





**U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE**

Washington, DC

GENERAL TERMS, CONDITIONS, AND SPECIFICATIONS

For the Procurement of

*Office of Dentistry Survey Mailers*

as requisitioned from the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) by the

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**

Single Award

**TERM OF CONTRACT:** The term of this contract is for the period beginning **November 1, 2020** and ending **October 31, 2021**, plus up to *four* optional 12-month extension period(s) that may be added in accordance with the "OPTION TO EXTEND THE TERM OF THE CONTRACT" clause in SECTION 1 of this contract.

**The period from November 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021 will be utilized for the required post-award implementation and certification of VA security requirements; actual production begins upon completion of the certification, no earlier than February 1, 2021.**

**BID OPENING:** Bids shall be opened at 11:00 a.m., prevailing Eastern Standard Time (EST), on **October 9, 2020** at the U.S. Government Publishing Office, APSDC. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this will NOT be a public bid opening.

**BID SUBMISSION:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the physical office will NOT be open. Based on this, bidders MUST submit email bids to [Bidsapsdc@gpo.gov](mailto:Bidsapsdc@gpo.gov) for this solicitation. No other method of bid submission will be accepted at this time.

The Program 179-S and the bid opening date must be specified in the subject line of the emailed bid submission. Bids received after 11:00 a.m. on the bid opening date specified above will not be considered for award.

**BIDDERS, PLEASE NOTE:** *This program was formerly part of 284-S.* These specifications have been extensively revised; therefore, all bidders are cautioned to familiarize themselves with all provisions of these specifications before bidding.

Abstracts of contract prices are available at: <https://www.gpo.gov/how-to-work-with-us/vendors/contract-pricing>.

For information of a technical nature, call **David Love** at (202) 512-0307 or email [apsdc@gpo.gov](mailto:apsdc@gpo.gov).

## SECTION 1. - GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

**GPO CONTRACT TERMS:** Any contract which results from this Invitation for Bid will be subject to the applicable provisions, clauses, and supplemental specifications of GPO Contract Terms (GPO Publication 310.2, effective December 1, 1987 (Rev. 1-18)) and GPO Contract Terms, Quality Assurance Through Attributes Program for Printing and Binding (GPO Publication 310.1, effective May 1979 (revised 9-19)).

GPO Contract Terms (GPO Publication 310.2) –

<https://www.gpo.gov/docs/default-source/forms-and-standards-files-for-vendors/contractterms2018.pdf>

GPO QATAP (GPO Publication 310.1) –

<https://www.gpo.gov/docs/default-source/forms-and-standards-files-for-vendors/qatap-rev-09-19.pdf>

**GPO IMPRINT REQUIREMENTS:** The GPO imprint requirement, GPO Contract Terms, Supplemental Specifications, No. 9, is waived.

**SUBCONTRACTING:** Subcontracting is allowed for manufacturing of the envelopes only.

**QUALITY ASSURANCE LEVELS AND STANDARDS:** The following levels and standards shall apply to these specifications:

Product Quality Levels:

- (a) Printing (page related) Attributes -- Level III.
- (b) Finishing (item related) Attributes -- Level III.
- (c) Exception: For F-1. Trim Size: Level I applies – On surveys a variance of no more than 1/16” or less on either side of the 11” dimension is allowed; final product cannot be larger than 8-1/2 x 11”.
- (d) Exception: For P-5. Text and Illustration Image Position: Level II applies.

Inspection Levels (from ANSI/ASQC Z1.4):

- (a) Non-destructive Tests - General Inspection Level I.
- (b) Destructive Tests - Special Inspection Level S-2.

Specified Standards: The specified standards for the attributes requiring them shall be:

<u>Attribute</u>	<u>Specified Standard</u>
P-7. Type Quality and Uniformity	O.K. Proofs/Average type dimension/ Electronic media
P-9. Solid and Screen Tint Color Match	Pantone Matching System

Prior to award, contractor may be required to provide information related to specific equipment that will be used for production.

**OPTION TO EXTEND THE TERM OF THE CONTRACT:** The Government has the option to extend the term of this contract for a period of 12 months by written notice to the contractor not later than 30 days before the contract expires. If the Government exercises this option, the extended contract shall be considered to include this clause, except, the total duration of the contract may not exceed five (5) years as a result of, and including, any extension(s) added under this clause. Further extension may be negotiated under the “EXTENSION OF CONTRACT TERM” clause. See also “ECONOMIC PRICE ADJUSTMENT” for authorized pricing adjustment(s).

**EXTENSION OF CONTRACT TERM:** At the request of the Government, the term of any contract resulting from this solicitation may be extended for such period of time as may be mutually agreeable to the GPO and the contractor.

**ECONOMIC PRICE ADJUSTMENT:** The pricing under this contract shall be adjusted in accordance with this clause, provided that in no event will any pricing adjustment be made that would exceed the maximum permissible under any law in effect at the time of the adjustment. There will be no adjustment for orders placed during the first period specified below. Pricing will thereafter be eligible for adjustment during the second and any succeeding performance period(s). For each performance period after the first, a percentage figure will be calculated as described below and that figure will be the economic price adjustment for that entire next period. Pricing adjustments under this clause are not applicable to reimbursable postage or transportation costs, or to paper, if paper prices are subject to adjustment by separate clause elsewhere in this contract.

For the purpose of this clause, performance under this contract will be divided into successive periods. The first period will extend from the **November 1, 2020** to **October 31, 2021**, and the second and any succeeding period(s) will extend for 12 months from the end of the last preceding period, except that the length of the final period may vary. The first day of the second and any succeeding period(s) will be the effective date of the economic price adjustment for that period.

Pricing adjustments in accordance with this clause will be based on changes in the seasonally adjusted “Consumer Price Index For All Urban Consumers - Commodities Less Food” (Index) published monthly in the CPI Detailed Report by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The economic price adjustment will be the percentage difference between Index averages as specified in this paragraph. An index called the variable index will be calculated by averaging the monthly Indexes from the 12-month interval ending three (3) months prior to the beginning of the period being considered for adjustment. This average is then compared to the average of the monthly Indexes for the 12-month interval ending **July 31, 2020** called the base index. The percentage change (plus or minus) of the variable index from the base index will be the economic price adjustment for the period being considered for adjustment.

The Government will notify the contractor by contract modification specifying the percentage increase or decrease to be applied to invoices for orders placed during the period indicated. The contractor shall apply the percentage increase or decrease against the total price of the invoice less reimbursable postage or transportation costs and separately adjusted paper prices. Payment discounts shall be applied after the invoice price is adjusted.

If the Government exercises an option, the extended contract shall be considered to include this economic price adjustment clause.

**NOTE:** Economic price adjustments are not cumulative and are to be applied to original bid prices only.

## **SECURITY AND PRIVACY REQUIREMENTS:**

### ***Confidentiality of Information –***

Information regarding any individual is of a confidential nature and may be used only for the purposes of producing the requirements of this contract. All materials containing confidential information, including but not exclusive to Government furnished data, imaged forms, and scrap, must be handled so that information does not have any unauthorized use. All scrap generated with any information regarding any individual person must be shredded, incinerated, otherwise destroyed beyond recognition. Any media (files, disks, etc.) produced by the VA and sent to the contractor **MUST** be returned to the VA upon completion of the specific order. Contractor must return this material via an overnight delivery service to prevent theft or accidental use.

All contractors and contractor personnel shall be subject to the Federal laws, regulations, standards and VA Directives and Handbooks, regarding information system security as delineated in this contract. Contractors must follow policies and procedures outlined in VA Directive 6500, Information Security Program and its handbooks to ensure appropriate security controls are in place.

***Protection of Confidential Information -***

- (a) The contractor shall restrict access to all confidential information obtained from the Department of Veterans Affairs in the performance of this contract to those employees and officials who need it to perform the contract.

Employees and officials who need access to confidential information for performance of the contract will be determined at the Post-Award Conference between the Contracting Officer and the responsible contractor representative.

