

## U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

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CITY PAIR PROGRAM (CPP)  
FY25 PRE-SOLICITATION CONFERENCE

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THURSDAY  
JANUARY 18, 2024

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The Pre-Solicitation Conference convened via Videoconference, at 2:00 p.m. EST, Mary Gartland, Director, City Pair Program, presiding.

## PRESENT

MARY GARTLAND, Director, City Pair Program  
ANDREA ANDERSON, Contract Specialist  
JERRY BRISTOW, Senior Program Analyst  
JENNIFER BURDETTE, Program Analyst  
MIKE CONNOR, Program Manager  
MATTHEW RACCHINI, Contract Specialist  
JAMES "JD" SANTINI, Contracting Officer

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 2:01 p.m.

3 MS. GARTLAND: We are going to go  
4 ahead and kick this City Pair Program FY25  
5 Pre-Solicitation Conference off. Good afternoon,  
6 everybody, I am Mary Gartland, I am the Director  
7 of the City Pair Program. We have the program  
8 office and the contracting team on the call  
9 today. We will be walking through the draft RFP  
10 that was just released on January 11th.

11 So, what we are going to discuss today  
12 is an overview of our partnership goals, the  
13 improvements we made, the solicitation updates,  
14 then walk through them by section, review our  
15 market information, and review your questions. If  
16 you have any further questions after this  
17 presentation is complete, you can always reach  
18 out to us as well.

19 The City Pair Program has partnership  
20 goals. We wouldn't be here without our agencies  
21 or our suppliers, so we want to create value for  
22 our stakeholders. We believe a strong

1 relationship management process will allow the  
2 program to improve our solicitation every year,  
3 and we have to ensure that we meet the demands of  
4 our customers, while also staying aligned with  
5 our suppliers and industry trends.

6 How do we do that? We meet with our  
7 suppliers twice a year in one-on-ones. We also  
8 have ad hoc meetings as needed. We meet with our  
9 agencies in partnership meetings, and we have an  
10 International Working Group that meets as well.  
11 We're also open to meet any time throughout the  
12 year. We want to make it easy to do business  
13 with City Pair.

14 So, what are some changes that we have  
15 made throughout the past year to do that? We  
16 want to ensure that our user interface tools are  
17 easy to use. We have incorporated our offer  
18 submission tool into an easier to use system,  
19 Contract Acquisition Life-cycle Management (CALM)  
20 City Pair Source Selection (CPSS). We recieved a  
21 lot of good feedback from our suppliers about how  
22 efficient the communication is when uploading

1 their offers.

2 We also provide timely access to our  
3 contract fares, and our agency Online Booking  
4 Tools (OBTs) and Travel Management Companies  
5 (TMCs). We try to award contract fares mid-July  
6 so you can start booking those next fiscal year  
7 trips. We also have regular cadence of  
8 information and data sharing. With our  
9 suppliers, we provide quarterly data reports on  
10 their top markets.

11 We also meet at a regular cadence of  
12 twice a year to discuss checkpoints and midyear  
13 statistics, along with end of year statistics.  
14 We have an innovative and equitable procurement.  
15 We try to create a competitive landscape where we  
16 allow all suppliers that are able to meet our  
17 minimum requirements, we don't limit it to just  
18 two or three suppliers.

19 And we like ideas to improve the  
20 program, that's why we have so many  
21 customer (audio interference).

22 PARTICIPANT: Lost you, Mary.

1 MS. GARTLAND: -- to ensure that we're  
2 on the right path with everyone's continuing  
3 participation in the program.

4 MS. BURDETTE: Mary, you came back,  
5 but I think we lost a bit of your dialogue there.

6 MS. GARTLAND: Okay.

7 MS. WURZBACHER: Mary, I don't know if  
8 you can hear me. I know some people are having  
9 trouble. If you try to access via browser, that  
10 was able to be successful. I think some of us  
11 are getting blocked.

12 MS. GARTLAND: Yeah, I would  
13 definitely recommend just joining by browser,  
14 even in the future. I have to join by browser  
15 because we don't have it downloaded on our  
16 computers, too, and you get all the same access,  
17 except maybe background applications.

18 Does anyone need me to repeat anything  
19 I just said? Jennifer, where did I leave off?

20 MS. BURDETTE: I believe you were on  
21 this, last pillar, innovative and equitable  
22 procurement.

1 MS. GARTLAND: So, overall, we just  
2 want to ensure that we are creating a level  
3 playing field and allow as many suppliers to  
4 submit offers and meet our minimum requirements  
5 as possible. We will work with new suppliers to  
6 ensure that, if there are hurdles, we can assist  
7 them.

8 We don't just award to two or three  
9 carriers, like corporations. We can award to as  
10 many carriers that have the best offer. We want  
11 to exchange ideas to improve the program with our  
12 customers and our suppliers to ensure that we're  
13 on the right path, and considering today's  
14 environmental landscape. We do that by  
15 incorporating your voice into this solicitation.  
16 I hope that you are happy with the improvements  
17 that are made, because most of them are done  
18 because of our customers or because of our  
19 suppliers.

20 I just wanted to say thank you to  
21 everybody, all our suppliers, for their continued  
22 participation. We appreciate it and our

1 partnership is important. If there's any way  
2 that we can improve, we are open to that  
3 discussion, and open to those meetings as well.

