Combined Synopsis/Solicitation H9821026QA002 for DANTES Online College and Career Planning Tool

Questions and Answers

Question 1: Reference: H9821026QA002, PWS Paragraph(s) 4.1.6 and 4.4.1.2.1, Page(s) 2 and 4

Section 4.1.6 requires "a detailed self-interest assessment" (singular) to determine career interests, work values, and work skills. Section 4.4.1.2.1 requires reporting on "each of the construct assessments" (plural) with completion counts.

Does the Government require three separate assessment instruments, one per construct, or does an integrated assessment instrument that measures all three constructs within a single validated instrument satisfy both sections?

Additionally, for Section 4.4.1.2.1 reporting purposes, if a single integrated instrument is acceptable, how should the contractor report completions -- as one assessment completed or as three construct completions per user?

Response 1: Any number of assessments are acceptable provided the core constructs of career interests, work values, and work skills are addressed. Paragraph 4.4.1.2.1 has been amended.

Question 2: Reference: H9821026QA002, RFQ Section 9, Addendum to FAR 52.212-1, 4.0.b, Page 4, Section 10, 3.a.(1), Page 7 and PWS Section 4.1, Pages 2-4

The solicitation states, "The online product must be ready to use upon award of the contract." Does this require that all functionality described in PWS Section 4.1 be fully operational on the first day of the base period, or would the Government consider a commercially available career planning tool with core assessment and career planning operational at award and a defined implementation timeline for supplemental features within the first 90 days of the base period?

Response 2: The PWS section 5.3 deliverables table has been updated. The proposed product must be fully operational within 30 calendar days of contract award. See response 7 below.

Question 3: Reference: H9821026QA002, RFQ Section 1.5, Page 2, and PWS Section 4.4, Page 4

This is a follow-on requirement. Can the Government provide historical usage data for the current Online College and Career Planning Tool, including approximate annual registrations, assessments completed, and number of active counselor/administrator accounts? This information would assist offerors in accurately scoping hosting capacity, technical support staffing, and pricing for the firm-fixed-price structure.

Response 3:

Branch/Site	Branch	Logins	Users	"Participants"	Accounts Created
DANTES					
	Branch - Army	29,967	23,131	53,098	22,851
	Branch - Air Force	9,010	6,491	15,501	6,077
	Branch - Navy	3,439	2,432	5,871	2,349
	Branch - Marines	2,246	1,632	3,878	1,566
	Branch - Space Force	335	240	575	224
	Branch - Coast Guard	44	33	77	31
Total		**45,041**	**33,959**	**79,000**	**33,098**

Question 4: Reference: H9821026QA002, PWS Section 3.0, Pages 1–2; PWS Section 4.1.19, Pages 3–4; and PWS Section 7.10, Page 7.

The PWS states that service members who establish accounts during the subscription period shall have lifetime access to their portfolio. In the event of a transition to a new contractor, what are the Government's expectations for continuity of existing user accounts and portfolio data? Will the Government facilitate data transfer from the incumbent system, or should offerors plan for the new system to operate independently of legacy data?

Response 4: There is no transition period as part of this requirement. In the event of transfer to a new contractor, a cold start with no import of legacy data is expected.

Question 5: Reference: H9821026QA002, PWS Section 8.2, Page 8

PWS Section 8.2 states that "personnel supporting this contract who require access to Service members' information or CUI, such as PII, must be Citizens of the United States." For the purposes of this requirement, does "supporting this contract" apply only to personnel who have access to the DANTES production environment and Service Member data, or does it apply to all contractor personnel who contribute to the platform in any capacity, including those with no access to Service Member information?

Response 5: As stated in Section 8.2, the citizenship requirement applies only to contractor personnel who have access to service member or user PII.

Question 6: Reference: H9821026QA002, RFQ Section 9, 1.5, Page 2.

The solicitation states "Funds are not presently available for this effort." Can the Government clarify whether this applies only to future option-year funding pending Congressional

appropriation, or whether base-year (FY2026/FY2027) funding is also subject to availability? Is there an anticipated date by which funding availability will be confirmed?

Response 6: This applies to the base period. Although it is anticipated that funds will be available, currently funds are not available. Future option years will also be subject to availability pending Congressional appropriation for their respective years.