- (b) The contractor shall process all confidential information obtained from VA in the performance of this contract under the immediate supervision and control of authorized personnel, and in a manner that will protect the confidentiality of the records in such a way that unauthorized persons cannot retrieve any such records.
- (c) The contractor shall inform all personnel with access to the confidential information obtained from VA in the performance of this contract of the confidential nature of the information and the safeguards required to protect this information from improper disclosure.
- (d) For knowingly disclosing information in violation of the Privacy Act, the contractor and the contractor employees may be subject to the criminal penalties as set forth in 5 U.S.C Section 552a (i)(1), which is made applicable to contractors by 5 U.S.C. 552a (m)(1) to the same extent as employees of the VA. For knowingly disclosing confidential information as described in section 1106 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1306), the contractor and contractor's employees may also be subject to the criminal penalties as set forth in that provision.
- (e) The contractor shall assure that each contractor employee with access to confidential information knows the prescribed rules of conduct, and that each contractor employee is aware that he/she may be subject to criminal penalties for violations of the Privacy Act.
- (f) All confidential information obtained from VA for use in the performance of this contract shall, at all times, be stored in an area that is physically safe from unauthorized access. (See "PRE-AWARD SURVEY, Security Control Plan - Production Area" for more information.)
- (g) The Government reserves the right to conduct on-site visits to review the contractor's documentation and in-house procedures for protection of confidential information. (See "PRE-AWARD SURVEY" for more information.)

***VA Information Custodial Requirements –***

1. Information made available to the contractor by VA for the performance and/or administration of this contract or information developed by the contractor in performance and/or administration of the contract shall be used only for those purposes and shall not be used in any other way without the prior written agreement of the Contracting Officer. This clause expressly limits the contractor's rights to use data as described in Rights in Data - General, Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 52.227-14(d) (1).
2. Information generated by a contractor as a part of the contractor's normal business operations, such as medical records created in the course of providing treatment, is subject to a review by the Office of General Counsel (OGC) to determine if the information is the property of VA and subject to VA policy. If the information is determined by OGC to not be the property of VA, the restrictions required for VA information will not apply.
3. VA information will NOT be commingled with any other data on the contractor's information systems/media storage systems in order to ensure VA requirements related to data protection and media sanitization can be met. VA also reserves the right to conduct IT resource inspections to ensure data separation and on-site inspection of information destruction/media sanitization procedures to ensure they are in compliance with VA policy requirements.

4. Prior to termination or completion of this contract, the contractor will not destroy information received from VA or gathered or created by the contractor in the course of performing this contract without prior written approval by VA. Any data destruction done on behalf of VA by a contractor must be done in accordance with National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) requirements as outlined in VA Directive 6300, *Records and Information Management* and its Handbook 6300.1 *Records Management Procedures*, and applicable VA Records Control Schedules. These Directives are available at: <http://www1.va.gov/vapubs/>.
5. The contractor will receive, gather, store, back up, maintain, use, disclose and dispose of VA information only in compliance with the terms of the contract and applicable Federal and VA information confidentiality and security laws, regulations and policies. Applicable Federal information security regulations include all Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) and Special Publications (SP) issued by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). If Federal or VA information confidentiality and security laws, regulations and policies become applicable to the VA information or information systems after execution of the contract, or if NIST issues or updates applicable FIPS after execution of this contract, the parties agree to negotiate in good faith to implement the information confidentiality and security laws, regulations and policies, including FIPS or SP, in this contract.
6. Contractors collecting, storing, or disseminating personal identifiable information (PII) or protected health information (PHI) data must conform to all pertinent regulations, laws, and VA directives related to privacy. Contractors must provide access for VA privacy reviews and assessments and provide appropriate documentation as directed.

**NOTE:** Personally identifiable information is defined as any information which can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as their name, social security number, Veterans identification 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.

7. The contractor shall not make copies of VA information except as necessary to perform the terms of the agreement or to preserve electronic information stored on contractor electronic storage media for restoration in case any electronic equipment or data used by the contractor needs to be restored to an operating state.
8. If VA determines that the contractor has violated any of the information confidentiality, privacy, and security provisions of the contract, it shall be sufficient grounds for the Government to terminate the contract for default or terminate for cause under the GPO Printing Procurement Regulations (GPO Publication 305.3).
9. If a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) contract is terminated for cause, the associated business associate agreement (BAA) will also be terminated and appropriate actions taken in accordance with VHA Handbook 1600.01 Business Associates.
10. Contractor will store, transport or transmit VA sensitive information in an encrypted form, using a VA-approved encryption application that meets the requirements of NIST's FIPS 140-2 standard.
11. The contractor's firewall and Web services security controls, if applicable, shall meet or exceed VA's minimum requirements. VA directives are available on the VA directives Web site at <http://www1.va.gov/vapubs/>.
12. Except for uses and disclosures of VA information authorized by this contract for performance of the contract, the contractor may use and disclose VA information only in two other situations: (1) in response to a qualifying order of a court of competent jurisdiction; or, (2) with VA's prior written approval. The contractor will refer all requests for, demands for production of, or inquiries about, VA information and information systems to VA for response.

13. Notwithstanding the provision above, the contractor shall NOT release medical quality assurance records protected by 38 U.S.C. 5705 or records pertaining to drug addiction, sickle cell anemia, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, or infection with human immunodeficiency virus protected under 38 U.S.C. 7332 under any circumstances, including in response to a court order, and shall immediately refer such court orders or other inquiries to VA for response.
14. The contractor will not use technologies banned in VA in meeting the requirements of the contract (e.g., Bluetooth enabled devices).

***Security Incident Investigation –***

1. The term “security incident” means an event that has, or could have, resulted in unauthorized access to, loss of, or damage to VA assets or sensitive information, or an action that breaches VA security procedures. The contractor shall immediately notify the GPO and VA representative and simultaneously, the designated ISO/Privacy Officer for the contract of any known or suspected security/privacy incidents, or any unauthorized disclosure of sensitive information, including that contained in system(s) to which the contractor has access.
2. To the extent known by the contractor, the contractor’s notice to GPO and VA will identify the information involved, the circumstances surrounding the incident (including to whom, how, when, and where the VA information/assets were placed at risk or compromised), and any other information that the contractor considers relevant.
3. The contractor will simultaneously report the incident to the appropriate law enforcement entity(ies) of jurisdiction, including the GPO and VA Offices of the Inspector General and Security and Law Enforcement, in instances of theft or break-in or other criminal activity. The contractor and its employees will cooperate with VA and any law enforcement authority responsible for the investigation and prosecution of any possible criminal law violation(s) associated with any incident. The contractor will cooperate with VA in any civil litigation to recover VA information, obtain monetary, or other compensation from a third party for damages arising from any incident, or obtain injunctive relief against any third party arising from, or related to, the incident.
4. To the extent practicable, the contractor shall mitigate any harmful effects on individuals whose VA Information was accessed or disclosed in a security incident. In the event of a data breach with respect to any VA sensitive information processed or maintained by the contractor under the contract, the contractor is responsible for liquidated damages to be paid to VA.
5. If a security incident (as described above) occurs at the contractor’s facility, the actual damage to the Government for the incident will be difficult or impossible to determine. Therefore, pursuant to the “Liquidated Damages” clause (GPO Contract Terms, Publication 310.2), in lieu of actual damages, the contractor shall pay to the Government as fixed, agreed, and liquidated damages for each record, or part thereof, involved in the incident, the amount set forth below. Liquidated damages will be assessed against that record, or part thereof, which has been compromised. Liquidated damages will not be assessed against that record or part thereof that has not been compromised. The amount of damages will be computed at \$37.50 per record, or part thereof, compromised; *provided* that the minimum amount of liquidated damages shall not be less than \$5.00 for the entire order and not more than 50% of the total value of the entire order. The total damages assessed against a contractor shall in no case exceed 50% of the total value of the entire order. Payment of an order will be withheld until evidence of steps taken to prevent the recurrence of a security incident has been taken.

***Security Training –***

1. All contractor employees requiring access to VA sensitive information and/or VA information systems shall complete the following before being granted access to VA networks or sensitive information:
  - Sign and acknowledge understanding of, and responsibilities for, compliance with the *Contractor Rules of Behavior* (Attachment B) relating to access to VA information and information systems;



- Successfully complete VA Cyber Security Awareness training and annual refresher training as required;
  - Successfully complete VA General Privacy training and annual refresher training as required; and
  - Successfully complete any additional cyber security or privacy training, as required for VA personnel with equivalent information system access.
2. The contractor shall provide to the Contracting Officer a copy of the training certificates for each applicable employee (for the required training as stated above) within seven (7) calendar days of notification of contract award and annually thereafter, as required.

These online courses are located at the following web site: <https://www.tms.va.gov>.

3. Failure to complete this mandatory training within the timeframe required will be grounds for suspension or termination of all physical and/or electronic access privileges and removal from work on the contract until such time as the training is completed.