4 Now we can walk through the program  
5 office driven improvements. The first one is  
6 nonstop bonus. We want to accurately reflect the  
7 best value service that's being offered in our  
8 price versus technical grouping. It's important  
9 to our customers that they get to their  
10 destinations efficiently as possible to meet  
11 their agency's missions. So, we have changed  
12 that Group 1, all A through G passenger levels,  
13 will receive 20 points for any carrier with  
14 nonstop service when compared to connect service.

15 Previously, there were lower points  
16 for E through F passenger levels. Passenger level  
17 G has never actually been included in Group 1; we  
18 usually put it in Group 3, so that is a new  
19 update as well. This is really just to ensure  
20 that nonstop service is getting the review from  
21 the evaluation team that is needed to ensure that  
22 we are awarding on best value.

1                   Next is the \_CA fare language  
2           improvement, that is our deeply discounted fare  
3           in our coach class fare offerings. We heard that  
4           there was auditing language in our contract that  
5           made it a little bit harder to manage to the \_CA  
6           fare class. It is capacity-controlled based on  
7           supply and demand of that current plane.

8                   \_CA is also a fare that may not always  
9           be taken by our travelers, and we all know that  
10          the load factors of planes are really high, and  
11          the airlines have no control over that either.  
12          So we removed the auditing language from our  
13          contract so that airlines can be more comfortable  
14          knowing that there will be no audit and no  
15          penalty on \_CA availability.

16                   We still hope that the offer will  
17          still be there, because the \_CA fare is really  
18          important to our government travelers. There's  
19          policies out there for them to take that when  
20          it's available. It really drives the cost  
21          savings and budgets of our agencies, and can make  
22          a difference in sometimes even going off carrier.



1 It improves compliance, as well, because those  
2 are the most competitive against those lower  
3 commercial fares that can be found that may not  
4 be contract fares. We hope that this will bring  
5 some comfort in continuing to offering those \_CA  
6 fares that are really important to our government  
7 travelers and agencies.

8 The premium economy expansion. So,  
9 premium economy was added as a new class of  
10 service about two years ago. The Federal Travel  
11 Regulation (FTR) has added a policy to allow  
12 agencies to approve this type of travel. We are  
13 seeing a slow movement into using this, I think  
14 because agencies are still gaining traction on  
15 the policymaking piece of that. But, at the same  
16 time, we are seeing usage, so we've expanded  
17 those markets, offering in 78 markets in total,  
18 adding 36 this year. Premium economy is not as  
19 expensive as business class, but has the extra  
20 space offering that maybe an international  
21 traveler might require when taking those longer  
22 trips.

1           Increased markets solicited. We have  
2 increased the markets that we are soliciting this  
3 year by about ten percent. We're seeing an  
4 influx of travel, we're at about 85 percent of  
5 pre-COVID FY19 levels.

6           So, we're seeing that market reach  
7 increase, and markets traveled increase getting  
8 back to normal. If a government traveler has  
9 traveled or requested a market for their mission  
10 and it meets our minimum requirements, we're  
11 going to solicit it so it's included in our spend  
12 under management and travelers can utilize the  
13 discounts offered.

14           This is one from last year. We  
15 thought International Air Transport Association  
16 (IATA) was going to transition some city codes to  
17 airport codes, and that change was not made. So,  
18 we are transitioning back to what is in IATA  
19 today, since they never made those improvements.  
20 We make it easier to do business with us and  
21 cause less confusion.

22           PARTICIPANT: That change was not made?

1 MS. GARTLAND: IATA stated they were  
2 going to make these changes this calendar year  
3 2023 and they have not. Due to that industry  
4 source not changing, we are going to change it  
5 back to what it was, and is today, to make it  
6 easier to do business with us. We wanted to note  
7 that, since we did make this change last year  
8 anticipating it was going to happen, and it did  
9 not.

10 That is all for the program  
11 improvement section. I am going to hand it off  
12 to our contracting team. Our contracting officer,  
13 JD Santini, is going to kick it off for them.

14 MR. SANTINI: Yes, thanks, Mary.  
15 Let's go to the next slide. Perfect. Well, good  
16 afternoon, everyone. I am really excited to be  
17 here with everyone, particularly now that I'm the  
18 experienced veteran here that I am, having a full  
19 12 months under my belt with the City Pair  
20 Program. The past year certainly has been kind  
21 of a whirlwind, a bit of a learning curve, and  
22 particularly when you combine that with the

1 integration of the CALM system.

2 But I know that that transition over  
3 the last 12 months has been so much smoother than  
4 it could have been otherwise, thanks in no small  
5 measure to the tremendous partnerships with have  
6 with so many of you that are on the call this  
7 afternoon. And it's something we definitely  
8 recognize and appreciate very much. And  
9 particularly myself in that first 12 months, it  
10 really makes it so much easier when you have  
11 partners that are dependable and so committed to  
12 the program. So, we very much appreciate that.

13 At the outset, just real quickly, I  
14 want to do a plug for the questions. We will  
15 have a Q&A session at the end, but we have  
16 everyone from contracting here, everyone from the  
17 program office here, it's kind of unusual in that  
18 instance, and so we certainly encourage any and  
19 all questions as they arise, as we have many on  
20 the line who can assist.

21 Going along with that, as a  
22 housekeeping note, tomorrow is the deadline for

1 questions for the draft RFP, it's tomorrow at 5  
2 pm EST. So, if you do feel more comfortable, you  
3 can submit a written list of questions, as well.  
4 And then, after that list is submitted, we will  
5 provide those questions and answers in their  
6 entirety on SAM.gov.