Question 7: Ready to Use Upon Award: Operational Definition and License Activation Window (RFQ Section 10 Element A, Page 7; PWS Section 5.3)

The solicitation states the tool must be ready to use upon award, but PWS Section 5.3 lists the deliverable as due at Beginning of Contract Award, which is ambiguous. For a licensed software product, does the Government require the tool to be fully operational and accessible to service members on the calendar date of contract award with zero setup time, or will the Government allow a defined activation window (for example, 5 to 10 business days) for activities such as DANTES URL provisioning, license activation, and access configuration?

Response 7: The deliverables table in Section 5.3 has been amended to state 'within 30 calendar days after contract award.'

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Question 8: Subject: User Portfolio Data: Ownership, Portability, and Transfer Obligations (PWS Section 4.1.19; PWS Section 7.10)

A. PWS Section 4.1.19 establishes that each user's electronic portfolio serves as a repository for self-interest assessments, career plans, education pathways, resumes, cover letters, reference lists, and uploaded items including transcripts, certificates, and work samples. PWS Section 7.10 states that the Defense Human Resources Activity owns the rights to all data and records produced as part of this contract. In the event of a contractor transition, the Government is asked to confirm which party holds legal ownership of each of the following data categories: user account credentials and profile data; completed assessment scores and associated results data; career plan and education pathway selections made by the user; documents created within the platform such as resumes and cover letters; and files uploaded by the user such as transcripts, certificates, and work samples. Specifically, does the Government's ownership claim under PWS Section 7.10 extend to all of the above categories, or are uploaded user-generated files treated differently from Government-commissioned deliverables?

B. Will the Government require the outgoing licensor to export and transfer all user portfolio data to the Government or to a new awardee upon contract expiration or termination? If so, please confirm whether this obligation will be incorporated as an explicit contract requirement prior to award, and whether the Government intends to include it in a PWS amendment.

C. What machine-readable file format and data schema does the Government expect for any portfolio data transfer? If no standard has been defined, will the Government establish one prior to the proposal due date so that offerors can make meaningful and comparable commitments about data continuity in their technical proposals?

Response 8: A. PWS Section 4.1.19 has been amended to exclude user uploaded documents from the Section 7.10 data rights description.

B. No, portfolio documents will not transfer in the event of a new contractor.

C. Not applicable. No portfolio transfer will take place.

Question 9: Subject: Lifetime Access Obligation: Continuity Across a License Transition (PWS Section 4.1.19; PWS Section 3.0)

Does the Government expect the new licensor to honor lifetime portfolio access for all previously registered users, including those who registered under a different platform with different data structures? What provisions are made for a vendor to no longer offer "lifetime access" after the contract with the Government is no longer in effect (i.e., if a product is no longer offered by a vendor, the company or its products acquired or sunset. This question simply seeks to understand a requirement that neither the incumbent nor competitors may be able to honor in perpetuity for any number of unforeseen reasons after a contract term ends.

Response 9: PWS Sections 3.0 and 4.1.19 have been amended.

Question 10: Subject: Prescriptive PWS Requirements vs. Commercial License Acquisition: Outcome-Based Evaluation (PWS Section 4.1; RFQ Section 10.3(a)(1), Page 7)

The PWS contains highly specific feature and prescriptive requirements written at a level of granularity more that seem to describe how the incumbent meets that requirement as opposed to stating the outcomes the Government wishes achieve to allow respondents flexibility and innovative approaches Sections 4.1.11 through 4.1.18 in particular prescribe exact search mechanisms, named external websites, specific filter criteria, and defined link destinations. In a commercial license acquisition, it is common practice for the Government to define outcomes and performance objectives and allow the licensor to satisfy those objectives using innovative approaches and the capabilities of their commercial product. Will the Government clarify whether evaluators will assess technical proposals based on whether the licensed product achieves the program outcomes described in the PWS, or whether evaluation will require a literal feature-by-feature match to every sub-requirement in Section 4.1 as written? The former allows for fair and open competition as well as new innovations; the latter may simply describe an incumbent product while unintentionally limiting competition and innovation.

Response 10: Innovative solutions that meet the Section 3.0 Scope will be considered.

Question 11: Subject: Evaluation: Rating Reconciliation When Technical Elements Diverge (RFQ Section 10.3(a), Page 7)

Factor 1 receives a single overall technical rating and the two elements are not individually rated. Can the Government clarify how divergent findings across Element A and Element B are reconciled into a single overall rating? Specifically, does a finding that warrants a Marginal on

either element automatically produce an overall Marginal rating, or does the Government apply a holistic assessment that weighs performance across both elements together?