***Safeguard Measures for Personally Identifiable Information (PII) Data –***

VA policies require documentation that PII data sent to contractor remains secure while projects are in progress and is eventually destroyed in such a way that it cannot be retrieved or restored after being deleted from the contractor's hard drives/systems.

***Protected Health Information –***

“Protected Health Information” or “PHI” shall have the same meaning as described at 45 C.F.R. § 160.103. “Protected Health Information” and “PHI” as used in this Agreement include “Electronic Protected Health Information” and “EPHI.” For the purposes of this Agreement and unless otherwise provided, the term shall also refer to PHI that the Business Associate creates, receives, maintains, or transmits on behalf of Covered Entity or receives from Covered Entity or another Business Associate.

**PREAWARD SURVEY:** In order to determine the responsibility of the prime contractor or any subcontractor, the Government reserves the right to conduct an on-site preaward survey at the contractor's/subcontractor's facility and/or to require other evidence of technical, production, managerial, financial, and similar abilities to perform, prior to the award of a contract. Attending the pre-award survey will be representatives from the GPO and the VA.

As part of the financial determination, the contractor in line for award may be required to provide one or more of the following financial documents:

- 1) Most recent profit and loss statement
- 2) Most recent balance sheet
- 3) Statement of cash flows
- 4) Current official bank statement
- 5) Current lines of credit (with amounts available)
- 6) Letter of commitment from paper supplier(s)
- 7) Letter of commitment from any subcontractor

The documents will be reviewed to validate that adequate financial resources are available to perform the contract requirements. Documents submitted will be kept confidential and used only for the determination of responsibility by the Government. Failure to provide the requested information in the time specified by the Government may result in the Contracting Officer not having adequate information to reach an affirmative determination of responsibility.

Contractors must complete Attachment C “*Contractor Security Control Assessment (CSCA), Self-Assessment Questionnaire for Contract Service Providers*” for VA review and use during the pre-award survey security review.

The pre-award survey will include a review of the contractor's backup facility, quality control, mail, recovery program, computer systems, material, personnel, production, and security plans, as required by this specification.

**PRODUCTION PLANS:** The contractor shall present, in writing, to the Contracting Officer within five (5) workdays of being notified to do so by the Contracting Officer or his/her representative, detailed plans for each of the following activities below. On any required revisions to the originally submitted plans the contractor will be allowed an additional three (3) workdays to submit updated revised plans.

The workday after notification to submit will be the first day of the schedule. These proposed plans are subject to review and approval by the government and award will not be made prior to approval of same.

**Backup Facility** – The failure to distribute any wave of survey instruments in a timely manner would have an impact on the daily operations of VA. Therefore, if for any reason(s) (act of God, labor disagreements, etc.) the contractor is unable to perform at said location for a period of longer than seven (7) calendar days, the contractor must have a contingency plan in place for a backup facility with the capability of producing the postcards and mailers.

Plans for this contingency production must be prepared and submitted to the Contracting Officer as part of the pre-award survey. These plans must include the location of the facility to be used, security plans at the facility, equipment available at the facility, and a timetable for the start of production at that facility. Part of the plan must also include the transportation of Government materials from one facility to the other. The contractor must produce items from a test file at the new facility for verification of software prior to producing the postcards and mailers at this facility.

The Contractor's contingency plan MUST maintain the print requirement for all workloads which states:

**For products that contain variable data, the contractor must print and variable image in a single pass.**

**NOTE:** All terms and conditions of this contract will apply to the backup facility.

**Production Plan** – The contractor will be required to provide documentation to demonstrate how orders placed against this program will be produced. Information required must include, but is not limited to, an equipment list, breakdown of production steps and required labor, cost breakdowns, subcontractor information, sample invoice, shippers to be utilized, etc.

The contractor is to provide a detailed plan of the following –

- a. A listing of all production equipment and equipment capacities to be utilized on this contract.
- b. The production capacity currently being utilized on this equipment.
- c. The capacity that is available for managing and producing the volume of work products identified within this contract.
- d. If new equipment is to be utilized, the documentation of the purchase order, source, delivery schedule and installation dates are required.

**Security Control Plan** – The contractor shall provide a security plan that addresses all aspects of physical and logical data file handling, processing and transfer, including publication and all associated mail handling as required. The security plan will address employee requirements for security training, background investigations, and credit checks. The security plan will address inventory controls, network security, visitor controls and applicable miscellaneous aspects of production. The security plan shall meet or exceed the mandated VA security requirements and be approved by a designated VA Information Security Officer and the Privacy Officer.

The contractor shall review the security plan at least quarterly and update it as soon as changes are indicated. The security plan will be maintained throughout the life of the contract. After acceptance of the security plan, the contractor shall inform the VA representative in writing, within seven (7) calendar days of changes made to the document. In addition to the above, the contractor is also required to complete the Contractor Security Control Assessment (Attachment C) annually and keep a copy with the Security Control Plan.

The system must comply with Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) requirements for Government systems.

The proposed Security Control Plan must address the following:

**Materials** – How all accountable materials will be handled throughout all phases of production. This plan shall also include the method of disposal of all production waste materials in accordance with VA directive 6371 and the NIST publication 800-88.

**Disposal of Waste Materials** – The contractor is required to demonstrate how all waste materials used in the production of sensitive VA records will be definitively destroyed (ex. burning, pulping, shredding, macerating, or other suitable similar means). Electronic Records must be definitively destroyed in a manner that prevents reconstruction. **Definitively** destroying the records means the material cannot be reassembled and used in an appropriate manner in violation of law and regulations. **Sensitive** records are records that are national security classified or exempted from disclosure by statute, including the Privacy Act or regulation.

If the contractor selects shredding as a means of disposal, it is preferred that a cross cut shredder be used. If a strip shredder is used, the strips must not exceed one-quarter inch. The contractor must provide the location and method planned to dispose of the material. The plan must include the names of all contract officials responsible for the plan and describe their duties in relationship to the waste material plan.

**Production Area** – The contractor must provide a secure area(s) for the processing and storage of data for the postcard and mailer items, either a separate facility dedicated to this product, or a walled-in limited access area within the contractor's existing facility. Access to the area(s) shall be limited to security-trained employees involved in the production of the postcards and mailers.

Part of the Security Control Plan shall include a floor plan detailing the area(s) to be used, showing existing walls, equipment to be used, and the printing and finishing locations.

**Quality Control Plan** – The contractor shall provide and maintain, within his own organization, an independent quality assurance organization of sufficient size and expertise to monitor the operations performed, and inspect the products of each operation to a degree and extent that will ensure the Government's quality assurance, inspection, and acceptance provisions are met. The contractor shall perform, or have performed, the process controls, inspections and tests required to substantiate that the products provided under this contract conform to the specifications and contract requirements. The contractor shall describe in detail their quality control/quality assurance and recovery plans describing how, when, and by whom the plans will be performed.

The plan must provide for periodic samplings to be taken during the production run, a control system that will detect defective, missing, or mutilated pieces, and the actions to be taken by the contractor when defective/missing/mutilated pieces are discovered. These actions must be consistent with the requirements found in GPO Contract Terms (GPO Publication 310.2, effective December 1, 1987, (Rev. 6-01)). A recovery system is required to replace all defective, missing, or mutilated pieces. This control system must use a unique sequential number to aid in the recovery program which has to be maintained in order to recover any missing or damaged pieces. These pieces must be reprinted and 100% accountability must be maintained throughout the run. The contractor must ensure that there are no missing or duplicated pieces.

The plan must include examples and a detailed description of all quality control samples and their corresponding inspection reports or logs the contractor will keep to document the quality control inspections performed on each run. The plan must provide for a complete audit trail (i.e., it must be possible to locate any piece of mail (postcard or mailer) at any time from the point it leaves the press up to and including the point at which the mail is delivered to a USPS facility). An explanation of the contractor's sequential numbering system is required to understand the audit trail required for each and every piece.

**NOTE:** The Government will not, as a routine matter, request that the contractor produce individual pieces in transit within the plant, however, the contractor must demonstrate that they have an audit trail established that has the ability to comply with this type of request if and when the need arises.

The quality control plan must also include examples of the documentation and a detailed description of the random samples that document all of the contractor's activities.

Furthermore, the plan must include the names of all quality assurance officials and describe their duties in relationship to the quality control plan. The plan must include a detailed description of the number and types of inspections that will be performed as well as the records maintained documenting these activities.