7 So, as we look through the slides here  
8 we have four parts to the RFP itself. So, be  
9 aware. So, in Part I and Part II, all of what's  
10 contained in those parts will be incorporated  
11 into any contract that is awarded.

12 So, you will be responsible for  
13 adhering to those contents through the life of  
14 the contract. And, ultimately, in order to be  
15 awarded a contract, you will need to follow the  
16 requirements and instructions that are in part  
17 three and part four of the RFP. So, the entirety  
18 of those parts, basically, are critical in being  
19 able to be awarded a contract, and then ensuring  
20 that you're complying with the contract.

21 So, starting off here with the  
22 schedule, I'm going to do a brief overview of

1 these sections. Certainly, they'll require more  
2 in depth reading on your ends. I just want to  
3 cover a couple points on each of these sections.

4 So, for the schedule, Part A, the  
5 SF1449, that's something that everyone's very  
6 much familiar with, first will be box 17A. And  
7 that's where you're just going to need to fill in  
8 your company name. And then the only other part  
9 that you'll need to fill in are the boxes 30A, B,  
10 and C, which will require your title, your  
11 signature, and the date. So, it's very straight  
12 forward, but it is essential the form is  
13 submitted on time with your proposal before the  
14 deadline.

15 Moving on to Section B, we have our  
16 services and price. So, basically, the first  
17 part of this section goes in depth on the  
18 services the government is procuring, and  
19 additionally Section B.2 provides a very  
20 extensive list of definitions and words you'll  
21 see throughout the solicitation that might have  
22 other meanings in various other contexts.

1           But for the government's purposes, in  
2 this solicitation, we do want to make sure that  
3 there's a clear understanding of the government's  
4 intentions with the inclusion of these words in  
5 the solicitation. So, ideally, it's just to  
6 eliminate any ambiguities and ensure we're all on  
7 the same page as far as the requirements of the  
8 solicitation and the government's expectations.

9           Moving on to Section C, here we have  
10 our descriptions and specifications. Basically,  
11 what we're looking to purchase. And this is the  
12 longest section of the RFP, and one of the most  
13 specific in regards to what exactly we're looking  
14 for. You'll find the scope of the requirements,  
15 a comprehensive list of the mandatory and non-  
16 mandatory users, and the technical requirements  
17 of the solicitation. So, please familiarize  
18 yourself with this section and understand the  
19 requirements laid out there.

20           There are no Sections D and E, as you  
21 can see, because they're not applicable to the  
22 solicitation, so those are left blank. We'll

1 move right along to Section F, Deliveries and  
2 Performance. So, highlighted here will be the  
3 period of performance, which in this case is  
4 going to be one year. And that is expected to  
5 commence on October 1st, 2025. Finally, there is  
6 one two-month option period and one one-month  
7 option period that can be exercised.

8 Another part of this section worth  
9 noting is, when a carrier has been awarded a  
10 contract and no longer meets the government's  
11 minimum flight requirements. This is a situation  
12 that can arise not only after award, but also  
13 during the solicitation process. The solicitation  
14 does stipulate that within 10 days after award, a  
15 carrier must confirm whether they still meet the  
16 minimum requirements for all the line items they  
17 have been awarded.

18 A carrier does not have to wait until  
19 after an award to notify us if they no longer  
20 meet the minimum requirements for a specific  
21 market. A carrier can notify us during the  
22 discussion phase if they no longer meet the



1 minimum requirements. This is particularly  
2 helpful to avoid awarding a market to a carrier  
3 that no longer meets the service requirements.

4           Okay, so moving on to Section G, here  
5 we have our contract administrative data. This  
6 section basically focuses on the ordering of  
7 services and the audits that can be conducted  
8 throughout the period of performance and after  
9 award, as well as post-award price reductions.

10 So, those are the procedures that once fares are  
11 reduced commercially, they should be reduced on  
12 an awarded market as well.

13           Moving on to Section H, this is in  
14 regards to our special contract requirements, and  
15 this is actually very important information  
16 regarding compliance with regulations. Those  
17 regulations are ones that are in the Federal  
18 Aviation Act or policies prescribed by the  
19 Department of Transportation or the Department of  
20 Defense. It also includes regulations from  
21 TRANSCOM and CRAF. So, these are regulations  
22 that do require strict adherence, and obviously

1 you need to make sure you're familiar with those  
2 requirements as part of this contract.

3 Section I, probably the most riveting  
4 portion of the RFP are always the contract  
5 clauses. Although maybe not as riveting as some  
6 may want, the importance really can't be  
7 overstated, because, ultimately, these clauses do  
8 become part of the contract, and the expectation  
9 is that those clauses will be followed. And also  
10 they are updated every year. Not every clause,  
11 but updates occur every year in the FAR. And  
12 some of the clauses in this RFP have been  
13 updated, so definitely want to pay attention to  
14 those that have been updated. And those have  
15 been highlighted in our significant changes  
16 document, that is an attachment to the RFP.

17 Moving on to Section J. So, these are  
18 a list of documents, exhibits, and other  
19 attachments. What's neat here is this is  
20 essentially a checklist. It spells out here  
21 clearly everything you'll need to include in your  
22 proposal submission to be considered for award.

1 So, as you're getting ready to submit your  
2 proposal, you can go basically line by line and  
3 make sure that it's included with your proposal  
4 and feel comfortable that if all those things are  
5 checked off, that you will be considered for  
6 award.