Response 11: Elements A and B are not subfactors, but Elements of Technical Factor 1 which will receive one rating based on both Elements A and B.

Question 12: Subject: Evaluation: Past Performance Three-Reference Maximum (RFQ Sections 3.0(c) and 9, Pages 4-5)

Is submitting more than three past performance references a hard disqualifier, or will the Government consider additional references if still within the 6-page volume limit?

Response 12: In accordance with the Combined Synopsis/Solicitation, Offerors shall submit no more than three relevant Past Performance references.

Question 13: Subject: Data Transfer: Government Requirement for Full Data Export from Incumbent to New Licensor (PWS Sections 3.0 and 5.3; PWS Section 7.10)

A. The PWS does not include a transition-in period, a data migration plan, or defined obligations for the current licensor regarding transfer of legacy data (if relevant) nor the time horizon of any data handoff (e.g., 1 year, 5 years, 10 years). Given that the Government owns the data generated under this contract per PWS Section 7.10, does the Government require the current licensor to export all user account data, portfolio contents, assessment histories, and associated metadata to the Government or to a new awardee upon contract expiration?

B. If yes to the above, what file format and schema will this data be provided?

C.Is there a requirement for a new licensor to incorporate in any way legacy data from an incumbent into its solution or will a new awardee start its data records fresh from the day of the new contract without expectation of ingesting legacy data from an incumbent's system?

Response 13: A. No, please see answer 4.

B. Not applicable.

C. No, please see answer 4.

Question 14: Subject: Data Transfer: Schema Documentation and Data Dictionary Availability (PWS Section 7.10; PWS Section 5.3)

If it is required for a new licensor to successfully migrate and continue service for existing users, vendors will need to understand the structure of legacy user data currently held by the incumbent. Will the Government make available to all offerors, prior to proposal due date, a data dictionary or schema documentation describing the required and optional user account fields, portfolio data structure, assessment result formats, and any associated metadata currently used in

the platform? Without this information, a new licensor cannot make meaningful commitments about data continuity and user experience preservation in its technical proposal.
If no data migration is required (i.e., users will create accounts for a new system) can the Government clarify this in the solicitation so that vendors do not need to make assumptions.

Response 14: The scope and nature of this requirement, without a transition period, dictate that any newly awarded vendor will be starting with new user accounts and data. Please see answer 4.

Question 15: Subject: Data Transfer: Timeline and Standards for Transition to a New Licensor (PWS Section 5.3)

If a new licensor is awarded this contract and some form of data migration is required from the legacy system to a new system, what is the Government's expectation for the timeline of data transfer from the incumbent? For example, does the Government expect data to be transferred before the new contract period begins, within the first 30 days, or on a rolling basis?

Response 15: No legacy data transfer is expected. Please see answer 4.

Question 16: Subject: Usage Data: Request to Share Existing Quarterly Reports with All Offerors (PWS Section 4.4.1)

The PWS requires the licensor to submit quarterly usage reports to the Government. These reports are Government property per PWS Section 7.10. Will the Government share the existing quarterly reports from the current contract period with all prospective offerors as part of the solicitation record? Releasing these reports levels the informational playing field between the incumbent licensor, who has full visibility into user volume data, and all competing licensors, who do not. Yes

Response 16: See response to question 30 B.

Question 17: Subject: Usage Data: Total Registered Users, Active Users, and Assessment Completion Rate (PWS Sections 4.4.1.1 and 4.1)

A. How many total new, unique accounts have been created annually over the last contract period? 156,506

B. To estimate usage volumes, what is the average number of “return logins”" unique users transact with the current system annually?

C. What were the peak concurrent log-in counts over the last 12 months?

Response 17: A. 1,100

B. 156,506

C. Since June 2025: 9,646 active users; 14,230 active sessions

Question 18: Subject: Usage Data: Registered and Active Users by Military Service Branch (PWS Section 4.4.1.2.1)

A. To assist with planning technical approach development for training and marketing, can the Government please provide a breakdown of registered and active Servicemember users by service branch (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, Reserve, National Guard)?

Response 18:

Branch/Site	Branch	Logins	Users	Participants	Accounts Created
DANTES	Branch - Army	116,377	77,804	194,181	77,696
DANTES	Branch - Air Force	80,848	48,638	129,486	47,671
DANTES	Branch - Navy	25,644	16,550	42,194	16,421
DANTES	Branch - Marines	22,072	13,270	35,342	13,059
DANTES	Branch - Space Force	2,003	1,168	3,171	1,141
DANTES	Branch - Coast Guard	904	523	1,427	518
Total		**247,848**	**157,953**	**405,801**	**156,506**

Question 19: Subject: Usage Data: Counselor and Administrator Engagement as a Driver of Service Member Adoption (PWS Sections 4.1.2 and 4.4.1.2.2)

Response 19: See responses below.