The quality control plan must also account for the number of pieces mailed daily, including days when no pieces are mailed.

The Government will periodically verify that the contractor is complying with the approved quality control plan through on-site examinations and/or requiring copies of the contractor's quality assurance records and quality assurance random copies.

**Quality Control Sample Plan** – The plan must provide a description of how the contractor will create quality control samples for periodic samplings to be taken during the production run and provide for backup and rerunning in the event of an unsatisfactory sample. The plan shall contain control systems that will detect defective, missing, or mutilated pieces.

The plan should include the sampling interval the contractor intends to utilize. The contractor will be required to create a quality control sample from each file, to be drawn from the production stream. Mailer samples should be in unsealed envelopes with contents inserted. Mailer number and file date must be indicated on each sample. The contractor must maintain samples as indicated in the contract specifications.

The plan shall detail the actions to be taken by the contractor when defective/missing/mutilated items are discovered. These actions must be consistent with the requirements found in GPO Contract Terms (GPO Publication 310.2, effective December 1, 1987 (Rev. 1-18)).

**Verification of Production and Mailing Plan** – Contractor will be responsible for validating the integrity of every item produced in all phases of printing, packaging, and mailing and to ensure all mailpieces were correctly entered into the United States Postal System.

Mailpiece Integrity shall be defined as follows: Each mailpiece shall include all components (and only those components) intended for the designated recipient as contained in the print files received from VA.

The contractor is responsible for providing the automated print integrity control systems and processes required to prevent the commingling of mailer items intended for different recipients into a completed package. The contractor's printing process must have automated systems that include coding and scanning technology capable of

1. Validating the count of items in a set.
2. Validating the sequence of items in a set.
3. Validating the sequence of sets in a production batch.
4. Interrupting production if variances are detected.

Mailing integrity shall be defined as follows: All records received from VA that are designated for printing were printed, inserted (if applicable) and entered correctly into the U.S. Postal System.

The contractor is responsible for providing the automated inserted mailpiece tracking/reporting systems and processes required to validate that 100% of all records received from VA which are designated for printing were printed, inserted (if applicable), and mailed correctly. The contractor's inserting equipment must have automated systems that include coding and scanning technology capable of –

1. Reconciling letter counts and quantity counts from VA provided files to print order control totals provided by VA; reporting variances.
2. Uniquely identifying each Product Types within a print order.
3. Unique identifier to be scanned after insertion to ensure all products are present and accounted for.
4. Tracking and reporting all products produced and mailed within a print order at the Product Type level.

5. Identifying and reporting all missing products that were lost or spoiled during production within a print order.
6. Generating a new production file for all missing products.
7. Tracking and reporting all products that were reproduced and mailed within a print order at the Product Type level.
8. Reconciling the total of all products produced and mailed within a print order to the control totals provided by VA; reporting all variances.
9. Reconciling the total of all products mailed to mailing totals contained on Postal Entry Forms within a print order; reporting all variances.
10. Generating a final automated summary report which provides information that all mail pieces have been scanned, after insertion, verifying that all pieces for each mail package and file date are accounted for after contents are inserted, and event information on any spoiled or missing pieces verifying that they were scanned and accounted for. A copy of the summary report must be submitted with the matching GPO 712 form(s).

The contractor must generate an automated audit report when necessary showing the tracking of all products throughout all phases of production for each mailpiece. This audit report will contain all information identified above for each phase of printing, packaging, and mailing.

All product tracking/reporting data must be retained in electronic form for 120 calendar days after mailing, and must be made available to VA for auditing of contractor performance upon request. The contractor must maintain quality control samples, inspection reports, and records for a period of no less than 120 calendar days subsequent to the date of the check tendered for final payment by the GPO. The Government will periodically verify that the contractor is complying with the approved quality control plan through on-site examinations and/or requesting copies of the contractor's quality assurance records and quality assurance random copies.

***Unique Identification Number Plan*** – Unique identifying numbers will be used to track each individual product, thereby providing 100% accountability. This enables the contractor to track each product through completion of the project. The contractor may create their own sequence number and run date to facilitate their presorting and inserting process but must maintain the original Unique ID (UID) for Management Information (MI) reporting.

***Recovery System*** – A recovery system will be required to ensure all defective, missing, or mutilated pieces detected are identified, reprinted, and replaced. The contractor's recovery system must use unique sequential alpha/numeric identifiers assigned to each piece (including quality control samples) to aid in the recovery and replacement of any defective/missing/mutilated pieces, and must be capable of tracking and/or locating any individual piece of mail from the time it leaves the press, up to and including when it is off-loaded at the USPS facility. An explanation of the contractor's sequential numbering system is required to understand the audit trail required for each and every piece.

**NOTE:** The Government will not, as a routine matter, request that the contractor produce individual pieces in transit within the plant, however, the contractor must demonstrate they will have an audit trail established that has the ability to comply with this type of request if and when the need arises.

***Computer System Plan*** – This plan must include a detailed listing of the contractor's operating software platform and file transfer system necessary to interface with VA's File Transfer Management System (FTMS) for electronic transmission of files from VA. The plan shall demonstrate the contractor's ability to provide complete hardware and software compatibility with VA's existing network. The plan must include the media type on which files from VA will be received to the extent that operator intervention (e.g., a tape mount) is not required at VA or the contractor's production facility. The plan must also provide a description of how the contractor will maintain control over the data while they are using it and their plan to remove the data once they are done using it.

Included with the Computer System Plan shall be a resume for each employee responsible for the monitoring and the programming of the contractor's computer system and file transmissions.

***Material Handling and Inventory Control*** – This plan should explain in detail how the following materials will be handled: incoming raw materials; work-in-progress materials; quality control inspection materials; USPS inspection materials; and all outgoing materials cleared for USPS pickup/delivery.

***Personnel Plan*** – This plan should include a listing of all personnel who will be involved with this contract. For any new employees the plan should include the source of these employees and a description of the training programs the employee's will be given to familiarize them with the requirements of this program.

***If employees have current and adequate security clearances, please notate.***

**ON-SITE REPRESENTATIVES:** One or two full-time Government representatives may be placed on the contractor's premises on a limited basis or throughout the term of the contract.

On-site representative(s) may be stationed at the contractor's facility to: provide project coordination in receipt of wire transmissions; verify addresses; monitor the printing, imaging, folding, inserting, mail processing, quality control, sample selections, and inspections; and monitor the packing and staging of the mail.

These coordinators will not have contractual authority, and cannot make changes in the specifications or in contract terms, but will bring any and all defects detected to the attention of the company Quality Control Officer. The coordinators must have full and unrestricted access to all production areas where work on this program is being performed.

The contractor will be required to provide one private office of not less than 150 square feet, furnished with at least one desk, two swivel arm chairs, secure internet access for Government laptop computers, a work table, and two four-drawer letter-size files with combination padlock and pendaflex file folders or equal.

**NOTE:** In the event that a Government representative cannot be on-site, and upon completion of the individual print order, the contractor is to ship overnight the quality sample pulls from that print order and send to one destination in Washington, DC. The remainder of the mailers mail per contract requirements. (See "QUALITY SAMPLE PULLS.")

**POST-AWARD CONFERENCE:** Unless waived by the Government, the total requirements of the job as indicated in these specifications will be reviewed by Government representatives with the contractor's representatives at the contractor's facility immediately after award. The contractor will be notified of the exact date and time.

**ASSIGNMENT OF JACKETS, PURCHASE AND PRINT ORDERS:** A GPO jacket number will be assigned and a purchase order issued to the contractor to cover work performed. The purchase order will be supplemented by an individual print order for each job placed with the contractor. The print order, when issued, will indicate the quantity to be produced and any other information pertinent to the particular order.

**ORDERING:** Items to be furnished under the contract shall be ordered by the issuance of print orders by the Government. Orders may be issued under the contract from **November 1, 2020** through **October 31, 2021**, plus for such additional period(s) as the contract is extended. All print orders issued hereunder are subject to the terms and conditions of the contract. The contract shall control in the event of conflict with any print order. A print order shall be "issued" upon notification by the Government for purposes of the contract when it is electronically transmitted or otherwise physically furnished to the contractor in conformance with the schedule.

**REQUIREMENTS:** This is a requirements contract for the items and for the period specified herein. Shipment/delivery of items or performance of work shall be made only as authorized by orders issued in accordance with the clause entitled "ORDERING." The quantities of items specified herein are estimates only, and are not purchased hereby. Except as may be otherwise provided in this contract, if the Government's requirements for the items set forth herein do not result in orders in the amounts or quantities described as "estimated," it shall not constitute the basis for an equitable price adjustment under this contract.

