



## *ASTRO Ordering Guide*

# **ASTRO**

*This Ordering Guide sets forth the procedures for issuing task orders against the ASTRO contracts to fill agencies' mission requirements for platform-related services. Any and all questions about this guide or the ASTRO program should be directed to [astro@gsa.gov](mailto:astro@gsa.gov).*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Thank you for choosing the ASTRO contract to fulfill your total solution for manned, unmanned, and optionally manned systems and platforms on land, sea, air, and space, as well as the services that support such systems and platforms.

The ASTRO vehicle provides a common architecture and platform across the Federal Government for the acquisition of platform-related requirements. These requirements typically necessitate the integration of several service disciplines including data operations; mission operations; maintenance of aviation, ground, maritime, and space equipment; system development and integration; research and development; training; and support services associated with these disciplines.

ASTRO is a collection of Multiple-Award, (MA), Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts. The ordering period of each MA IDIQ is 10 years consisting of a five-year base period and one five-year option period. There is no maximum on the total value of orders that can be placed under the contracts. The ASTRO contracts were awarded under full and open competition.

## 2.0 WHO IS THIS ORDERING GUIDE WRITTEN FOR?

This Ordering Guide is written for General Services Administration (GSA), Office of Assisted Acquisition Services (AAS) warranted Ordering Contracting Officers (OCOs) considering or intending to use the ASTRO contract vehicle. It explains how ASTRO can be used to satisfy platform-related requirements. The Ordering Guide addresses contracting issues and concepts unique to ASTRO. It does not address general contracting issues or concepts unless necessary for complete understanding. This Ordering Guide presumes the OCO is proficient in his or her duties.

This Ordering Guide will help ordering offices to effectively use the ASTRO contracts to deliver solutions to mission needs.

Information to assist AAS Offices in using the ASTRO contracts is available online at <https://aas.gsa.gov/astro/>.

Further information regarding AAS PMO guidance and policy concerning ASTRO can be found at the AAS intranet page:

<https://sites.google.com/a/gsa.gov/aas-assisted-acquisition-services-site2/acquisition-resources/astro>.

These sites include copies of the conformed master contracts, lists of the industry partners awarded ASTRO contracts, and other useful documents.

## 3.0 SCOPE OF THE ASTRO CONTRACTS

The scope of ASTRO includes operations, maintenance, readiness, research, development, systems integration, and support for manned, unmanned, and optionally manned platforms and/or robotics, as well as the services that support those platforms and robotics.

The scope of ASTRO spans many areas of expertise and includes all components required to formulate a total solution to a requirement, except for those services and products specifically prohibited in the ASTRO master contract. Solutions may include ancillary support services and/or ancillary support products as defined in **Sections C.4** and **C.5** of the ASTRO master contract. Requirements may call for solutions that cross multiple disciplines; include ancillary

support services and/or products; require commercial and/or non-commercial items; require professional and/or non-professional labor; and use a variety of contract types including fixed-price (all types), cost reimbursement (all types), Time-and-Materials (T&M)/Labor-Hour (LH), or a hybrid mix of contract types. These platforms and robotics may be based on land, air, sea, and/or space.

ASTRO covers services that are commercial, non-commercial, classified, and non-classified. The requirements may be for services in the Continental United States (CONUS) and Outside CONUS (OCONUS) locations. All ASTRO task orders must be within the scope of the ASTRO master contract. Review **Section C** of the ASTRO master contract for a complete understanding of the scope.

### **3.1 SERVICES NOT ALLOWED ON ASTRO TASK ORDERS**

ASTRO task orders may not include any of the following:

- a. Inherently governmental functions as prohibited in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) subpart 7.503(a).
- b. Personal services as defined in FAR subpart 37.104(a).
- c. Architect and Engineering (A&E) services subject to the Brooks Act and FAR Part 36 acquisition procedures.
- d. Requirements where the primary objective is to obtain Information Technology (IT) products and/or services or any ancillary service as defined in **Section C.4.1** of the ASTRO master contract.

