participant's issue/question is addressed.</p> <p>Example:  <i>"I'd be happy to help you with that. May I have your social security number so I can access your account?"</i></p> <p><i>N/A:</i> This skill may be rated Not Applicable in the event the caller is not the account holder and is only requesting general information.</p>

**DATA QUALITY**

<i>Skill</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Guidelines</i>
<p><b>Provides accurate information</b></p> <p><b><i>A final overall rating of zero may be given if the participant is provided with inaccurate information that would severely impact the participant's account.</i></b></p>	<p>Ensures that the caller receives the correct information.</p>	<p>The PSR needs to interpret information on the system correctly and relay it accurately to the caller. A rating of "no" is given when the information supplied to the caller is incorrect.</p> <p>Example of incorrect response:  <i>"Your address can only be changed through your employing agency"</i> - while the record indicates that the participant is separated from Federal service.</p> <p><i>N/A:</i> This skill may not be rated Not Applicable. All calls involve the relay of certain pieces of information and that information must be accurate.</p>

**PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE**

<i>Skill</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Guidelines</i>
<p><b>Uses appropriate hold and transfer steps</b></p>	<p>Notifies the caller when placing him/her on hold and makes the wait as pleasant as possible.</p>	<p>Whenever the hold is used, the PSR should state what needs to be done and how long the hold period will last. The PSR must also ask the participant for permission to place him/her on hold.</p> <p>Example:  <i>"I need to research that before giving you an answer. This will take no longer than one or two</i></p>

	<p>Prepares the caller in advance if a transfer is going to take place and lets him/her know where and why the call is being transferred.</p>	<p><i>minutes. May I place you on hold?"</i></p> <p>When the PSR returns to the call he/she must thank the caller for holding. A stated hold time should never exceed two minutes, and the PSR must check back before the time estimate is up, even if the research is not completed. If more time is required, a new time estimate should be given and permission from the caller must again be obtained.</p> <p>If the call must be transferred, the participant should be told why the transfer is taking place and who (full name and title if appropriate) will be receiving the call. The PSR must also ask for permission to transfer.</p> <p>Example: <i>"The information you are requesting is not available to me; however, my supervisor, Mary Jones, can help you with this. May I place you on hold to transfer the call to her?"</i></p> <p><i>N/A:</i> This skill may be rated Not Applicable if the PSR does not need to use the hold button or make a transfer during the call.</p>
<p><b>Uses please, thank you, and caller's name when appropriate</b></p>	<p>Projects an image of courtesy and caring.</p> <p>Helps personalize the caller's experience.</p>	<p>Use of "please" and "thank you" typically works best when asking the caller for information.</p> <p>Example: <i>"Would you please provide me with your current address? (Participant states address). Thank you."</i></p> <p>Occasional use of the caller's name (using Mr., Ms., or Mrs. with the last name) especially during a long, complex call, helps to personalize the service experience.</p> <p><i>N/A:</i> This skill may not be rated N/A, as every call will provide the opportunity to extend these forms of courtesy.</p>
<p><b>Does not interrupt caller</b></p>	<p>Ensures complete understanding of facts and caller's perspective.</p> <p>Allows the caller to complete each sentence and provides the opportunity to fully express concern or frustration.</p>	<p>Even in those cases where a customer goes off "on a tangent," the PSR should allow the caller to finish speaking before pulling the conversation back in line. Interrupting a caller can only occur when the caller is using profane language and needs to understand that continuing to do so will result in the PSR terminating the call.</p> <p><i>N/A:</i> This skill may not be rated N/A, except in a situation of profane language.</p>