7 Moving onto Section K, Section K is  
8 our representations, certifications, and other  
9 statement of offers. So, here you'll be asked to  
10 identify the authorized negotiators, provide  
11 primary and alternate points of contact, and also  
12 a customer service point of contact. Also  
13 included here is the CRAF certification, your  
14 code-sharing partner arrangements, and then  
15 compliance with various air quality and safety  
16 regulations. This is also the part where your  
17 SAM registration needs to be documented, as well  
18 as your 889 telecommunications equipment  
19 representations.

20 So, this is a more interactive section  
21 because this does require responses to certain  
22 boxes that need to be checked, and information

1 that needs to be provided. And if it's  
2 incomplete, your proposal will not be considered  
3 for award until those areas are completed.

4 Moving on to Section L, so here's  
5 where you'll find the deadlines that we have  
6 moving forward throughout the season. And there  
7 are various groups and stages, so it's important  
8 that you familiarize yourself with those  
9 deadlines and make sure that they are on your  
10 calendar. We do try to provide reminders and  
11 such, but, ultimately, is incumbent upon you to  
12 keep track of those deadlines.

13 This section also does contain some  
14 solicitation provisions. One notable provision  
15 that is in this section is the public disclosure  
16 of greenhouse gas emissions and reduction goals,  
17 and this again does include a couple of questions  
18 that need to be answered or boxes that need to be  
19 checked.

20 Finally, we move to Section M, and  
21 these are the evaluation of factors. Part of the  
22 goal here when we're creating the RFP every year

1 is transparency. And here we're just trying to  
2 provide, in this Section M, a roadmap, basically,  
3 so that you're able to know, from our end as  
4 evaluators, how the submission will be received  
5 and evaluated. So, we try to be as specific as  
6 possible in the process we go through for the  
7 evaluation, and we just want to make sure that  
8 everyone is aware that the evaluators do strictly  
9 adhere to the evaluation methodology that is laid  
10 out in the proposal to ensure fairness for all  
11 those that are sending in their offers, and that  
12 it's very clear what the criteria, or the rubric  
13 that will be used in making those evaluations.

14 Okay, so I think now we can move to  
15 the next slide. I am getting a little bit of  
16 background --.

17 MS. BURDETTE: Yes, if you are calling  
18 in, please double-check that you are muted. That  
19 would be great. We are getting some feedback  
20 here. Thank you.

21 MR. SANTINI: Yeah, usually I'm used  
22 to feedback with my children, so that was a

1 welcome surprise that it wasn't them and it was  
2 rather just somebody else contributing.

3           Moving on to just a couple of  
4 important updates and reminders. First, we want  
5 to ensure everyone's SAM registration is active,  
6 and is being monitored throughout the year. As a  
7 reminder, a contract cannot be awarded without an  
8 active SAM account, and when you're submitting  
9 your proposal, an active SAM account has to be  
10 associated with the carrier as well. So, please  
11 make sure that you monitor those dates when it  
12 expires, and keep up to date with your SAM  
13 account.

14           Please review your CALM CPSS  
15 submissions, and make sure that you have  
16 addressed any errors. This is another part  
17 that's really important, that you've built in  
18 enough time to ensure your proposal is submitted  
19 in a timely fashion. Sometimes errors do pop up  
20 and require us to work with the CALM technical  
21 team, to fix things on the back end, and that can  
22 take some time. So, if you've waited until the

1 last minute, you could be out of luck in terms of  
2 getting that timely assistance to be able to  
3 address the situation.

4 So, fortunately, I know most of you do  
5 have some experience from last year working with  
6 the CALM system, and so hopefully that experience  
7 will help, as well. We have gone through a  
8 number of enhancements to hopefully make that  
9 experience smoother this time around, but  
10 inevitably there are things that can arise. So,  
11 please build in some time into your schedule to  
12 submit that earlier rather than later.

13 Additionally, when there is an  
14 amendment posted to the RFP, we do need to make  
15 sure from your end that you return those signed  
16 SF30s with my signature as the CO, and you  
17 complete block 8. So, make sure that those are  
18 uploaded into the CALM system, as well.

19 Lastly, I just need to touch upon the  
20 submission of each carrier's code sharing  
21 arrangements. Fortunately we were able to work  
22 with the CALM Team to ensure any code sharing

1 data submitted last year will be prepopulated in  
2 the system this year as well.

3 But what's important here is to make  
4 sure that what's in the system is accurate and  
5 up-to-date. I know sometimes -- not a lot of  
6 them, but sometimes those code-sharing  
7 arrangements can change from year to year. So,  
8 please ensure the information for those companies  
9 is accurate, and that you want those companies to  
10 be on that list. And if any company is not on  
11 that list, obviously, to add them to the list to  
12 make sure that they will be considered as part of  
13 your proposal.

14 Moving to the next slide we can see  
15 there are some items that do require your  
16 completion in CALM CPSS and others that require  
17 your completion in SAM.gov.

18 Sections K.1 to K10, will need to be  
19 completed in the CALM CPSS system and any  
20 corresponding documentation or certifications  
21 will need to be uploaded there. Now K.11 are  
22 questions that need to be done through SAM.gov,



1 and one of them here is the covered  
2 telecommunications equipment or service  
3 representation. The questions actually are right  
4 here, they're just two boxes that need to be  
5 checked about whether the offer does or does not  
6 provide covered telecommunications equipment.

7 And another one that was mentioned  
8 previously was in Section L.5, which is the  
9 greenhouse gas emissions certifications that need  
10 to be submitted, as well. So, I just wanted to  
11 make sure that we're up to speed on which parts  
12 need to be done in CALM, and which parts need to  
13 be done through SAM.gov.