### **4.0 WHAT ARE POOLS?**

ASTRO consists of 10 functional Pools. Each Pool is a different contract. Some contractors won contracts in more than one Pool and were awarded separate contracts for each of those Pools. Each ASTRO Pool has been assigned a single North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code and associated small business size standard. Task order solicitations should identify the functional Pool that best fits the associated task order requirement. Pool selection is what establishes the applicable NAICS code and small business size standard. **The ASTRO Pools and associated NAICS codes and small business size standards are identified in Appendix A.**

### **5.0 WHO CAN USE ASTRO?**

The ASTRO master contract was awarded and will be administered by the ASTRO Program Office as a part of the Federal Systems Integration and Management Center (FEDSIM). Task orders may be solicited, awarded, and administered by OCOs possessing a Delegation of Procurement Authority (DPA) issued by the ASTRO Program Office. Direct use of the ASTRO contracts is limited to the offices of the General Services Administration (GSA) Assisted Acquisition Services (AAS), including FEDSIM and AAS Regional Office employees possessing ASTRO DPAs.

### **5.1 HOW DO I BEGIN USING ASTRO?**

In order to solicit and place a task order under ASTRO, you must obtain a DPA from the ASTRO CO or delegated program official. In order to do this, you must:

- a. Be a warranted AAS OCO in good standing.
- b. Formally apply for a DPA.
- c. Attend a specialized ASTRO training course.

## 6.0 HOW DO I REQUEST A DPA?

To request a DPA, please send a request for training by email to [ASTRO@gsa.gov](mailto:ASTRO@gsa.gov).

DPAs are issued to individuals, not to agencies or organizations/contracting offices at-large. Organizations may have as many of its COs apply for a DPA as needed. Once a CO receives a DPA from the ASTRO CO, he/she is officially known as an OCO. An OCO has the authority to solicit, award, administer, and modify task orders against the ASTRO contracts on behalf of their organization. COs who do not have DPAs may not use the DPA of a different CO as authority to solicit and award task or delivery orders. In other words, DPA authority may not be delegated by an OCO to any person not possessing a DPA.

No work may be performed, no obligation may be accrued, and no payment may be made against the ASTRO contracts except as authorized by a bona-fide written order signed by an OCO having an official ASTRO DPA. **A sample DPA is provided in Appendix B for review. It lists the responsibilities an OCO must meet as an authorized user of ASTRO contracts in order to keep an active DPA.**

DPA training may be done via conference call, web-ex, or in person depending on circumstances. DPAs may be revoked at the discretion of the ASTRO CO.

## 6.1 REASSIGNING TASK ORDERS FOR ADMINISTRATION

ASTRO task orders can only be reassigned for administration to other agency COs who have been issued an ASTRO DPA. Organizations should plan for workforce turnover and development of qualified OCOs to administer task orders. GSA will work with organizations to expedite training and DPA issuance when personnel turnover is sudden and unexpected.

## 7.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The ASTRO Program Office is responsible for award, administration, and management of the ASTRO contracts. The ASTRO Program Office will also be responsible for:

- a. Monitoring and evaluating performance against the master contract requirements by each contract holder.
- b. Modifying the ASTRO master contract terms and conditions within its exclusive, non-delegable rights.
- c. Providing advice and guidance to ordering/requiring activities, OCOs, and contractors regarding all ASTRO procurement-related matters.
- d. Conducting meetings with ASTRO prime contractors as scheduled and/or necessary.

Requiring activities will be responsible for:

- a. Defining task order requirements.
- b. Preparing a Statement of Work (SOW), Performance Work Statement (PWS), or Statement of Objectives (SOO) for each task order Request for Proposal (RFP).
- c. Funding requirements.

- d. Ensuring IT capital planning when appropriate.
- e. Assisting the OCO with quote/proposal evaluation.
- f. Assisting the OCO with performance monitoring and appraisal.

OCO responsibilities include complying with the following:

- a. ASTRO master contract terms and conditions.
- b. ASTRO Ordering Guide.
- c. FAR or authorized agency supplements or exceptions thereto.
- d. Applicable agency-specific statutes and policies.
- e. Additional responsibilities defined in the ASTRO DPA.

## **8.0 WHAT ORDERING PROCEDURES APPLY TO ASTRO TASK ORDERS?**

Ordering procedures outlined in FAR subpart 16.505 apply to the ASTRO IDIQ task orders.

## **9.0 WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF USING ASTRO?**

ASTRO is flexible and easy to use, and it allows organizations to:

- a. Purchase commercial or non-commercial services.
- b. Use any contract type, including hybrid mixtures of contract types.
- c. Establish Contract Line Item Number (CLIN) structures tailored to individual task order requirements.
- d. Order work within CONUS and outside CONUS.
- e. Establish labor categories and price estimates for four different levels of over 230 labor categories in up to 640 precise geographic locations, including states, metropolitan areas, non-metropolitan areas, and the territories of Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.
- f. Add labor categories at the task order level, if necessary.
- g. Include ancillary services and Other Direct Costs (ODCs) at the task order level, as needed.
- h. Share lessons-learned and best-practices.