**CONCLUSION**

<i>Skill</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Guidelines</i>
<p><b>Summarizes the next steps and agreements</b></p>	<p>Ensures understanding of any follow-up work that was discussed.</p> <p>Reminds the caller of any</p>	<p>Any action items that are agreed upon during the call need to be summarized prior to conclusion. Along with the summarization, the PSR should get agreement to the steps from the caller.</p>

	action items for which he/she may be responsible.	<p>Example:  <i>"OK Mrs. Jones, you'll fax us a completed Form TSP-3, Designation of Beneficiary, at 999-999-9999, and upon our receipt, we'll submit the form for processing. Then you'll contact us in approx. ten business days to be certain that the form was received and entered. Is that correct?"</i></p> <p><i>N/A:</i> This skill may be rated N/A for those calls that do not generate any follow-up tasks.</p>
<b>Asks to be of further assistance</b>	<p>Communicates to the caller that he/she is our first priority.</p> <p>Reduces the amount of follow-up calls that are required, as these frustrate callers and reduce organizational efficiency.</p>	<p>Prior to completing the call, the PSR should ask if he/she can be of further assistance to the caller. A typical wording would be "Is there anything else that I can help you with today?" Variations on this are acceptable as long as they convey the willingness to fully answer all inquiries.</p> <p><i>N/A:</i> This skill may be rated Not Applicable if the caller ends the call abruptly and without warning.</p>
<b>Brands the call</b>  TSP participants have the option of investing in private industry plans instead of contributing to the TSP. One way to encourage continued participation is for "quality service" and "Thrift Savings Plan" to become synonymous in the mind of the participant. Branding the call is one way of doing this.	<p>Communicates to the customer that the call is ending.</p> <p>Over time, provides a consistent image of the high quality service supplied by TSP.</p>	<p>A consistent closing should be applied to all calls, with the exception of those mentioned below. The wording options are "Thank you for contacting the Thrift Savings Plan (or TSP) and have a nice day" or "Have a nice day, and thank you for calling the Thrift Savings Plan (or TSP)." Other substitutions are acceptable only if they convey gratitude for the call and specifically use "Thrift Savings Plan" or "TSP" in the closing. Closings that don't include this would result in a "no" rating in this category.</p> <p><i>N/A:</i> This skill may be rated N/A, in the event of a complaint or an emotional caller. For these calls, the PSR should choose a closing that best fits the situation.</p>

## FINESSE SKILLS

Rating: 0= unsatisfactory 1= needs improvement 2= satisfactory 3= outstanding, N/A=not applicable for this call

## CALL MANAGEMENT/LISTENING

<i>Skill</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Guidelines</i>
<b>Checks for understanding and restates for understanding in complex situations</b>	Verifies that what the PSR heard is what the caller said, and vice versa.	<p>To receive a <b>0 rating</b>, the PSR fails to verify understanding of messages going to or coming from the caller.</p> <p>To receive a <b>1 rating</b> the PSR only partially verifies messages and instructions.</p> <p>To receive a <b>2 rating</b>, the PSR fully verifies messages and instructions.</p> <p>To receive a <b>3 rating</b>, the PSR checks for understanding based on the needs of the caller, recognizing that some may need verification even for simple requests and messages.</p>

		<p>N/A: This skill may be rated Not Applicable if the call is short and simple and the caller displays a complete understanding of the communication.</p>
<p><b>Manages silence well</b></p>	<p>Puts the caller at ease.</p> <p>Delivers a smoother call flow.</p>	<p>Silence can be generated internally, when a PSR is not sure of an answer, or externally, when the system response is slow or a computer needs to be re-booted during a call.</p> <p>To receive a <b>0 rating</b>, the PSR allows the silence to occur without acknowledging it or filling it with brief comments or using hold.</p> <p>To receive a <b>1 rating</b> the PSR intermittently acknowledges the period(s) of silence and/or only partially fills the silence with brief comments or by using hold.</p> <p>To receive a <b>2 rating</b>, the PSR “prepares” the customer for moments of silence.</p> <p>Example:  <i>“I’m getting that information for you now, just a moment please.”</i></p> <p>To receive a <b>3 rating</b>, the PSR fills times of potential silence with useful conversation.</p> <p>Example:  <i>“My computer is a bit slow today. While I’m waiting for it to access that information, may I verify your address please?”</i></p> <p>N/A: This skill may be rated N/A when there is no possibility for silence encountered during the call.</p>
<p><b>Captures information the first time</b></p>	<p>Ensures that the caller does not have to repeat information or requests</p> <p>Generates a feeling of confidence in the PSR’s abilities</p>	<p>To receive a <b>0 rating</b>, the PSR is distracted and asks the caller to repeat information.</p> <p>To receive a <b>1 rating</b> the PSR only partially captures the information without asking the caller to repeat themselves.</p> <p>To receive a <b>2 rating</b>, the PSR captures all information provided the first time.</p> <p>To receive a <b>3 rating</b>, the PSR not only captures all information the first time, but also picks up on cues that help to avoid unnecessary requests.</p> <p>Example:  <i>The caller states that she is traveling for the next few weeks. Later in the call, as the PSR is indicating the a letter will go out requiring a signature, the PSR asks for a fax or alternate address to send the form so the case can be handled without delay.</i></p> <p>N/A: This skill may be rated N/A if the PSR is having</p>