Except as otherwise provided in this contract, the Government shall order from the contractor all the items set forth which are required to be purchased by the Government activity identified on page 1.

The Government shall not be required to purchase from the contractor, requirements in excess of the limit on total orders under this contract, if any.

Orders issued during the effective period of this contract and not completed within that time shall be completed by the contractor within the time specified in the order, and the rights and obligations of the contractor and the Government respecting those orders shall be governed by the terms of this contract to the same extent as if completed during the effective period of this contract.

If shipment/delivery of any quantity of an item covered by the contract is required by reason of urgency prior to the earliest date that shipment/delivery may be specified under this contract, and if the contractor will not accept an order providing for the accelerated shipment/delivery, the Government may procure this requirement from another source.

The Government may issue orders which provide for shipment/delivery to or performance at multiple destinations.

Subject to any limitations elsewhere in this contract, the contractor shall furnish to the Government all items set forth herein which are called for by print orders issued in accordance with the "ORDERING" clause of this contract.

**PRIVACY ACT NOTIFICATION:** This procurement action requires the contractor to do one or more of the following: design, develop, or operate a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, Public Law 93-579, December 31, 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a) and applicable agency regulations. Violation of the Act may involve the imposition of criminal penalties as stated in 5 U.S.C. 552a (i)(1) CRIMINAL PENALTIES.

It is incumbent upon the contractor to inform its officers and employees of the penalties for improper disclosure imposed by the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a, specifically, 5 U.S.C. 552a (i)(1) CRIMINAL PENALTIES and m(1) GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS.

### **PRIVACY ACT**

(a) The contractor agrees:

- (1) to comply with the Privacy Act of 1974 and the rules and regulations issued pursuant to the Act in the design, development, or operation of any system of records on individuals in order to accomplish an agency function when the contract specifically identifies (i) the system or systems of records and (ii) the work to be performed by the contractor in terms of any one or combination of the following: (A) design, (B) development, or (C) operation;
- (2) to include the solicitation notification contained in this contract in every solicitation and resulting subcontract and in every subcontract awarded without a solicitation when the statement of work in the proposed subcontract requires the design, development, or operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function; and
- (3) to include this clause, including this paragraph (3), in all subcontracts awarded pursuant to this contract which require the design, development, or operation of such a system of records.

(b) In the event of violations of the Act, a civil action may be brought against the agency involved where the violation concerns the design, development, or operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function, and criminal penalties may be imposed upon the officers or employees of the agency where the violation concerns the operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function. For purposes of the Act when the contract is for the operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function, the contractor and any employee of the contractor is considered to be an employee of the agency.

(c) The terms used in this clause have the following meanings:

- (1) "Operation of a system of records" means performance of any of the activities associated with maintaining the system of records including the collection, use, and dissemination of records.
- (2) "Record" means any item, collection or grouping of information about an individual that is maintained by an agency, including, but not limited to, his education, financial transactions, medical history, and criminal or employment history and that contains his name, or the identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual, such as a finger or voice print or a photograph.
- (3) "System of records" on individuals means a group of any records under the control of any agency from which information is retrieved by the name of the individual or by some identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual.

**ADDITIONAL EMAILED BID SUBMISSION PROVISIONS:** The Government will not be responsible for any failure attributable to the transmission or receipt of the emailed bid including, but not limited to, the following –

1. Illegibility of bid.
2. Emails over 75 MB may not be received by GPO due to size limitations for receiving emails.
3. The bidder's email provider may have different size limitations for sending email; however, bidders are advised not to exceed GPO's stated limit.
4. When the email bid is received by GPO, it will remain unopened until the specified bid opening time. Government personnel will not validate receipt of the emailed bid prior to bid opening. GPO will use the prevailing time (specified as the local time zone) and the exact time that the email is received by GPO's email server as the official time stamp for bid receipt at the specified location.

**PAYMENT:** Submitting all invoices for payment via the GPO fax gateway (if no samples are required) utilizing the GPO barcode coversheet program application is the most efficient method of invoicing. Information for using this method can be found at the following web address:

<https://winapps.access.gpo.gov/fms/vouchers/barcode/instructions.html>.

Invoices may also be mailed to: U.S. Government Publishing Office, Office of Financial Management, Attn: Comptroller, Stop: FMCE, Washington, DC 20401.

For more information about the billing process refer to the General Information of the Office of Finance web page located at: <https://www.gpo.gov/how-to-work-with-us/vendors/how-to-get-paid>.

**Contractor's billing must be itemized in accordance with line items in the "SCHEDULE OF PRICES."**



## SECTION 2. - SPECIFICATIONS

**SCOPE:** These specifications cover the production of three workloads which include: 1. Pre-Notification Mailer consisting of a pre-notification letter in a *small outbound mail envelope* (OME) with window; 2. Survey Mailer consisting of a cover letter, questionnaire, and business reply envelope (BRE) all inserted into a *large outbound mail envelope* (OME) with window and; 3. Thank-You/ Reminder Postcard. All workloads require such operations as electronic prepress, printing, variable imaging, binding, construction, inserting, and distribution.

**TITLE:** Office of Dentistry (ODD) Survey Mailers.

This workload consists of Pre-Notification Mailers, Survey Mailers and Postcards (including English and Spanish versions of each).

GPO will serve as the primary point of contact however, the Contractor is expected to collaborate with GPO, the VA, and an independent data analytics contractor to resolve any discrepancies found in the printed products or to clarify expectations for this project

The awarded contractor must be available to attend 30 minute weekly teleconference meetings with the VA and the data analytics contractor two weeks before and during the printing cycles, should the VA require them. The purpose of the meetings is to clarify requirements and resolve any identified issues as quickly possible.

Packages included are as follows:

(1) Pre-notification Mailer - includes the following:

- (a) *Pre-Notification Letter*
- (b) *Small OME Window Envelope* – face only (after construction)

(2) Survey Mailer – includes the following:

- (a) *Cover letter* – face only
- (b) *Questionnaire* - Dental Patient Satisfaction Survey
- (c) *BRE Envelope* – face only (after construction).
- (d) *Large OME Window Envelope* – face only (after construction).

(3) Thank you / Reminder Postcard

**QUANTITY AND FREQUENCY OF ORDERS:** VHA pieces print in both English and Spanish versions (split is approximately 95% English and 5% Spanish)

- (1) Pre-notification Mailer– approximately 50,000 total participants annually, print orders issued monthly. Average monthly quantity is 4,122 (4,089 English, 33 Spanish.)
- (2) Survey Mailer – approximately 50,000 participants annually, print orders issued monthly. Average monthly quantity is 4,149 (4,017 English, 32 Spanish.)
- (3) Thank you / Reminder Postcard – approximately 50,000 participants annually, print orders issued monthly. Average monthly quantity is 4,017.

For the patients serviced through San Juan, Puerto Rico VAMC, all materials will go out with an English language version and a Spanish language version. The postcard for this group is printed in English and Spanish on one card.

**The Government reserves the right to increase the total mailers ordered annually by up to 20%.**

**NUMBER OF PAGES:**

(1) Pre-Notification Mailer - includes the following:

(a) *Pre-Notification Letter* – face only.

**NOTE:** For Spanish recipients, print face only English letterhead and face only Spanish second sheet

(b) *Small OME Window Envelope* – face only (after construction)

(2) Survey Mailer - includes the following:

(a) *Cover letter* – face only.

**NOTE:** For Spanish recipients, print face only English cover letter and face only Spanish second sheet.

(b) *Questionnaire* –8 pages– face and back.

**NOTE:** For Spanish recipients, print 8-page English questionnaire and 8-page Spanish questionnaire.

(c) *BRE Envelope* – face only (after construction).

(d) *Large OME Window Envelope* – face only (after construction)

(3) Thank you / Reminder Postcard – face and back

**TRIM SIZES:**

(1) Pre-Notification Mailer - includes the following:

(a) *Letter* – 8-1/2 x 11”

(b) *Small OME Window Envelope* – 4-1/8 x 9-1/2” (No. 10), plus flap

(2) Survey Mailer - includes the following:

(a) *Cover Letter* – 8-1/2 x 11”

(b) *Questionnaire* – 8-1/2 x 11”

(c) *BRE Envelope* – 5-7/8” x 8-7/8”, plus flap.