## **10.0 THE ORDERING PROCESS**

### **10.1 STEP 1: ACQUISITION PLANNING**

Orders against multiple-award IDIQ contracts, such as ASTRO, are not exempt from Acquisition Planning as prescribed in FAR Part 7, and OCOs must follow the ordering procedures in FAR subpart 16.505.

Unless an authorized exception applies, fair opportunity procedures prescribed for the dollar value of the task order must be used. When the OCO plans to award an order based on an exception to fair opportunity, an applicable Justification and Approval (J&A) document should be prepared and approved as part of the acquisition planning process. Any required notices and postings must also be issued.

Important considerations in developing an acquisition plan are described in the following sections.



### **10.1.1 MARKET RESEARCH**

The OCO must conduct market research for requirements in accordance with regulations for any ASTRO procurement. OCOs are encouraged to submit Requests for Information (RFI), draft solicitations, and other documents to ASTRO contract holders as part of the market research efforts.

### **10.1.2 TASK ORDER CONTRACT TYPES**

Subject to FAR and Agency-level required consideration criteria, limitations, and/or prohibitions, ASTRO task orders may be any appropriate contract type. These generally include, but are not limited to:

- a. Fixed-Price, all types.
- b. Cost-reimbursement, all types.
- c. T&M.
- d. LH.
- e. Hybrids of any of these types.

If using a hybrid contract type, use separate CLINs for the work under each contract type and annotate each CLIN with the associated contract type. This is important for clause implementation.

In accordance with regulation, OCOs must select the appropriate Pool for the task order based solely upon the scope of the work to be performed. Pre-solicitation scope reviews are mandatory for all ASTRO task order solicitations. Additionally, the ASTRO contracting staff will review every solicitation issued under ASTRO to ensure the integrity of Pool utilization. OCOs are required to provide a copy of any ASTRO task order solicitation at the request of the ASTRO CO or Program Manager. Apparent discrepancies will be brought to the OCOs attention. If Pool selection is deemed inappropriate, the ASTRO CO may rescind the OCOs DPA.

Each ASTRO Pool is a distinct contract. Accordingly, the fair opportunity process for each order only applies to the ASTRO contractors that were awarded contracts within the Pool being solicited.

### **10.1.3 TASK ORDER FUNDING AND FUNDING LIMITATIONS**

All task orders must be funded by the organization requiring and requesting services under ASTRO. However, orders placed under ASTRO may not be used to circumvent conditions and limitations imposed on the use of funds.

### **10.1.4 SECURITY CLEARANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

The task order solicitation should clearly express all requirements for security clearances, including both facility and personnel.

### **10.1.5 CLASSIFIED TASK ORDERS**

The OCO should release procedures for a classified task order via an unclassified notice to all contractors within a selected Pool. OCOs should adhere to all classified handling procedures at all times.

### **10.1.6 TASK ORDER DURATION**

The period of performance for each task order awarded under ASTRO must be specified in the task order. Task orders must be solicited and awarded prior to expiration of the ASTRO Ordering Period (November 15, 2021 – November 14, 2031, assuming option extension), and task orders may extend up to five years after the ASTRO Ordering Period expires.

Task order option periods may be exercised after the ASTRO Ordering Period expires as long as the final task order option period does not extend the cumulative term of the task order beyond five years after the expiration of the ASTRO Ordering Period.

After the ASTRO Ordering Period expires, the ASTRO contracts will remain active for administration only. The ASTRO contracts will govern the terms and conditions of active task orders to the same extent as if they were completed during the ASTRO Ordering Period.

### **10.1.7 MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM ORDER LIMITATIONS**

The minimum per order limitation on this contract is valued at the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT). The Government is not obligated to purchase, and the contractor is not required to furnish services valued at less than the SAT. There is no maximum per order limitation under ASTRO.