<p><b>Attempts to build relationship</b></p>	<p>Puts the caller at ease.</p> <p>Generates value in the mind of the participant over and above what is expected from the inquiry.</p> <p>Increases participant satisfaction regarding TSP service.</p>	<p>difficulties due to a bad telephone connection, if the caller has an accent that is clearly difficult to understand or any other circumstance outside the PSR's control.</p> <p>By listening to verbal cues, the PSR should be able to determine when and with whom it is appropriate to attempt to build a relationship. This is done most effectively when the PSR goes out of his/her way to show concern for and interest in the caller, beyond the issue at hand. This can also be accomplished when the PSR makes a special consideration for a caller.</p> <p>Some examples include:          (While waiting for the system to refresh):  <i>"I notice that you live right near the path of that tropical storm that hit land yesterday. I hope you haven't had any damage in your town."</i></p> <p><i>(Upon an elderly caller stating that she can't read the notice well because of her eyes) "I can discuss this with you now, and if you'd like, you can download the form from the TSP website with larger printing so that it will be easier for you to read".</i></p> <p>A PSR may receive a <b>0 rating</b> if he or she does not attempt to build a relationship, even though the opportunity presents itself and the PSR is not taking "back-to-back" calls (which would demonstrate a high call load and would discourage the additional time this takes).</p> <p>A <b>1 rating</b> may be received if the PSR goes overboard and spends too much time trying to build a relationship with a caller that is clearly not interested.</p> <p>A PSR may receive a <b>2 rating</b> if he or she makes attempts that make the call more personable and friendly without degrading the service received.</p> <p>A PSR may receive a <b>3 rating</b> when relationship building attempts are clearly successful based on the caller's reactions and the attempts are not overly time consuming.</p> <p><i>N/A:</i> This skill may be rated N/A when caller reactions and/or workload demands (back-to-back calls) dictate that an attempt to build a relationship should not be undertaken. This will quite often be the case on simple calls where getting the information quickly is typically the caller's priority.</p>
--	--	--

**PROGRAM KNOWLEDGE**

<i>Skill</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Guidelines</i>
<b>Educates customer,</b>	Enhances caller confidence.	To receive a <b>0 rating</b> , the PSR avoids providing

<p><b>demonstrates industry and product expertise</b></p>	<p>Provides thorough and accurate answers.</p> <p>Increases the caller's understanding about the TSP and the options and/or processes pertinent to the call.</p>	<p>information, provides incorrect information and/or exhibits uncertainty.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p><i>"You'll need to check with your payroll office on that. I don't know who that would be, check with your personnel office."</i></p> <p>To receive a <b>1 rating</b> the PSR only partially answers the caller's inquiries, and/or provides some information that is incorrect and exhibits a lack of self confidence.</p> <p>To receive a <b>2 rating</b>, the PSR answers all inquiries accurately in a confident manner.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p><i>"I'm sorry, Mrs. Smith, but as an active employee, you cannot close your account."</i></p> <p>To receive a <b>3 rating</b>, the PSR provides industry or product information in a confident manner and follows on the education provided with additional information, based on the caller's cues that this is helpful. If a confirmation notice will be issued, the participant is told to expect the notice in the mail.</p> <p>Example 1:</p> <p><i>"I'm sorry Mrs. Smith, but as an active employee you cannot close your account. There are some loan options however, that may meet your needs. Would you like me to describe these options for you?"</i></p> <p>Example 2:</p> <p><i>"When you complete the Form TSP-21 Loan Agreement/Promissory Note you can elect to have the funds electronically transferred directly to your bank account by entering your bank routing number and account number on the form. This will eliminate the time necessary for a check to reach you through the mail and the possibility of a lost check."</i></p> <p><i>N/A:</i> This skill may be rated N/A in the rare cases when a call does not require system use or product knowledge.</p>
<p><b>Asks appropriate questions &amp; attempts call objectives</b></p>	<p>Ensures all customer needs are uncovered and the root of the customer's issue/problem is identified.</p> <p>Moves the call forward productively and directs the caller toward a positive resolution.</p>	<p>Appropriate questions are strategic inquiries into the caller's specific situation, often in response to participant cues. By asking appropriate questions or open-ended questions (e.g., "tell me what happened") the PSR is able to uncover additional needs or concerns, clarify the participant's position and expand the opportunities to satisfy the participant's objectives during the call.</p> <p>Examples:</p>

