

**United States Postal Service
Office of Inspector General
Risk Analysis and Research Center**

RFI # 6HQOIG-14-A-0005

**Quantitative Survey of Universal Service Obligation
Request for Information**

November 18, 2013

1. Introduction

This announcement constitutes a Request for Information (RFI) for the purpose of determining market capability of sources or obtaining information. It does not constitute a Request for Proposals (RFP), a Request for Quote (RFQ) or an indication that the Government will contract for any of the items and/or services discussed in this notice. Any formal solicitation that may subsequently be issued will be announced separately. Information on the specific topics of interest is provided in the following sections of this announcement. Neither the USPS OIG nor any other part of the federal government will be responsible for any cost incurred by responders in furnishing this information.

2. Background

The OIG is an independent federal law enforcement agency within the U.S. Postal Service. Its mission is to conduct and supervise objective and independent audits, reviews, and investigations relating to Postal Service programs and operations; to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness within the Postal Service; and to keep the Postal Service Governors, Postal Service management, and Congress informed of problems, deficiencies, and corresponding corrective actions.

The Risk Analysis Research Center (RARC) within the OIG conducts research on economic, business, and policy issues related to the Postal Service. RARC's staff includes experts in economics, operations research, and data analysis.

3. Statement of Objective

This Request for Information is to conduct market research to find offerors that will provide a quantitative survey of universal service obligation's solutions based on the following objective:

- The Office of Inspector General (OIG) of the United States Postal Service seeks to assess the value that the mailing public (including households and businesses) places on various important aspects of the Postal Service's universal service obligation (USO).
- The USO is a set of actions that the Postal Service performs as part of its public service mandate that extend beyond what a profit maximizing private firm might perform. This includes delivering mail six days a week and keeping approximately 30,000 post offices open across the country.
- The OIG has already performed focus group and other qualitative research into the value of the USO and now seeks to augment that information with some quantitative research.
- The OIG has reviewed studies of postal universal service obligations in other countries and has determined that a discrete choice analysis is the preferred methodology for estimating the mailing public's willingness to pay for different attributes of the USO. It is thus interested in undertaking a survey designed to produce the data required for a stated preference discrete choice analysis.
- The OIG anticipates simultaneously analyzing three or four attributes including such things as the number of days of mail delivery, the accessibility of post offices and the price of a stamp. It is expecting to develop a set of scenarios covering alternative values of these attributes that could be tested in the survey.

The potential offeror will

- a. Develop a revealed preference study that will be used to develop willingness to pay estimates for two to four attributes of the USO. . The OIG prefers the use of a discrete choice model, but is open to discussion on the type of model used.
- b. Implement the survey, including providing a mechanism for choosing those to include in the survey. This method will need to ensure that it includes a subset of individuals that are most vulnerable to relaxation of the universal obligation (rural areas, elderly, etc.). The OIG foresees the survey including approximately 500 households and 150 businesses. While most of the surveys could be completed electronically, there will likely be some subset that must be completed by telephone or mail.
- c. Analyze and interpret the results of the survey and to provide the results in an easy to understand format. The final results should be included in a Word Document.
- d. Provide all raw data that is collected via the survey. This data shall be shared electronically.
- e. Provide, in a Word Document, a write up of their methodology and their results.
- f. Work closely with the OIG in the development of this project. The expectation is that at a minimum, there will be bi-weekly check-in meetings. But there may be times where more frequent meetings are needed.

Knowledge of postal universal service obligation is preferred, but not required

4. Due Date

Interested suppliers should submit proposals including cost pricing information via email to Millie Abdi at mabdi@uspsoig.gov by **December 2, 2013 3pm EST. Please put the RFI # in the Subject line.**