14 And I believe there's one more slide.  
15 And this last slide is a contract clause that was  
16 recently added to the RFP. It's FAR section  
17 52.204-21, the Basic Safeguarding of Covered  
18 Contractor Information System. I think, for the  
19 majority, if not all of those that will be  
20 submitting proposals, this is probably a standard  
21 business practice. But we need to make sure that  
22 any federal contract information that isn't

1 intended for public use is safeguarded according  
2 to the stipulations specified in this clause,  
3 which includes limited access to only authorized  
4 users, in terms of who has visibility on that  
5 information.

6 With that, I will turn the time over  
7 to my esteemed colleagues, who are really the  
8 engine that runs this whole train and phenomenal  
9 superstars of this program, Matt and Andrea, and  
10 they will discuss a couple more important aspects  
11 of this upcoming procurement. Thank you.

12 MR. BRISTOW: Hey, JD, this is Jerry  
13 Bristow. On the CALM item there, are there going  
14 to be refresher courses or training days  
15 associated with CALM this year, as they were last  
16 year?

17 MR. SANTINI: Absolutely will be, and  
18 actually my colleagues are going to get into that  
19 in terms of the deadlines and what will be  
20 covered there.

21 MR. BRISTOW: Okay, great, thank you.

22 MR. SANTINI: That's a good question.

1 MR. RACCHINI: Thanks, JD. Hi, all.  
2 My name is Matt. I'm one of the two contract  
3 specialists with the City Pair Program. I'm going  
4 to start by discussing an update to B.4 within  
5 the draft RFP, which is entitled Pricing Schedule  
6 for Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3 Line Items,  
7 specifically in Section 7(a).

8 It's a very minor change. The new  
9 language states that the FY25 premium economy  
10 markets can be found in Attachment 4. So, within  
11 Attachment 4, which is the schedule of Group 1  
12 line items, there will now be a column that  
13 carriers can use to filter Group 1 markets by  
14 premium economy. There will no longer be a  
15 premium economy markets list found in B.4 of the  
16 RFP. Next slide, if there are no questions.

17 Furthermore, in F.6, Auto-  
18 cancellation, we've also added some language here  
19 in red. So, as it states, a complete auto-  
20 cancellation profile document must be submitted  
21 to GSA within 20 calendar days after award if the  
22 contract carrier chooses to participate in auto-

1 cancellation. And the added language states this  
2 document could also be submitted and uploaded in  
3 CPSS during the proposal period.

4 So, there's two different options,  
5 either within 20 days after award, and that would  
6 have to be emailed to us; or before award during  
7 the proposal period, it could instead be uploaded  
8 in CPSS. Next slide.

9 Furthermore, in J.1, Attachment 1,  
10 Proposal Checklist, we're asking this year for  
11 all submissions in J.1, including Section K  
12 submissions, that they all be submitted in PDF,  
13 Excel, or Microsoft Word format. So, in any one  
14 of these three formats. Again, that's all  
15 Section K documents, that's Standard Form 1449,  
16 Standard Form 30, and then subcontracting plans  
17 for any carriers that are required to submit one.  
18 This is highlighted in yellow in the draft RFP as  
19 well.

20 Any questions? Okay, I'm going to  
21 pass it over now to Andrea Anderson.

22 MS. ANDERSON: Good afternoon,

1 everyone. This is Andrea Anderson. I am a  
2 contract specialist for City Pair Program. I'm  
3 going to be going over the next few slides. This  
4 slide here is found in Section L.1 of the draft  
5 RFP. We changed the submission period. Before  
6 CALM, we always had one submission for your  
7 proposal checklist items. But, last year,  
8 because it was a new system, we had an initial  
9 due date, and then we had a final submission  
10 date.

11 This year, we decided to go back to  
12 the way we had done it in the past. So we will  
13 only have one submission date, and that will be  
14 Friday, March 8th, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard  
15 Time. In the draft RFP, I believe we mention  
16 Wednesday instead of Friday; it is Friday. So,  
17 we will definitely update that in the final RFP,  
18 but we wanted to bring that to your attention.

19 I also want to mention that if you  
20 have any changes that you want to make to your  
21 proposal, you could also make those changes  
22 during FPRs.

1 Does anybody have any questions?

2 Please feel free to stop me at any point; I  
3 welcome those questions. All right, next slide,  
4 please.

5 All right, as JD mentioned, some of  
6 the provisions and some of the clauses are to be  
7 completed in SAM.gov. A lot of the carriers are  
8 already doing that, so this is more of a  
9 reminder. So, in the RFP, in Section L.5, we've  
10 added to please complete this provision in  
11 SAM.gov. It's the 52.223-22, Public Disclosure  
12 of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Reduction Goals.

13 Next slide, please. As JD mentioned,  
14 we have made some enhancements. First, we want  
15 to thank you for your feedback on the new system.  
16 We appreciate all of the feedback and input. We  
17 heard you, and we have made some changes, we have  
18 made some enhancements to the system. So, if you  
19 want to take a look at the vendor user guide,  
20 which has been updated, you can go to  
21 [calm.gsa.gov](http://calm.gsa.gov), and it will take you to the CPSS  
22 Landing Page, and you can find the vendor user

1 guide under City Pair Source Selection. You can  
2 also find a link to the user guide in Section L.1  
3 of the RFP, and in the first paragraph we provide  
4 you with the link. Next slide, please.

5 All right, so the updated user guide  
6 was completed December 2023, and if every time  
7 you go to the link and you keep seeing the old  
8 version, I would recommend that you clear your  
9 browser, and go back to the link, and you should  
10 be able to see the version 2 of the user guide.