<p><b>Promotes TSP web site/ThriftLine</b></p>	<p>Encourages the use of the TSP web site/ThriftLine for transactions, information</p>	<p><i>"Mr. Quincy, you said you sent your payment in two weeks ago. May I ask what address you mailed it to please?"</i></p> <p><i>"When you tried to enter your Social Security number on the TSP web site, what happened?"</i></p> <p>A PSR may receive a <b>0 rating</b> if he or she does not ask appropriate questions even though the opportunity existed.</p> <p>A PSR may receive a <b>1 rating</b> if he or she asks some questions that would help the participant clarify their problem but does not take advantage of every opportunity that existed.</p> <p>A PSR may receive a <b>2 rating</b> if he or she asks questions which help the participant clarify their problem and moves the call forward toward resolution.</p> <p>A PSR may receive a <b>3 rating</b> if he or she asks skillful or perceptive questions, uncovers a previously hidden need or issue, and/or applies this line of questioning during a particularly challenging call.</p> <p>To receive a <b>0 rating</b> the PSR misses all opportunities during the conversation to encourage the use of the web site/ThriftLine.</p> <p>To receive a <b>1 rating</b> only partially takes advantage of all opportunities (e.g., part is calling to inquire about the loan process and the PSR explains how obtain information from the web site but not how to apply via the web).</p> <p>To receive a <b>2 rating</b> the PSR takes advantage of all opportunities.</p> <p>To receive a <b>3 rating</b> the PSR takes advantage of every opportunity presented in the conversation to promote use of the web site/ThriftLine and creatively takes the additional steps of briefly informing the participant of other appropriate information/processes that are available through these mediums and that may be of use to the participant.</p> <p><i>N/A:</i> This skill may be rated N/A in the rare cases that there are no opportunities to promote either the web site or the ThriftLine or it is not appropriate.</p>
--	--	---

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS/CUSTOMER RESPONSIVENESS**

<i>Skill</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Guidelines</i>
<b>Uses polite manner, effective pace,</b>	Makes communication as clear as possible	To receive a <b>0 rating</b> , the PSR is difficult for the caller to understand (e.g. speaking too fast), uses business