(d) *Large OME Window Envelope* – 6 x 9-1/2”, plus flap.

(3) Thank you / Reminder Postcard – 4-1/4 x 6”

**GOVERNMENT TO FURNISH:** Files furnished via contractor-hosted SFTP server.

Files for static text matter/artwork will be furnished immediately after contract award and are to be held for re-use throughout the term of the contract. In the event that any of the static text matter/artwork changes, new files will be furnished to the contractor.

The static text matter and artwork for all items will be furnished as Adobe Acrobat print ready PDF files (current/near current version). In some instances MS Word files may be supplied.

All fonts will be embedded. The contractor is cautioned that the furnished fonts are the property of the Government and/or its contractors. All furnished fonts are to be eliminated from the contractor’s archive immediately after completion of the contract.

ASCII or MS Excel files will be supplied for the variable data. These files will be transferred to the contractor’s SFTP site for retrieval by the contractor with each order. The variable data will be furnished as a flat (fixed column) ASCII file.

A black and white VA logo will be provided for use on the envelopes in the upper left corner.

Exhibit A – Background Investigation Request Worksheet

Exhibit B – Contractor Rules of Behavior

Exhibit C – Contractor Security Control Assessment

Identification markings such as register marks, commercial identification marks of any kind, etc., carried in the electronic files, must not print on finished product.

**CONTRACTOR TO FURNISH:**

All materials and operations, other than those listed under “Government to Furnish,” necessary to produce the products in accordance with these specifications.

The Contractor must be able to accept files electronically via a contractor-hosted Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) server. Appropriate log-on instructions and protocol must be provided at time of award

**ELECTRONIC PREPRESS:**

Prior to image processing, the contractor shall perform a basic check (preflight) of the furnished media and publishing files to assure correct output of the required production image. Any errors, media damage, or data corruption that might interfere with proper file image processing must be reported to the ordering agency as specified on the print order.

The contractor shall create or alter any necessary trapping, set proper screen angles and screen frequency, and define file output selection for the imaging device being utilized. Furnished files must be imaged as necessary to meet the assigned quality level.

When required by the Government, the contractor shall make minor revisions to the electronic files. It is anticipated that the Government will make all major revisions.

Prior to making revisions, the contractor shall copy the furnished files and make all changes to the copy.

**PRIOR TO PRODUCTION SAMPLES:** Prior to the commencement of production on the first order

The sample requirement for this contract is five (5) printed construction samples in English and Spanish for each wave of the mailers, complete with all requirements for each, as specified on the print order.

Wave 1                   (a) Pre-Notification Mailer – English  
                             (b) Pre-Notification Mailer – English/Spanish

Wave 2                   (a) Survey Mailer – English  
                             (b) Survey Mailer – English/Spanish

Wave 3                   (a) Thank you / Reminder Postcard – English /Spanish

Samples will be inspected and tested and must comply with the specifications in all respects (construction, kind and quality of materials).

Prior to the commencement of production of the contract production quantity, the contractor shall submit samples plus the furnished government material to the address indicated on the Print Order. Samples will be tested for conformance of material(s). Samples will be tested for construction.

The container and accompanying documentation shall be marked PREPRODUCTION SAMPLES and shall include the GPO jacket, purchase order, and program numbers. The samples must be submitted in accordance with the specified schedule. (See “SCHEDULE,”)

The Government will approve, conditionally approve, or disapprove the samples. Approval or conditional approval shall not relieve the contractor from complying with the specifications and all other terms and conditions of the contract. A conditional approval shall state any further action required by the contractor. A notice of disapproval shall state the reasons therefor.

If the samples are disapproved by the Government, the Government, at its option, may require the contractor to submit additional samples for inspection and testing, in the time and under the terms and conditions specified in the notice of rejection. Such additional sample shall be furnished, and necessary changes made, at no additional cost to the Government and with no extension in the shipping schedule. The Government will require the time specified above to inspect and test any additional sample required.

In the event the additional samples are disapproved by the Government, the contractor shall be deemed to have failed to make delivery within the meaning of the default clause in which event this contract shall be subject to termination for default, provided however, that the failure of the Government to terminate the contract for default in such event shall not relieve the contractor of the responsibility to deliver the contract quantities in accordance with the shipping schedule.

In the event the Government fails to approve, conditionally approve, or disapprove the sample within the time specified, the Contracting Officer shall automatically extend the shipping schedule in accordance with Contract Clause 12, "Notice of Compliance with Schedules," of GPO Contract Terms (GPO Publication 310.2, effective December 1, 1987 (Rev. 6-01)).

Manufacture of the final product prior to approval of the sample submitted is at the contractor's risk. Samples will not be returned to the contractor. All costs, including the costs of all samples shall be included in the contract price for the production quantity

## **PROOFS:**

### ***PDF soft proofs*** – Before beginning live production

A PDF soft production proof must be submitted as a single file for the first five names in the furnished file and must include all the variable data for those five names.

Proof will be transferred to the agency via SFTP site

If any contractor's errors are serious enough in the opinion of the GPO to require revised proofs, the revised proofs are to be provided at no expense to the Government. No extra time can be allowed for this reproofing; such operations must be accomplished within the original production schedule allotted in the specifications.

**CONTRACTOR MUST NOT PRINT PRIOR TO THE RECEIPT OF AN "O.K. TO PRINT."**

**STOCK/PAPER:** The specifications of all paper furnished must be in accordance with those listed herein or listed for the corresponding JCP Code numbers in the "Government Paper Specification Standards No. 13" dated September 2019.

Government Paper Specification Standards No. 13 –

[https://www.gpo.gov/docs/default-source/forms-and-standards-files-for-vendors/vol\\_13.pdf](https://www.gpo.gov/docs/default-source/forms-and-standards-files-for-vendors/vol_13.pdf)

All paper used must be of a uniform shade.

### (1) Pre-notification Mailer – includes the following:

- (a) *Letter* – White Uncoated Text, basis weight: 60 lbs. per 500 sheets, 25 x 38", equal to JCP Code A60.
- (b) *Small OME Window Envelope* – Writing Envelope; White, basis weight: 24 lbs. per 500 sheets, 17 x 22", equal to JCP Code V20.

(2) Survey Mailer – includes the following:

(a) *Cover Letter* – White Uncoated Text, basis weight: 60 lbs. per 500 sheets, 25 x 38”, equal to JCP Code A60.

(b) *Questionnaires*: White Optical Mark Sense Scanner (OMSS) Bond, 24 lbs. per 500 sheets, 17 X 22”, equal to JCP Code O27. Stock must NOT contain any recycled content

**NOTE:** Grain direction must run across the 11” dimension of the final product

(c) *BRE Envelope* – White Writing Envelope, basis weight: 24 lbs. per 500 sheets, 17 x 22”, equal to JCP Code V20.

(d) *Large OME Window Envelope* – White Writing Envelope, basis weight: 24 lbs. per 500 sheets, 17 x 22”, equal to JCP Code V20.

(3) Thank you / reminder postcard – White Uncoated Cover, basis weight: 100 lbs. per 500 sheets, 20 x 26”, equal to JCP Code L23.

**PRINTING AND VARIABLE IMAGING:**

GPO imprint is waived and must not print on the items in the mailer.

At contractor’s option, the static only products (products that will not require variable imaging at any time) may be produced via conventional offset or digital printing provided that Quality Level III standards are maintained. Final output must be a minimum of 150-line screen and at a minimum resolution of 2400 x 2400 dpi x 1 bit or 600 x 600 dpi x 8 bit depth technology. Digital device must have a RIP that provides an option for high quality color matching such as Device Links Technology and/or ICC Profiles.

**For products that contain variable data, the contractor must print and variable image in a single pass.**

Contractor must match Pantone color as indicated on the print order.

All the BRE and OME envelopes require a security tint printed on the inside (back - before manufacture) in black ink. Contractor may use his own design but must guarantee that the product will ensure complete opacity and prevent show through of any material contained therein.

Printing on envelopes shall be in accordance with the requirements for the style envelope ordered. All printing shall comply with all applicable U.S. Postal Service regulations, including automation guidelines/requirements. The envelope shall accept printing without feathering or penetrating to the reverse side.

Letters, Cover Letters, Surveys, and Thank you / Reminder Postcards are printed in English and Spanish languages.

The response positions are not in the same identical positions for each, therefore two separate scan applications are required.