A. How many military counselors and administrator accounts are currently active under the existing license? 270 administrator accounts are currently active in the system.

B. What is the average monthly login frequency for counselors compared to service members? Service members log in 2x's as often as counselors.

C. Can the Government provide a breakdown of active counselor accounts by service branch (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, Reserve, National Guard)?
Army (91), Navy (123), Marine Corps (17), Air Force (85), Space Force (3), Coast Guard (2), National Guard (8)

Question 20: Subject: Day-One License Readiness vs. Phased Configuration for a New Licensor (PWS Section 4.1; RFQ Section 10.3(a)(1), Page 7)

A. Does every sub-requirement in PWS Section 4.1 need to be fully operational at license activation on the first day of the contract, or is the Government open to accepting a licensed product that satisfies the core requirements at award with specific configurations completed within a defined transition-in period, i.e., to provision user accounts?

Response 20: The platform must be fully operational within 30 days of the contract award.

Question 21: Subject: Outdated Named Platforms: Monster and CareerBuilder (PWS Section 4.1.17)

PWS Section 4.1.17 specifically names Monster and CareerBuilder as example job search links. Given that the job search platform landscape has changed significantly since these requirements were written, is the Government open to a licensor proposing an alternative job search integration that these named platforms with resources more aligned to current service member job search behavior?

Response 21: Yes, the by-name website references have been removed from Section 4.1.17.

Question 22: Subject: Section 508: VPAT Requirement and Submission Timing (PWS Section 4.5; RFQ Section 15, Page 13)

A. Please identify at what point in the contract lifecycle 508 compliance documentation will be formally required and verified.

Response 22: Section 508 compliance will be formally required and verified upon full implementation of the tool in accordance with the Section 5.3 deliverables table.

Question 23: Subject: Webinar Operations: Scheduling, Content Approval, and Attendance (PWS Section 4.2.2)

A. PWS Section 4.2.2 requires the licensor to provide webinar training not to exceed one event per month. Can the Government clarify average numbers of webinar participants based on historical data from the past 12 months?

B. Is there a breakdown of attendance between counselors and service members?

C. Are webinars recorded and made available on demand after each session, or are they live-only events? Understanding current webinar operations will allow offerors to develop a realistic and responsive outreach plan in their technical approach.

Response 23 A: Approximately 400 participants have attended sessions over the past 12 months.

B. Counselors make up the majority of attendance in all DANTES sponsored training sessions.
C. Webinars are recorded and available on demand after each session.

Question 24: Subject: Outreach and Marketing: Current Methods and Government Priorities (PWS Section 4.2.1)

A. Has DANTES developed any installation-level outreach partnerships with education services officers or transition assistance program offices that a new licensor would be expected to maintain or build upon? Yes.

B. Are their specific populations, such as junior enlisted personnel or members within 12 months of separation, that the Government considers priority audiences for outreach efforts? Understanding current outreach priorities would allow offerors to propose a targeted adoption strategy rather than a generic awareness campaign. No

Response 24: See responses above.

Question 25: Subject: Veteran Eligibility: Whether Separated and Retired Service Members Are Authorized Users Under This License (PWS Section 3.0; PWS Section 4.1.15)

PWS Section 3.0 defines the eligible user population as active, reserve, and National Guard military members. Veterans, individuals who have separated or retired from active duty, are not included in this definition. However, PWS Section 4.1.15 explicitly requires the platform to provide information on education benefits for "Service members and Veterans" on the Department of Veterans Affairs GI Bill of Rights.

A. Are Veterans defined as individuals who have separated or retired from military service considered eligible users of the DANTES Online College and Career Planning Tool under this license? Yes

B. If Veterans are not eligible users, how does the Government expect PWS Section 4.1.15's requirement to serve Veterans to be fulfilled if Veterans cannot access the platform? Veteran’s are eligible to access the platform.

Response 25: See responses above.

Question 26: Subject: Space Force Guardians: Eligibility and Current User Data (PWS Section 3.0)

PWS Section 3.0 identifies eligible users as Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard personnel but does not name Space Force. Current platform marketing materials explicitly list Space Force Guardians as eligible users.