<p><b>volume, tone</b></p>	<p>Increases the caller's comfort level</p>	<p>jargon, slang vocabulary or poor grammar.</p> <p>To receive a <b>1 rating</b> the PSR appears disinterested, uses slang vocabulary or poor grammar, or projects a negative image through voice tone and inflection.</p> <p>To receive a <b>2 rating</b>, the PSR practices clear speaking at a pace and volume that is easy for a typical caller to follow.</p> <p>To receive a <b>3 rating</b>, the PSR changes pace, volume, and tone to meet the caller's perceived needs. This could include such examples as lowering tone for callers that are hard of hearing, or slowly spelling out words or numbers for a caller that is writing down information and is having a difficult time. In this situation, the PSR must not only adjust the communication but also show patience with the caller.</p> <p><i>N/A:</i> This skill may not be rated N/A.</p>
<p><b>Acknowledges customer's issue/problem, handles objections/gains customer's commitment</b></p>	<p>Lets caller know that there is understanding.</p> <p>Verifies that the message was received.</p> <p>Increases the customer's positive perception of their experience by sensitively addressing their objections and concerns about past issues and/or proposed solutions and persuasively gaining the caller's commitment.</p>	<p>This step is necessary whenever a caller presents an issue or problem. In these cases, the PSR should express an understanding of the issue or problem before moving toward resolution.</p> <p>Example:  <i>"Mr. Sanford, I can understand the frustration that this incorrect payment amount is causing you.."</i></p> <p>A PSR may receive a <b>0 rating</b> if the PSR elects to ignore the issue or problem being raised, ineffectively responds to the customer's objections or argues with the participant.</p> <p>Example of <b>0 rating</b>:  <i>The participant complains about a new fee that has been added. The PSR counters "Well, that's the rule."</i></p> <p>A PSR may receive a <b>1 rating</b> if he or she acknowledges the problem but doesn't provide information that specifically answers the problem or makes no attempt to address the problem at all and does not reassure the customer regarding his concerns.</p> <p><i>The participant expresses doubts about the effectiveness of a solution offered. The PSR encourages him or her to try the solution, but does not provide adequate explanation or address the customer's concerns.</i></p> <p>A PSR may receive a <b>2 rating</b> if he or she provides an acknowledgement that verifies understanding of the issue and provides information that specifically answers the question.</p> <p>A PSR may receive a <b>3 rating</b> if he or she: not only</p>

		<p>verifies understanding of the issue but also creatively and persuasively addresses the customer's objections, going beyond typical responses, effectively displays empathy for caller through wording and/or voice tone, tailors his or her responses to speak to the customer's</p> <p>specific situation and needs, and gains a strong customer commitment to the proposed solution.</p> <p>This skill may be rated Not Applicable if there are no customer objections and/or there is no solution for which the customer's commitment is required.</p>
--	--	--

<p><b>Provides accurate and pertinent inquiry/response codes and comments when necessary</b></p>	<p>Maintains a history of the inquiry so that future communication is enhanced.</p>	<p>A call note must be entered for each call received. The inquiry and response codes entered should accurately reflect the nature of the call, and any comments entered should provide pertinent details that could be useful in handling future contacts. Comments should be clearly understandable to someone reviewing the note at a future date who is not familiar with the situation. Failure to enter a comment when critical information is needed, entering cryptic abbreviations or entering unnecessary comments in the case of a simple inquiry, will result in a lower rating.</p> <p>To receive a <b>0 rating</b> the PSR enters an inaccurate response/inquiry code and or fails to enter a comment for a complex call.</p> <p>To receive a <b>1 rating</b> the PSR fails to fully enter critical information when needed including contact information, comments are confusing or missing pertinent details. A 1 rating can also be received if the PSR enters unnecessary comments in the case of a simple inquiry.</p> <p>To receive a <b>2 rating</b> the PSR enters accurate inquiry and response codes which reflect the nature of the call, and adequate comments are entered.</p> <p>To receive a <b>3 rating</b> the PSR enters accurate inquiry and response codes which reflect the nature of the call, and comments that clearly provide pertinent details that could be useful in future research or in handling future contacts.</p> <p><i>N/A:</i> This skill may be rated N/A if the caller asks for general information and does not inquire about a specific account.</p>
--	---	---

Attachment D - Customer Satisfaction Survey Program



Thrift Savings Plan

Telephone Customer Satisfaction Survey Program

## Customer Satisfaction Survey Procedures

As part of its ongoing commitment to participant satisfaction, the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (Agency) requires its call centers to conduct ongoing customer satisfaction calls to monitor and measure the participant services. Further, the Agency has integrated its customer satisfaction surveys with its call quality monitoring program to evaluate the validity of both activities. This approach is not normally conducted by private sector entities and is an evolving process since exact correlations between the two programs are not possible.

Consequently, customer satisfaction survey calls are only to be conducted on participant calls that have been monitored for quality assurance purposes. The results of each monitored call are compared to the results of the survey performed for the same call. Doing so will help to identify areas of possible improvement in the Quality Assurance Plan, the Customer Satisfaction Survey, and in the services we provide to our participants.