11 I would recommend that you become  
12 familiar with the user guide, because there have  
13 been some changes, some enhancements, so I would  
14 recommend you take a look at it. Next slide,  
15 please.

16 The draft RFP was posted on SAM.gov on  
17 January 11th, and, as stated in the draft RFP, if  
18 you have any questions on the RFP or any of the  
19 attachments, please submit them to us by January  
20 19th at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Please  
21 send them to JD, myself, and onthego@gsa.gov.  
22 Please use Attachment 7, which is the draft RFP

1 questions template. As you go through the draft  
2 RFP, and any of the attachments, please let us  
3 know if you notice that something stands out.  
4 Please let us know by using Attachment 7. We  
5 plan on responding to your questions by Friday,  
6 January 26th, and the Q&As will be posted on  
7 SAM.gov.

8 Any questions? All right, next slide  
9 please. So, here we have our anticipated  
10 schedule. And we will have a training session,  
11 and I will go over that on the next slide. But I  
12 wanted to discuss Group 1. For Group 1, we will  
13 open up CPSS on February 14th through March 15th.  
14 Group 2 will open April 1st through April 12th.  
15 And Group 3 will open April 15th through April  
16 19th. And this year, your points of contact will  
17 be myself and Mike Connor. Next slide, please.

18 So, this year we will have one  
19 training session. It will last about an hour.  
20 It will be held on Thursday, February 8th, at  
21 3:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. The CPSS team  
22 will go over the user guide, they will conduct a



1 live demo, and take any questions you may have  
2 about the system. This session will also be  
3 recorded, so if you cannot attend, please let me  
4 or Mike know, and we will send you the recording.  
5 An invitation will go out to all of the users,  
6 but if you would like to attend for informational  
7 purposes, let us know, and we will add you to the  
8 training session.

9 Any questions? All right, next slide,  
10 please. All right, so, as JD mentioned, we have  
11 made lots of changes and enhancements to the  
12 system. There were too many to mention on just  
13 one slide, so I'm just going to mention the ones  
14 that stand out to me. The main one is that the  
15 Section K will now pre-populate from the previous  
16 year to the new fiscal year. So, the carriers  
17 now can go in and add, delete, edit that data.

18 Another update was Section K edit and  
19 review process. So, last year, if a carrier made  
20 a change, let's say, to Section K.1 during FPRs,  
21 the change would not show. So, then the carrier  
22 would submit a few times because the change would

1 not show. But what was happening is that the  
2 change had to get contracting approval. So, this  
3 year if a carrier submits a change during FPRs,  
4 the carrier will get a pop up saying we've  
5 received this change, but it has to go through  
6 contracting review and approval.

7 Here is one reminder for the carriers.  
8 To avoid receiving error messages, the carriers  
9 should delete the line items in their spreadsheet  
10 for which they do not meet the minimum service  
11 requirements for. If the carriers choose to keep  
12 all of the line items, the evaluation team will  
13 only consider the offers that were successfully  
14 submitted.

15 So, last year, we had a feature in  
16 CPSS where the carriers could download the line  
17 items that the system was considering as a  
18 successful submission. But if the file was too  
19 large, it would not download. So it was causing  
20 some issues. But this year that has been fixed,  
21 so a carrier can go in during the submission  
22 period and they can download this spreadsheet,

1 and they can see what the system is considering a  
2 successful submission.

3 Next is CPSS will treat fares listed  
4 as zero, or if the carrier leaves that fare  
5 blank, the system is considering that as a no  
6 offer. Another reminder, for average elapsed  
7 time, the value should be in minutes. If you  
8 submit, for instance, a one, you will get an  
9 error message. We didn't have that last year,  
10 but we have it this year.

11 If you're submitting connect points,  
12 they have to be in alpha characters. If not, you  
13 will get an error message. Last year, if a  
14 carrier determined that they would not meet the  
15 minimum service requirements for, let's say, 40  
16 line items during FPRs, and they wanted to  
17 withdraw offers, they had to delete one by one.  
18 This year the system will allow the carriers to  
19 bulk delete any line items that they want to  
20 withdraw during FPRs.

21 The last one, before CALM everything  
22 was done through email, and we, contracting,

1 could cc anybody in the carriers team that wanted  
2 to be cc'd on mods, but with CALM we could not do  
3 that. The only person that would get a copy of  
4 an executed mod was the person on the carrier  
5 side that was signing. We heard you, we've  
6 updated that. And if you want to be cc'd, if  
7 you're listed in Section K.1 or K.2, and you want  
8 to be cc'd on these mods, let us know and we will  
9 add you to the mods.

10 Again, I wanted to thank all of the  
11 carriers. We appreciate all of the feedback.  
12 While you're going through the system for this  
13 year, while you're submitting your proposals,  
14 your offers, please let us know if you see  
15 something that we can do better for FY26, we will  
16 take it into account. We want to make the system  
17 is user friendly so it's easy for you to submit  
18 your proposals. So, please let us know if we can  
19 do something better. And now I'll hand it over  
20 to Matt so he can go over FPRs.

21 MR. RACCHINI: Thank you, Andrea. So,  
22 now very briefly we'll go over final proposal

1 revisions (FPR) reminders. As a preface to this  
2 discussion, FPRs only occur if the contracting  
3 officer decides that they will take place. So,  
4 all that is to stress that they're not guaranteed  
5 for any given year. But, as a quick summary of  
6 FPRs, this is the final opportunity before award  
7 for carriers to make changes.