### **10.1.8 TASK ORDER SIZE REPRESENTATION**

The ASTRO Program Office maintains a list, in spreadsheet format, on the ASTRO website, that provides the business size classification for each contractor as it pertains to their ASTRO contract. These lists are accessible by links found on the ASTRO web page at:

<https://aas.gsa.gov/astro/>

All small business set-asides authorized by FAR subpart 16.505(b)(2)(i)(F) may be conducted on ASTRO as applicable. However, if conducting a small business set-aside, a size re-representation must be conducted at the task order level in accordance with 13 CFR 121.404(a)(1)(i).

### **10.1.9 LABOR CATEGORIES (LCATS) NECESSARY TO PERFORM THE TASK ORDER WORK**

Requirements personnel should determine the array of labor categories that are necessary to perform the task order work in preparation for developing the Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE) of performance, holding any negotiations that may be necessary with potential offerors, and preparing the task order solicitation.

ASTRO contains over 230 unpriced LCATs (each with four different levels – Junior, Journeyman, Senior, and Subject Matter Expert (SME)) that are mapped to over 800 occupations found in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. The list of the ASTRO LCATs can be found in the ASTRO master contract at **Section J.1, Attachment A**. Each LCAT identifies the specific SOC occupations mapped to that LCAT. The remainder of the 840 SOC occupations that were not included in the ASTRO LCATs are considered ancillary occupations that may be used to provide the ancillary labor services allowed and defined in the ASTRO master contract at **Section C.4**.

The 840 occupations in the SOC are considered to belong to one of two categories: primary or ancillary occupations. Primary occupations are those that are mapped to the ASTRO LCATs. Ancillary occupations comprise the remainder of the 840 that are added at the task order level as ancillary labor. Any of the remainder of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) LCATs may be used as long as they are integral and necessary to provide a total service solution to the organization's needs.

Specialized labor is defined in the ASTRO master contract, at **Section B.4.3**, as any labor for which the expertise required, or duties performed, are within the scope of the master contract and task order but are not identified by the standardized labor categories. The contract also provides that the contractor may propose specialized labor when proposing ancillary support; however, the OCO will determine whether circumstances merit the use of specialized skills. Whenever possible, this specialized labor should be mapped to an OMB SOC.

The task order solicitation should instruct offerors how to identify and call attention to the intent to use specialized labor. If the requiring Agency determines during requirements development that specialized labor would be required to support segments of the task order work, it should state so in the task order solicitation. The offeror's proposal should include the following elements, at a minimum, when proposing specialized labor:

- a. The proposed labor category title.
- b. Expertise and qualifications required by the specialized labor category.
- c. Duties to be performed by the specialized labor.
- d. Segment of the SOW that the specialized labor will perform with references to SOW sections.
- e. An explanation of why the specialized labor is required with a discussion of which ASTRO LCATs in contract **Section J.1, Attachment A** were considered and why they were not appropriate or did not fit the task order requirements.
- f. A discussion of the OMB SOC occupations that were examined to determine if the specialized labor could be mapped to an OMB SOC occupation.
- g. The OMB SOC occupation that maps, if applicable.

To ensure that all offers use the same vocabulary and can be compared on an "apples to apples" basis, including specialized labor categories in the solicitation, where possible, is preferential over allowing contractors to create and offer specialized labor categories.

#### **10.1.10 SERVICE CONTRACT ACT (SCA)**

Many ASTRO labor categories are considered bona-fide executive and/or administrative professional labor and are exempt from the SCA. However, OCOs may order any labor typically found in the Department of Labor's Directory of Occupations for SCA labor and necessary to deliver a total mission solution integrated across disciplines and/or the enterprise. Consult with local counsel on whether the amount of SCA labor in the task order requires incorporation of SCA clauses and wage determinations.

#### **10.1.11 DAVIS-BACON WORK**

Minor amounts of construction, alteration, or repair may be included as ancillary services in task orders when integral and necessary to delivering a total professional service solution to a mission

need. The OCO is responsible for ensuring that construction, alterations, or repairs are covered by the purpose element of the appropriation used to fund the construction portion of the task order.

The OCO must identify construction under a separate CLIN and price it on a Firm-Fixed-Price basis. The OCO must also include all applicable construction clauses and wage decisions in the task order.

#### **10.1.12 RIGHTS IN DATA**

There are multiple Rights in Data clauses in the ASTRO master contract. The OCO should ensure that the applicable Rights in Data clause(s) is (are) clearly assigned in each task order solicitation and resulting task order. Rights in Data is a highly specialized area and OCOs should seek advice from qualified professionals on these issues to ensure the proper clause is in effect for each task order.