### Procedures for Customer Satisfaction Call Surveyors:

- a) You will be provided with a spreadsheet containing the Social Security numbers, names and telephone numbers for the participants whom you are to contact, along with the reason the participant contacted the Thrift Savings Plan.
- b) You must initiate contact with the participants selected for the survey within 48 hours of the participant's contact with the call center. (If the participant cannot be reached within 3 days of the initial contact, then he or she will not be included in the survey.)
- c) You must complete a Customer Satisfaction Survey form for each participant you contact. If you are unable to reach the participant, do not complete a form.
- d) If you are unable to reach the participant, annotate that fact on the spreadsheet. These calls will be totaled at the end of each survey.

- e) Enter a call note in PSR for each completed survey call using inquiry code 660, Call Satisfaction Survey, and response code 7032, Comments. Enter the comment "Conducted customer satisfaction survey."
- f) When speaking with the participant, the participant may indicate that he or she contacted the TSP with regard to a problem with his or her account. If the problem still exists, take immediate steps to research and resolve the issue. If you are unable to resolve the problem while the participant is on the telephone, inform the participant that he or she will be contacted within 24 hours (or on the next business day) and will be told the status of the actions being taken. Forward the account information to the designated supervisor for follow up. Indicate in your call note that the account was forwarded to a supervisor for follow up action.

Results:

The results of the survey calls, in conjunction with the results of the quality assurance monitoring, are to be rolled up once each month and submitted to the Agency using the report provided. These results will then be integrated with the results of the Quality Assurance Program monitoring. The reports documenting the results, analysis, and conclusions will be provided to the call center managers for review and action as appropriate. Where identified, changes to either the survey instrument or procedures or to the Quality Assurance Program may be initiated.

**Attachment E - Participant Service Representatives  
Application Training Manual**

## **Attachment F - TSP Information Technology Technical Specifications**

### PSR Workstation specifications

X86 Platform  
=>2.0 GHz Intel or AMD processor  
Windows XP Operating System  
=>60GB Hard disk  
1GB Memory  
Video Adapter w/=>128MB of Video Memory

### Technical Specifications

The Offeror must supply and maintain telecommunications equipment that can provide the following capabilities:

- Accept and properly route at least 250,000 agent-assisted calls per month, representing at least 1,500,000 minutes of monthly call load
- Exactly mimic call treatments (timing and wording of messages) in place at the Clintwood site in order to provide a consistent service experience to participants
- Provide real-time and historical reporting on call volumes, service levels, calls in queue, abandoned calls, average handle times, and other similar call center metrics
- Provide customers expected to wait three minutes or longer with an expected wait time message

The Agency will provide interactive voice response (IVR) hardware and software to the Offeror, and will also provide access to the E-mail Response Management application that will be utilized. The agency will provide the Offeror a circuit and edge communication equipment for data access into the Agency Enterprise network. This equipment will be an Agency-managed product suite. This hardware suite will include a router services, stateful firewall inspection device and an intrusion protection system for anomaly detection. The Offeror must provide all other required telecommunications equipment.

## **Attachment G - TSP Physical Security Requirements/ Guidelines**

Work performed under this contract deals directly with data classified as Personally Identifiable Information (PII)<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, it is imperative that appropriate measures be established to monitor and control ingress/egress to work areas, and to ensure proper handling of media and devices used to store both PII and sensitive Agency data. The Offeror's proposal should address how it intends to meet/comply with the following physical security guidelines:

- Employee badges or other identification.
- Control, monitoring, audit and records retention of ingress/egress.
- Control, monitoring audit and records retention of physical access to servers, networking equipment and telecommunications lines.
- Distribution and control of keys/data cards.
- Securing/disabling spare network jacks, USB ports, etc.
- Labeling, handling, storing, control and disposal of electronic and paper media.
- Control, monitoring, use and protection of portable computing devices and storage media.
- Employee training and awareness.
- Work area access removal.
- Incident response.
- If combination locks are employed, frequency and records retention of combination change.
- If a monitored alarm system is in place, source of monitoring, incident response, law enforcement involvement, etc.