Variable printing on front of cover letter and page 1 of questionnaire only will include the name, address, and unique identification number (see below) on the cover letter that will also accompany the questionnaire, and the thank you / reminder postcard. It will also include location of VA facility and an appointment date.

(1) Pre-notification Mailer – in English and Spanish

(a) *Letter*: Print face only in black. Printing consists of text and line matter in black.

Variable imaging – addressing and identifier, or identification number

(b) *Small OME Window Envelope* – Print face only (after construction) in a single pantone color. Printing consists of text and line matter, for return address.

(2) Survey Mailer – include the following:

- (a) *Cover letters* – in English and Spanish. Print face only in black. Printing consists of text and line matter in black.

Variable imaging – Variable imaging of a personalized name, address, and bar-code or some other unique litho code tracking mechanism matching the survey

- (b) *Questionnaires* – in English and Spanish. Print head-to-head in black ink. Printing consists of text and line matter.

Variable imaging – Variable image in black on multiple pages throughout. Consists of text and line matter (name, address, litho-code matching cover letter, and survey sequence number)

- (c) *BRE Envelopes* – Print face only (after construction) in a single color, black or pantone. Printing consists of text and line matter. Variable imaging is not required.

**NOTE:** Return envelopes must be printed in Business Reply Format.

- (d) *Large OME Window Envelope* – Print face only (after construction) in single ink color. Printing consists of text and line matter, and agency seal. Variable imaging is not required.

- (3) Thank you / reminder postcard – in English and Spanish. Print face and back in black. Printing consists of text and line matter, and agency seal.

Variable imaging - Imaging consists of text and line matter face only in black (name, address, eSurvey passcode, and barcode).

**Unique Identification Numbers** - The tracking mechanism is used to monitor response rates. The tracking mechanism for the survey must include a unique identifier for each survey participant. The unique identifier, or identification number, printed on the survey must also serve as a link with the name and address file provided to the vendor.

The number also must include an identifier designating which survey cycle and mailing sequence the survey questionnaire belongs to. The purpose of the patient unique identification number serves as a way of tracking respondents so that their names will not appear directly on the questionnaire.

The OOD guarantees survey respondents' anonymity. The identification numbering system used to track surveys specifies a unique number to each individual in the sample. This number will be used during data analysis to link survey respondents to their demographic data. The numbering system can be sequential or non-sequential and can be developed collaboratively between the vendor and the OOD.

**MARGINS:** Margins will be as indicated on the print order or furnished electronic media.

**BINDING:**

*Pre-Notification letters:* Trim and fold in thirds to insert into No. 10 envelope.

*Cover letters:* Trim four sides

*Questionnaires:* 8-page Questionnaires will be Saddle-stitched with two wires across the 11" dimension and trim 3-sides to finished size of 8-1/2 x 11".

*Thank you / reminder postcard:* Trim four sides.

**NOTE:** Must keep all postcards in the correct order for mailing throughout all the processes

**Performance:** The forms shall read continuously on the specified scanner. The reject rate due to manufacturing deficiencies shall not exceed 0.65 percent of the items when run on the specified equipment. A form is a reject when it cannot be correctly processed on the first pass through the specified reading equipment.

Acceptability of the lot for readability shall be based on the number of rejected items in a sample of the size specified in ANSI/ASQC Z 1.4, Sampling Procedures and Tables for Inspection by Attributes, with AQL equal to 0.65 percent. For evaluation of readability, the sampling unit of product shall be an individual form. Readability tests are independent of tests and evaluations of all other product characteristics. At the option of the Government, the sample may consist of sequential items from one or more portions of the lot rather than a random sample.

### **CONSTRUCTION:**

**Envelopes:** *All Envelopes (BRE, small OME, and large OME):* Envelopes must be open side, side seam, with gummed fold-over flap for sealing. Flap depth is at the contractor's option but must meet all USPS requirements. Flap must be coated with suitable glue that will securely seal the envelope without adhering to contents, not permit resealing of the envelope, and permit easy opening by the recipient. Envelopes shall be sufficiently high cut so as to prevent the flap adhesive from coming in contact with the envelope's contents. The sealed seam shall not adhere to the inside of the envelope. Envelopes shall be free from cuts, folds, tears, machine marks, foreign matter, dirt, ink smears, and adhesive stains.

*Small OME Window Envelope (No. 10) (4-1/8 x 9-1/2")* will require one die-cut window 1-1/8 x 4-1/2", located 7/8" from the left edge of envelope and 1/2" from the bottom edge of envelope for viewing of address on cover letter. Window must have slightly rounded corners. Die-cut window is to be covered with a suitable poly-type, transparent, low-gloss material that must be clear of smudges, lines, and distortions. Poly-type material must be securely affixed to the inside of the envelope so as not to interfere with insertion of contents. Window material must meet the current U.S. Postal Service's (USPS) readability standards/requirements.

*Large OME Window Envelope (6 x 9-1/2")* will require one die-cut window (1-1/2 x 4-1/4" in size) located 7/8" from left edge of envelope and 3-1/4" from bottom edge of envelope for viewing of mailing address on questionnaire. Window must have slightly rounded corners. Die-cut window is to be covered with a suitable poly-type, transparent, low-gloss material that must be clear of smudges, lines and distortions. Poly-type material must be securely affixed to the inside of the envelope so as not to interfere with insertion of contents. Window material must meet the current U.S. Postal Service's (USPS) readability standards/requirements.

### **INSERTING:**

For each of the workloads it is the contractor's responsibility to assure that only the mailing address and barcode, lithocode or tracking mechanism on the questionnaire is visible through the window on the OME envelope, and that only one questionnaire, cover letter, and BRE envelope is inserted into each OME envelope.

*Pre-notification Mailer:* Insert folded letter into a 4-1/8 x 9-1/2" small OME window envelope (No. 10). Contractor must insure the complete address shows through the window. For Spanish recipients, print face only English letter and face only Spanish letter as a second sheet.

*Survey Mailer* Cover letters will be matched to the survey booklet with the same unique identifier, or identification number and inserted with a 5-7/8 x 8-7/8" BRM envelope into a 6 x 9-1/2" large OME window envelope. Contractor must insure the complete address shows through the window. For the Spanish recipients, insert both an English version AND a Spanish version of the cover letter and survey questionnaire.

### **QUALITY SAMPLE PULLS:**

The contractor will be required to pull one (1) test sample every 1,000 postcards or mailers, as applicable per workload.

**NOTE:** For orders placed with a quantity of less than 1,000 copies, contractor must pull 1 random test sample.

For quality sample pulls of mailers, the mailers must be complete – all required items printed/imaged, bound/constructed, and inserted in accordance with these specifications.

Quality sample pulls for an order must be signed and dated by the contractor operator and placed in a container. The Government on-site representative will review. Once approved, these samples will be mailed at a later date. The samples constitute a part of the total quantity ordered, and no additional charge will be allowed.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

***NCOA Processing*** – In accordance with United States Postal Service (USPS) regulations, contractor may be required to run distribution files on each order through the National Change of Address (NCOA) service database to verify addresses are NCOA certified, as required. All related costs to perform this operation must be included in submitted bid pricing. No additional reimbursement will be authorized.

Under the requirements above, the vendor will be supplied Data files. These files must undergo standard Code 1 mail streaming and NCOA cleaning to remove any undeliverable addresses before printing of the names and addresses on the surveys begins. The Post Office requires all mailing lists to be run through NCOA processing in order to give presort and bulk rate discounts.

Once a mailing list is received by the vendor, an output table file must be created containing each mailing participant. The contents of the output file must be approved/verified by VA before proceeding to Code 1 mail streaming and NCOA cleaning. To do this the output file must be transmitted electronically to the VA so they can verify that the vendor has received the full contents of the address file.

An output file containing the rejected names and addresses must be provided to VA along with the reject code or some explanation for reason of rejection. The output containing the names and addresses of those records retained after NCOA cleaning (i.e. cleared for mailing) must be provided to VA in the layout described above.

Mail f.o.b. contractor's city each individual postcard or survey mailer to domestic addresses nationwide.

The contractor is responsible for all costs incurred in transporting the Pre-notification mailers or postcards, Survey mailers and thank you/reminder postcards, as required for each workload, to the U.S. Postal Service facility.

All mailing shall be made at the Presorted First Class rate.

Contractor will mail using departmental mailing permit imprint through VA's USPS Enterprise Payment System (EPS). Contractor is responsible for establishing the mail permit.