#### **10.1.13 RIGHTS RESERVED BY THE PROCURING CONTRACTING OFFICER (CO)**

Only the ASTRO CO is authorized to modify the ASTRO contract terms and conditions and to delegate ASTRO procurement authority. OCOs may not transfer DPA to a non-delegated CO. Only a warranted OCO having written authority/delegation from the ASTRO Procuring CO may make any required change to a previously issued task order.

#### **10.1.14 OTHER SIGNIFICANT PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

Other key considerations to address when developing an acquisition plan and preparing for task order solicitation include the following. The OCO should:

- a. Ensure inherently governmental functions are not included in the scope. The requirements official should provide the OCO with a written determination that these are not included in the scope.
- b. Ensure no personal services are included as these are not authorized on ASTRO.
- c. Complete a commerciality determination.
- d. Use performance-based contracting as the preferred method.
- e. Identify and evaluate potential Conflicts of Interest (COIs).
- f. Prepare a Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) or Award Fee Determination Plan (AFDP) and identify performance metrics, as applicable.
- g. Develop evaluation factors.
- h. Determine the source selection methodology.

#### **10.1.15 CANCELLATION OF REQUIREMENTS**

The OCO has the discretion to cancel a solicitation. The OCO should consider the implications before canceling the solicitation. It is a good practice for the OCO to document their decision for canceling the solicitation and inform the affected ASTRO Pool.

#### **10.1.16 PRE-SOLICITATION SCOPE REVIEWS**

The scope of task orders under ASTRO must be within the scope of the ASTRO master contract as discussed in **Section 3.0** of this ordering guide. Accordingly, scope reviews are mandatory for

all task orders placed under the ASTRO vehicle. Scope reviews may be requested via email to [ASTRO@gsa.gov](mailto:ASTRO@gsa.gov).

## **10.2 STEP 2: DEFINE THE REQUIREMENTS AND DEVELOP THE SOLICITATION**

### **10.2.1 REQUIREMENTS DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT RESOURCES**

Numerous aids and support resources are available online in the ASTRO web library, including, but not limited to:

- a. Contract terms and conditions.
- b. List of contractors in each Pool.
- c. List containing small business and socio-economic status of contractors in each Pool.
- d. ASTRO Price Estimating tool.

### **10.2.2 THE ASTRO PRICE ESTIMATING TOOL**

ASTRO provides a pricing tool to assist in developing task order IGCEs. It covers all occupations in the OMB's SOC system that are mapped to ASTRO LCATs with associated pricing for 640 specific geographic locations in the United States (U.S.) and its territories. The estimating tool is currently available via email request to [ASTRO@gsa.gov](mailto:ASTRO@gsa.gov).

### **10.2.3 DEVELOPING THE SOLICITATION**

Use the solicitation form and format for task orders normally prescribed and used by your agency for task order solicitations, consistent with FAR 16.505 procedures.

Use of the Uniform Contract Format found in FAR 15.2 is not required for ASTRO orders. Furthermore, we do not recommend its use for ASTRO orders as it can lead to confusion between the ordering procedures found in FAR 16.505 versus source selection procedures found in FAR 15.3, which are not applicable to ASTRO task orders.

In addition to the typical content of a solicitation, certain information particular to using ASTRO appropriately should be added, emphasized, or highlighted in the solicitation. That information will be discussed and explained in the succeeding paragraphs.

In addition to the information required by FAR 16.505(a)(7), all ASTRO solicitations should provide the following information, at a minimum:

- a. Pool being solicited.
- b. Applicable NAICS code and Product Service Code (PSC).
- c. SOW/PWS/SOO.
- d. Type of services (Commercial or Non-Commercial).
- e. CLIN structure.
- f. Evaluation factors.
- g. Source selection methodology.
- h. Contract type(s).
- i. Period of performance.
- j. Place of performance.
- k. Proposal due date.

- l. Proposal instructions.
- m. Other pertinent information (e.g., agency specific clauses or optional clauses).

#### **10.2.4 CLAUSES AND PROVISIONS**

**Section I.1** of the ASTRO master contract establishes that all applicable and required provisions and clauses set forth in FAR 52.301 automatically flow down to all ASTRO task orders, based on their specific contract type (e.g., cost or fixed price), SOW/PWS/SOO, competition requirements, commercial or not commercial, and dollar value as of the date the task order solicitation is issued.