---

<sup>1</sup> Personally Identifiable Information (PII) refers to information which can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as their name, social security number, biometric records, etc. alone, or when combined with other personal or identifying information which is linked or linkable to a specific individual, such as date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, etc.

## **Attachment H - TSP Information Technology (IT) Security Requirements/Guidelines**

Work performed under this contract deals directly with data classified as Personally Identifiable Information (PII). Accordingly, it is imperative that appropriate measures be established to monitor and control access to TSP and FRTIB systems. The offeror's proposal should address how they intend to meet/comply with the following IT security guidelines:

- Maintaining a secure data network.
- Employee training and awareness
- System access removal
- Incident response policy and procedures
- Change management (hardware & software).
- Manner in which the contractor proposes to ensure all software and hardware under their control is to be maintained in such a manner as to be free of malicious code.
- Ability and intent of the contractor to ensure access to the World Wide Web can or will be restricted from PSR workstations, or limited to [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov), [www.frtib.gov](http://www.frtib.gov), or other Agency-approved sites only.
- Plans for providing a separated Local Area Network switching environment for desktop and server devices.

Plans/capabilities for restricting remote access to Agency-dedicated resources/applications except as agreed upon by Agency Security Office (e.g. remote diagnostic and resolution, etc.)

**Attachment I - Agency Background Investigation Review  
Guidelines**

FRTIB BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION REVIEW GUIDELINES

#	Circumstance	Reviewer Action	COTR Action
COURT RECORD	1 Misdemeanors, including youthful indiscretion and non-drug or alcohol related moving violations in past 5 years	Defer for COTR Review	At contractor Project Manager (PM) request, COTR and contractor PM may provide potential employee an opportunity to explain circumstances. Handled (and documented) on a case by case basis.
	2 Single driving under the influence (DUI) or driving while impaired (DWI) in past 3 years	Approve	N/A
	3 Multiple (2 or more) DWI or DUI in past 5 years	Disapprove	N/A
	4 Applicant is <u>not</u> a U.S. citizen or is resident alien <u>without</u> a current, valid green card	Disapprove	N/A
	5 Driving under the influence of drugs in past 3 years	Defer for COTR Review	At contractor Project Manager (PM) request, COTR and contractor PM may provide potential employee an opportunity to explain circumstances. While a single event involving marijuana may be allowed, under no circumstances will related convictions involving so-called "hard drugs" (i.e. cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines) be allowed. Handled (and documented) on a case by case basis.
	6 Multiple (2 or more) instances of domestic abuse in past 3 years	Disapprove	N/A
	7 Multiple (2 or more) instances of physical violence (drunk and disorderly, assault and battery) or public intoxication within past 5 years	Disapprove	N/A
	8 Any non-employment related conviction of theft involving goods or money in past 3 years	Defer for COTR Review	At contractor Project Manager (PM) request, COTR and contractor PM may provide potential employee an opportunity to explain circumstances. Handled (and documented) on a case by case basis.
	9 Any conviction of embezzlement or theft from employer in past 10 years	Disapprove	N/A
	10 Any conviction of drug possession in past 5 years	Defer for COTR Review	At contractor Project Manager (PM) request, COTR and contractor PM may provide potential employee an opportunity to explain circumstances. While a single event involving marijuana may be allowed, under no circumstances will related convictions involving so-called "hard drugs" (i.e. cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines) be allowed. Handled (and documented) on a case by case basis.
	11 Failure to file Federal or State tax returns in past 3 years.	Disapprove	N/A
	12 Discharge from uniformed services under other than honorable or general circumstances.	Defer for COTR Review	At contractor Project Manager (PM) request, COTR and contractor PM may provide potential employee an opportunity to explain circumstances. Handled (and documented) on a case by case basis.
	13 Any felony conviction	Disapprove	N/A
Consumer Credit Report	14 Medical obligations referred for collection	Approve	N/A
	15 Student Loan Delinquency within the past 3 years	Defer for COTR Review	At contractor Project Manager (PM) request, COTR and contractor PM may provide potential employee an opportunity to explain circumstances. Handled (and documented) on a case by case basis.
	16 Five or more active, non-medical accounts (revolving, installment, mortgage) greater than 90 days late in past 24 months. This includes those accts currently in collections.	Defer for COTR Review	At contractor Project Manager (PM) request, COTR and contractor PM may provide potential employee an opportunity to explain circumstances. Handled (and documented) on a case by case basis.
	17 Three or more non-medical accounts (revolving, installment, mortgage) charged off as bad debt (reflecting no attempt to pay; most owed+balance) in past 24 months	Defer for COTR Review	At contractor Project Manager (PM) request, COTR and contractor PM may provide potential employee an opportunity to explain circumstances. Handled (and documented) on a case by case basis.
	18 Bankruptcy declaration in past 3 years	Defer for COTR Review	At contractor Project Manager (PM) request, COTR and contractor PM may provide potential employee an opportunity to explain circumstances. Handled (and documented) on a case by case basis.