8 In addition, please ensure that your  
9 offers are updated to reflect any changes in  
10 flight schedules. And then, keep in mind that  
11 all offered line items, so any line item in Group  
12 1, Group 2, or Group 3 can be revised at this  
13 time. The contracting officer, if it's  
14 determined that we will go into FPRs, will send  
15 carriers a negotiation letter.

16 But carriers do not only need to look  
17 at line items in that letter. They may revise  
18 offers on any line items that they submitted an  
19 offer on. Furthermore, carriers are able to  
20 update their sections K.1 through K.10 if  
21 applicable. And then as was mentioned in the  
22 previous slide, there is now a functionality in

1 which carriers will be able to withdraw offers in  
2 bulk rather than simply one line item at a time.

3 Next slide. So, this is a very  
4 general overview of upcoming RFP dates. Some of  
5 these dates have already been shown to all of  
6 you. But in mid-February we're expecting the  
7 final release of the RFP, so this would be the  
8 final RFP. By early March we will close the  
9 vendor proposal submission window. And once  
10 again, just as a reminder, there will only be one  
11 vendor proposal submission window this year.

12 In past years, there was an initial  
13 and a final window; there will only be one window  
14 this year. By mid-March, Group 1 will close. In  
15 early April, the Special Board will have their  
16 first meeting and have an initial review of their  
17 markets. Later that month, in mid-April, Group 2  
18 will close. And then, at the end of April, Group  
19 3 will close.

20 That will bring us then into late May,  
21 during which the final proposal revisions, if the  
22 contracting officer determines that they will

1 take place, will occur at this time. And also in  
2 late May, the Special Board will have its final  
3 review. And we are aiming at this time for the  
4 awards to take place in mid-July.

5 Are there any questions about these  
6 dates? If not, I will then pass it over to Mike  
7 Connor, the program manager.

8 MR. CONNOR: Thanks, Matt. So, I just  
9 wanted to go over the significant changes that  
10 we've made to the RFP. Mary kind of highlighted  
11 all these already, so I just want to kind of  
12 touch on the language, and the changes that are  
13 actually going to be in there. All of these  
14 changes are listed in Attachment 2, so you can  
15 actually look at the language from last year  
16 versus this year, and see what the changes are.

17 Like Mary said about what we removed  
18 in regard to the \_CA, B.4 Section 5 was the only  
19 change. The goal is still to be at 60 percent,  
20 but we understand there's a lot of factors that  
21 aren't in control of the suppliers, so we're  
22 removing the audit language, so you won't see

1 that in this solicitation.

2 The next few slides are all kind of  
3 tied together under Section M. Mary also touched  
4 on. None of this language is new at all; it's  
5 just that we used to evaluate the A through D  
6 passenger level markets differently than E  
7 through G. So, again, it's not new language, it  
8 now incorporates all of our passenger levels.

9 If there's no questions, we'll just  
10 keep moving on. Again, what we did here was just  
11 added passenger level G for M.3, Subfactor 1  
12 Timeband/Service Distribution Domestic Routes.  
13 Now it is for all passenger levels E through G.  
14 Really not a whole lot to talk about there.

15 Again, they're all tied together, so  
16 the same thing for International and  
17 International Business Class line items, just  
18 adding that so that we're evaluating all of the  
19 levels the same.

20 And on the next slide, again, same  
21 thing for the average elapsed time. So, all  
22 these slides are meant to do is just to highlight



1 in the language what you'll see, and the changes  
2 you'll see in the RFP.

3 Okay, so, for here, we just wanted to  
4 clarify the order of calculation, so the order of  
5 calculation, goes nonstop, direct, and connect.  
6 Previously, it wasn't quite as clear, so now  
7 we're just pointing it out so that you can  
8 actually see that when we're looking at.

9 Here all we did was, again, we're just  
10 clearing it up for clarification, added all  
11 passenger levels, and removed the last two  
12 sentences. So, you'll see that change when you  
13 look at it too. And that's kind of a wrap up for  
14 the language changes in the RFP.

15 What I'll do now is throw it back to  
16 Mary for market selection and information.

17 MS. GARTLAND: So, as discussed, we  
18 increased our markets by over a thousand overall,  
19 about a 10 percent change year over year. The  
20 biggest increase you would see is in Group 1.  
21 Over the past few years, we've been shifting a  
22 lot markets that may have fit into Group 1 for

1 price vs. technical evaluation into Groups 2 or  
2 3. We made the decision to put all DCA, or Reagan  
3 National Airport, back into Group 1.

4 All nonstops are in Group 1. So,  
5 that's where you will find all the nonstops this  
6 year to get a price vs. technical evaluation.  
7 So, that's where a lot of that shifting and  
8 increase came from.

9 Again, our travelers, and even  
10 personal travelers, you know that you prefer the  
11 nonstop carrier. So, we really want to give it  
12 that appropriate evaluation and look to ensure  
13 that we are making the best value decision. Of  
14 course, the price still has to be fair and  
15 reasonable, and that determination will be made  
16 at that time. But, you know, when there's a  
17 connect versus a nonstop in a price-only  
18 situation, most of the time it's going to go to  
19 the connect carrier. So, we really want to have  
20 that price versus technical evaluation, so that  
21 we can then take a look at the offer and make  
22 sure that we are making the best value award

1 decision on behalf of the government travelers.