The contractor is required to obtain the maximum postage discount allowed by the USPS in accordance with appropriate USPS rules and regulations, including the USPS Domestic Mail Manual, and Postal Bulletins, in effect at the time of the mailing.

The contractor is cautioned that mailing permit imprint may be used only for the purpose of mailing material produced under this contract.

Orders which result in mailings of less than 200 pieces or less than 50 pounds will require the contractor to apply the appropriate postage to each mailing. Contractor will be reimbursed for postage by submitting a properly completed Postal Service Certificate of Mailing with the invoice for billing.

***Certificate of Conformance:*** When using Permit Imprint Mail the contractor must complete GPO Form 712 - Certificate of Conformance (Rev. 10-15), and the appropriate mailing statement or statements supplied by USPS. A fillable GPO Form 712 Certificate of Conformance can be found at <https://www.gpo.gov/how-to-work-with-us/vendors/forms-and-standards>.

All copies mailed must conform to the appropriate regulations in the U.S. Postal Service manuals for "Domestic Mail" or "International mail" as applicable.

Upon completion of each order, the contractor must notify the ordering agency on the same day that the product mails via email to the email address specified on the print order.

The subject line of the email shall be "Distribution Notice for Program 179-S, P.O. XXXXX, Jacket XXX-XXX, Print Order XXXXX." The notice must provide all applicable tracking numbers and mailing method. Contractor must be able to provide copies of all mailing receipts upon agency request.

**In addition to the individual mailing pieces, the contractor may be required to mail 2 to 25 quality samples, f.o.b destination to a single destination as listed on the print order.**



**SCHEDULE:** Adherence to this schedule must be maintained. Contractor must not start production of any job prior to receipt of the individual print order (GPO Form 2511). Print order and all furnished materials will be provided via SFTP.

When required, prior to production samples must be delivered to and picked up from address listed on the print order. When required, PDF soft proofs must be sent via SFTP.

No definite schedule for pickup of material can be predetermined.

The following schedule begins the workday after notification of the availability of print order and furnished material; the workday after notification will be the first workday of the schedule.

### ***Prior to Production Samples***

Prior to production samples are produced separately at the beginning of the contract and when significant changes are made to a survey instrument

Prior to Production samples must be submitted within three (3) work days from approval of artwork.

The Government will approve, conditionally approve or disapprove the samples with in five (5) workdays of the receipt thereof.

### ***Proofing***

Soft copy PDF production proofs for the first five names in the furnished file must be submitted within one (1) work day after receipt of data files.

Soft copy PDF production proofs will be withheld no more than two (2) work days from their receipt at the ordering agency until they are made available for pickup or the corrections / changes/“O.K. to print” are provided to the contractor (via email), as applicable. The first workday after receipt of proofs at the ordering agency is day one of the hold time.

All expenses incidental to submitting proofs must be borne by the contractor.

### ***Live Production***

The first workday after receipt of proof approval OR notice that the proofs are waived is workday one. Production is to be completed within five (5) workdays but no earlier than the date listed on the print order.

The print order for each wave and the distribution file will be available on or around the 7<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Contractor has five (5) workdays from receipt of file to deliver Pre-Notification Letters to the Post Office for distribution.

Five (5) workdays after delivery of the Pre-Notification Letter, the contractor is to deliver the Survey pieces to the Post Office for distribution.

Five (5) workdays after delivery of the Survey, the contractor is to deliver the Reminder Postcards to the Post Office for distribution.

The timing sequence of the mailings for each item is noted below in the following sample schedule:

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of the month: Monthly Print Orders for each wave and Data files are provided

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month: Pre-notification Mailer is mailed

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of the month: Survey Mailer is mailed

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of the month: Thank you / Reminder Postcard is mailed

The ship/deliver date indicated on the print order is the date products ordered for delivery f.o.b. destination must be delivered to the destinations specified, and the date products ordered for mailing f.o.b. contractor's city must be delivered to the U.S. Postal Service.

Unscheduled material such as shipping documents, receipts or instructions, delivery lists, labels, etc., will be furnished with each order or shortly thereafter. In the event such information is not received in due time, the contractor will not be relieved of any responsibility in meeting the shipping schedule because of failure to request such information.

For compliance reporting purposes, contractors are to report information regarding each order with date of shipment or delivery, as applicable, in accordance with the contract requirements by contacting the Shared Support Services Compliance Section via email at [compliance@gpo.gov](mailto:compliance@gpo.gov). Personnel receiving the email will be unable to respond to questions of a technical nature or to transfer any inquiries.

### SECTION 3. - DETERMINATION OF AWARD

The Government will determine the lowest bid by applying the prices offered in the "Schedule of Prices" to the following units of production which are the estimated requirements to produce one (1) year's production under this contract. These units do not constitute, nor are they to be construed as, a guarantee of the volume of work which may be ordered during a like period of time.

Although the base year will allow only nine (9) months of live production, the determination below was estimated on a full years' production

I.	(a)	1	
	(b)	36	
		(1)	(2)
II.	(a)	72	92
	(b)	36	49
	(c)	12	49
	(d)	12	49
	(e)	12	49
	(f)	12	48
III.	(a)	49	
	(b)	49	

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**SECTION 4. - SCHEDULE OF PRICES**

Bids offered are f.o.b. contractor’s city for all mailing and f.o.b. destination for all other shipments.

Prices must include the cost of all required materials and operations for each item listed in accordance with these specifications.

Bidder must make an entry in each of the spaces provided. Bids submitted with any obliteration, revision, or alteration of the order and manner of submitting bids may be declared non-responsive.

An entry of NC (No Charge) shall be entered if bidder intends to furnish individual items at no charge to the Government.

Bids submitted with NB (No Bid), NA (Not Applicable) or blank spaces for an item may be declared non-responsive.

The Contracting Officer reserves the right to reject any offer that contains prices for individual items of production (whether or not such items are included in the DETERMINATION OF AWARD) that are inconsistent or unrealistic in regard to other prices in the same offer or to GPO prices for the same operation if such action would be in the best interest of the Government.

All invoices submitted to the GPO shall be based on the most economical method of production.

Fractional parts of 1,000 will be prorated at the per-1,000 rate.

Contractor’s billing invoice must be itemized in accordance with the line items in the “SCHEDULE OF PRICES.”

**I. PREPRESS:** For line item I.(a), the face of each envelope will be charged as one trim/page-size unit.

- (a) Prior to Production samples (1<sup>st</sup> order).....all Items.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Adobe Acrobat PDF soft proof ( 5names)..... per file.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**II. PRINTING, VARIABLE IMAGING, BINDING, AND CONSTRUCTION:** Prices offered must be all inclusive and include the cost of materials and operations (including stock) necessary for the printing, variable imaging, binding, and construction listed in accordance with these specifications.

	<u>Makeready and/or Setup</u> (1)	<u>Running Per 1,000 Copies</u> (2)
(a) Pre-notification letters, or Cover letters: Printing face only in black. In English or Spanish, including binding ..... per letter.....	\$ _____	\$ _____
(b) Eight-Page Questionnaires: Printing face and back in black, with variable imaging in black. In English or Spanish, including binding ..... per questionnaire.....	\$ _____	\$ _____

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Initials)

	<u>Makeready and/or Setup</u> (1)	<u>Running Per 1,000 Copies</u> (2)
(c) Small OME Window Envelope (4-1/8 x 9-1/2"): Printing face only in a single color, including construction ..... per envelope.....	\$ _____	\$ _____
(d) BRE Envelope (5-7/8 X 8-7/8"): Printing face only in a single color, including construction ..... per envelope.....	\$ _____	\$ _____
(e) Large OME Window Envelope (6 X 9-1/2"): Printing face only in a single color, including construction ..... per envelope.....	\$ _____	\$ _____
(f) Thank you / Reminder Postcards: Printing face and back in black, with variable imaging in black in English or Spanish, including binding and mailing ..... per postcard.....	\$ _____	\$ _____

**III. INSERTING AND MAILING:** Prices offered must be all inclusive and include the cost of all required materials and operations necessary for the mailing of the survey mailers, including cost of collating questionnaire leaves and cover letter, lettering-folding to required size in accordance with these specifications, insertion of questionnaires/cover letters and BRE envelopes into OME envelope, NCOA verification and mailing, in accordance with these specifications.

- (a) Per 1,000 Pre-notification Mailers .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Per 1,000 Survey Mailers .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Initials)