**Attachment J - Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board  
Non-Disclosure Agreement**



## Non-Disclosure Agreement for Participant Service Representative, Data Entry, and Other Designated Positions (as required)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, an employee of \_\_\_\_\_

(Contractor) consent to this Agreement so that I may have access to certain proprietary information or confidential and sensitive information about the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) that is necessary to perform my assigned duties and responsibilities.

### Information Covered by this Agreement

"Proprietary information" refers to sensitive business, technical, financial, and procurement information regarding the Thrift Savings Plan, its record keeping system, and the contract between the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (Agency) and this contractor. This information is subject to protection from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, or modification by Federal law. See 12 U.S.C. § 3417, 18 U.S.C. § 1905, and 41 U.S.C. § 423.

"Confidential and sensitive information" is any information about a TSP participant or beneficiary that is not already public or available without authorization. This information, if lost, misused, or modified could adversely affect the Agency, the TSP, or its participants or beneficiaries. It includes information protected under the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. section 552a, as amended (for example, information regarding participants, participants' accounts, beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries, as well as information provided by third parties).

### Conditions

I understand that the Agency has placed special confidence and trust in me by giving me access to the information described above. I further understand that I am obligated to protect this information from unauthorized disclosure or misuse in accordance with the laws and regulations protecting this information.

I acknowledge that I have had explained to me the kind of information that I will have access to and how to protect it. I agree to comply with the procedures and standards to be used to access, disseminate, handle, and safeguard this information.

I understand that the Agency or someone acting for the Agency (e.g., an auditor) may monitor my activities and conduct inspections at any time or place to ensure that I am complying with the procedures and standards for accessing, disseminating, handling, and safeguarding this information.

Attachment K - Reporting Metrics

[center name] Daily Interval Report

2/26/2008 Tuesday

ET	Thriftline Answered	Opt Out to PSR	PSR Answd	Calls Abnd	ATT	ACW	AHT	Abnd %	SVCLVL	Avg Agent
7:00										
7:30										
8:00										
8:30										
9:00										
9:30										
10:00										
10:30										
11:00										
11:30										
12:00										
12:30										
13:00										
13:30										
14:00										
14:30										
15:00										
15:30										
16:00										
16:30										
17:00										
17:30										
18:00										
18:30										
19:00										
19:30										
20:00										
20:30										
Total										

Comments:

## **Attachment L - Financial Viability Requirements and Reporting**

### **1. Financial Condition Statement**

The Agency will assess each Offeror's overall financial condition and assess whether each Offeror has adequate financial resources to perform the contract. An Offeror must already have the necessary technical equipment, facilities, other resources, and personnel on hand or demonstrate the financial resources necessary to rent, purchase, or otherwise acquire the needed facilities, equipment, other resources, or personnel. Assessment of the Offeror's financial condition shall consider both net worth and liquidity.

### **2. Financial information required to be submitted:**

- a. The three most recent years of audited financial statements available as of the date of the proposal.
- b. Copies of any SEC filings made during the period beginning with January 1 of the calendar year preceding the date of the proposal and ending with the date of the proposal.
- c. A statement describing any material financial events affecting the company since the date of the last audited financial statement and any material financial events expected to affect the company (such as planned mergers, acquisitions, restructurings) in the next year.