A. Are Space Force Guardians currently accessing the platform as an authorized user group under the existing license? Yes.

B. Does the Government intend for Space Force Guardians to be included as eligible users under this new contract? Yes.

C. If Space Force is in scope, how many registered and active Guardian accounts currently exist in the platform, and will the PWS be amended to include Space Force explicitly before proposals Ware due?

Response 26: The PWS has been amended to include Space Force.

Branch/Site	Branch	Site	Sub-Site	Logins	Users	"Participants"	Accounts Created
DANTES	**Total**			**490**	**335**	**825**	**319**
	Branch - Space Force	**Total**		**490**	**335**	**825**	**319**
		Armed Forces Americas	**Total**	**490**	**335**	**825**	**319**
			Buckley SFB	56	41	97	40
			Los Angeles SFB	15	14	29	14
			Patrick SFB	36	25	61	21
			Peterson SFB	171	108	279	101
			Schriever SFB	143	104	247	102
			Vandenberg SFB	69	43	112	41
Total				**490**	**335**	**825**	**319**

Question 27: Subject: Military Spouses: Eligibility, Access Mechanism, and Usage Data (PWS Section 3.0; PWS Section 4.0)

Current platform marketing states that military spouses are authorized to use the system, with most accessing through the MyCAA portal or by creating an account linked to their sponsor's eligibility. The PWS does not reference military spouses as an eligible population in Sections 3.0 or 4.0.

A. Are military spouses currently accessing the platform as an authorized user group under the existing DANTES license? No.

B. If spouses are currently accessing the tool, is that access funded under this DANTES contract or through a separate vehicle such as the MyCAA program? N/A

C. How many registered and active military spouse accounts currently exist in the platform? N/A

Response 27: See responses above.

Question 28: Subject: Transition Guidance Content: Resume Tools, Interview Resources, and Social Networking Guidance (PWS Section 4.1.10)

PWS Section 4.1.10 requires guidance for military personnel transition to the civilian workforce, including resume writing guidance, interview question samples, use of social networking sites, and conducting internet job searches.

A. Is the resume writing capability a built-in tool or is resume guidance delivered as static instructional content with links to external resources? It is a built-in tool.

B. How are interview question samples delivered today, is this a static content pages? The interview questions are generated based on job interests they are delivered from content pages and some interactive video.

C. Would the Government consider replacing the prescriptive list of delivery mechanisms in PWS Section 4.1.10 with an outcome-based requirement, allowing licensors to satisfy the transition guidance objective through their commercial platform's current best-practice and or more innovative approach? Yes, if the outcome is the same.

Response 28: See responses above.

Question 29: Subject: One-Stop Career Center Identification: Data Source and Currency (PWS Section 4.1.18)

PWS Section 4.1.18 requires the platform to help users identify nearby one-stop career centers.

A. What is the current data source used to identify one-stop centers: a direct integration with the CareerOneStop API or similar government resource, a licensed third-party directory, or a static database maintained by the licensor? API Integration.

B. How frequently is this location data updated, and how does the platform handle centers that have closed, relocated, or changed? The changes are reflected directly from the API Source

Response 29: See responses above.

Question 30: Reference: H9821026QA002, Attachment 1 (PWS), Paragraph(s) 3.0, 4.1.1, and 4.4.1.2.1, Page(s) 2 and 4.

The PWS provides for unlimited, unrestricted access for all active, reserve, and National Guard members across the five Service branches. To help offerors size and price the subscription-based solution:

a. Can the Government provide the current number of registered users (80,498) and the number of new registrations over the most recent 12-month period (49,093)?

b. If the Government tracks usage by any category, can it provide a breakdown by Service branch, pay grade/rank, and/or component (active, reserve, National Guard)? Yes, VEMIS report is attached. Please note that this data integrates the Space Force numbers with the Air Force.

Response 30: See responses above.

Question 31: Reference: H9821026QA002, Attachment 1 (PWS), Paragraph(s) 3.0 and 4.1.19, Page(s) 2-4.

The PWS provides that, once a user establishes an account, the user retains lifetime access to their electronic portfolio. Please confirm whether there is a requirement to continue supporting separated Service members and veterans (i.e., users no longer serving) and, if so, whether that population is intended to retain access to full tool functionality (assessments and career-planning features) or only to their previously saved portfolio contents.

Response 31: Yes, there is a requirement for service members and Veterans to retain access to full tool functionality indefinitely. However, please see response 9.