2           Mostly everything else, you can see,  
3 shifted as well. That's where the decrease in  
4 Group 2 came, and in Group 3 there was an  
5 increase. We know that in Group 3 that is price-  
6 only and there are no minimum service  
7 requirements, so you can serve the market one day  
8 a week with no maximum connection time  
9 requirements. So a lot of our increased markets  
10 fell into that this year.

11           There's a bit of an increase in  
12 international, as well. Some of those line items  
13 may be markets that fell off during COVID and are  
14 coming back due to the increased travel, or  
15 there's new markets that are being requested by  
16 agencies where they foresee the travel increasing  
17 this year, or where there's a need to travel to  
18 for FY25.

19           Next up dives even a little bit deeper  
20 into that, so you can see these numbers:  
21 domestic, international, extended, connect, our  
22 business class. We are still soliciting to Fifth

1 Freedom markets. So, if any of our suppliers see  
2 a discrepancy in any of these markets when you're  
3 going through the RFP, and you feel it should be  
4 moved to another group, for example, because you  
5 have nonstop service in a Group 2 market, please  
6 notify us so we can move it to Group 1 to be  
7 evaluated appropriately.

8 Anything that you have questions  
9 about, please reach out to us so we can address  
10 it now. We can address it later, but it's easier  
11 to do it now. We can address a lot of things up  
12 until pre-award, but obviously it's ideal to do  
13 it at this point in the process, so we can fix  
14 things from our draft version to our final RFP  
15 release.

16 And I will say, we are basing these  
17 groupings off of our OAG data that we receive,  
18 it's a snapshot in time. So, we would love to  
19 hear your feedback, and rely on if you're seeing  
20 that we misclassified something based on that  
21 verified data source of your schedules. We  
22 understand that you change your service often,

1 and we want to hear from you to validate if  
2 anything is out of place or misclassified.

3 Just moving on, I think we are going  
4 into our contact information. So, for contract-  
5 related issues, On the Go, that's where you get  
6 most of the contract modifications from.  
7 Program-related issues, a lot of the customer  
8 agencies and individuals reach out to the travel  
9 programs. On the next slide, we ask you just to  
10 come straight to the source and contact us  
11 directly, our contracting team, the CO, JD. You  
12 can always cc Andrea or Matthew in case someone's  
13 out of pocket.

14 And then the program office, myself,  
15 and Mike Connor, Jerry, Jennifer, we're always  
16 here to answer your questions. We love to reply  
17 promptly as well. So, we want to make sure we  
18 get all your concerns, questions addressed  
19 appropriately and in a timely manner. We will  
20 open up the floor to our stakeholders, and see if  
21 you have any questions for us at this time.

22 MR. SCHIFFNER: Hey, Mary, this is

1 Justin Schiffner from Southwest Airlines. I had  
2 one clarifying question from the technical  
3 service. The 20 points additional when scoring  
4 for nonstop service, can you just clarify, is  
5 that just the overall market gets a 20 point  
6 score, or is it every single nonstop gets an  
7 additional 20 points until you get to the cap?

8 MS. GARTLAND: So, this is Subfactor  
9 2, I believe. It's just the one cumulative  
10 number is 20, so it's not 20, 20, 20, if you have  
11 four nonstops; it's just you either get 20  
12 additional bonus points or you get zero if you  
13 have connect.

14 MS. BURDETTE: The bonus points apply  
15 only when comparing to connect service.

16 MR. SCHIFFNER: Thank you very much.

17 MS. GARTLAND: Okay, great.

18 MS. BURDETTE: Anybody else?

19 MS. GARTLAND: JD, can you remind us of  
20 when the questions are due, the due date? I  
21 believe it's tomorrow.

22 MR. SANTINI: Yeah, for the draft RFP,

1 it'll be tomorrow at noon.

2 MS. ANDERSON: I'm sorry, I think it's  
3 tomorrow at 5:00 p.m.

4 MR. SANTINI: That's right, we did  
5 change that for time zone considerations.

6 MS. ANDERSON: Yeah.

7 MR. SANTINI: Sorry, yeah, it's  
8 tomorrow at 5:00 p.m.

9 MS. GARTLAND: So, tomorrow, Friday,  
10 at 5:00 p.m. Then we'll probably take a week to  
11 answer those, and then target the final RFP  
12 release February 14th, or sometime around there.  
13 So, again, we can have those questions, but I  
14 would say feel free to reach out to the program  
15 office between now and February 14th if there are  
16 any markets you notice in Groups 2 or 3 that you  
17 believe should be in Group 1 for a price versus  
18 technical evaluation due to your nonstop service.  
19 We want to release the best solicitation out  
20 there with the most up to date information so we  
21 can have a great FY25 procurement and fiscal year  
22 in the future.

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So, I want to thank everyone for being able to participate today, and we look forward to this upcoming procurement cycle.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 3:04 p.m.)



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**30A** 14:9  
**36** 9:18

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**4**

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**4** 27:10,11  
**40** 35:15

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**5**

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**5** 13:1 39:18  
**5:00** 29:14 31:20 47:3,8  
47:10  
**52.204-21** 25:17  
**52.223-22** 30:11

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**6**

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**60** 39:19

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**7**

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**7** 31:22 32:4  
**7(a)** 27:7  
**78** 9:17

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**8**

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**8** 23:17  
**85** 10:4  
**889** 19:18  
**8th** 29:14 32:20



C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: FY25 Pre-Solicitation

Before: US GSA

Date: 01-18-24

Place: Videoconference

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate complete record of the proceedings.



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Court Reporter

**NEAL R. GROSS**

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