However, the OCO must identify in the task order solicitation whether FAR Part 12 commercial clauses/provisions apply or do not apply. Furthermore, the OCO must identify any optional, and/or agency-specific provisions/clauses for each individual task order solicitation and subsequent award. For optional and/or agency-specific provisions/clauses, the OCO must provide the provision/clause number, title, date, and fill-in information (if any), as of the date the task order solicitation is issued.

#### **10.2.5 EVALUATION FACTORS**

The procedures prescribed in FAR subpart 15.3 (Source Selection) DO NOT apply to the MA IDIQ ordering process. In accordance with FAR subpart 16.505, “The contracting officer may exercise broad discretion in developing appropriate order placement procedures. The contracting officer should keep submission requirements to a minimum. Contracting officers may use streamlined procedures, including oral presentations.”

The task order solicitation and award process should be as streamlined as practical to reduce solicitation and proposal preparation costs and time for the Government and contractor, respectively.

### **10.3 STEP 3: ISSUE THE SOLICITATION**

#### **10.3.1 ASTRO ORDERING PORTAL**

OCOs must use the ASTRO Ordering Portal at <https://astro.app.cloud.gov/> for distributing all ASTRO solicitations and communicating with ASTRO Industry Partners. The portal uses the Symphony Procurement Suite (Symphony), a cloud-based application, to provide collaborative workflow between GSA and ASTRO industry partners. The portal streamlines the ordering process by automating the following pre-award activities:

- a. Fair opportunity management
- b. Managing RFIs
- c. Issuing Task Order Requests
- d. Facilitating pre-award communications with Industry Partners
- e. Managing the Q&A process during active solicitations
- f. Managing the proposal submission process
- g. Providing dashboards to track active solicitations
- h. Pricing tool access (future)

While OCOs are required to use the ASTRO Ordering Portal for the above pre-award activities, task order awards and post-award task order management will take place in the GSA Assisted Services Shared Information System (ASSIST). **Do not use GSA eBUY for ASTRO requirements!**

OCO should register in Symphony at <https://astro.app.cloud.gov/>. For additional help with Symphony, please email the help desk at [client.support@apexlogic.com](mailto:client.support@apexlogic.com) or visit the Getting Started With Symphony Page at <http://gettingstarted.apexlogic.com/support/home>.

Requests for Symphony training or support should be sent via email to [ASTRO@gsa.gov](mailto:ASTRO@gsa.gov).

### **10.3.2 CONTRACTORS IN DORMANT STATUS**

The ASTRO contracts contain the ability to place contractors in a dormant status while they develop corrective measures for the ASTRO CO to review and approve. During dormancy, contractors may continue to work on existing task order awards but are prohibited from competing for new task order awards. GSA will maintain a list of contractors in dormant status. If conducting a sole source procurement, the OCO should check with the ASTRO Program Office prior to solicitation to determine if the contractor is in dormant status. Upon receipt of solicitation for competitive procurements, the ASTRO CO will notify the OCO if any contractors in the applicable Pool are under dormant status.

## **10.4 STEP 4: EVALUATE PROPOSALS**

OCO should evaluate proposals based on the methodology stated in the task order solicitation to maintain fairness in the ordering process and mitigate protest risk.

### **10.4.1 ASTRO IS UNPRICED**

Pricing is primarily based upon competition at the task order level and will vary in accordance with factors applicable to the task order requirement (e.g., geography, security level, complexity, deadlines, risk levels, or contract type).

### **10.4.2 CONTRACT LEVEL PRICING**

Contract level pricing is not necessarily the best method, for the following reasons:

- a. Any published rates are maximum rates for that specific contract.
  1. Accordingly, those rates must reflect the highest reasonable prices for all elements that might affect pricing (e.g., geography, security level, risk, or visibility).
- b. When you publish a rate that represents a maximum and determine it to be “reasonable,” you actually elevate all pricing elements that would otherwise be below a “max” consideration.
- c. Contract level pricing results in artificially high pricing in many instances.

### **10.4.3 TASK ORDER PRICE**

Per FAR 15.404-1, adequate price competition normally establishes a fair and reasonable price. OCOs should ensure fair and reasonable pricing in accordance with FAR 15.4.

- a. The number one recommended way to establish fair and reasonable pricing is competition.
- b. If there is adequate price competition, then there is a fair and reasonable price.
- c. Once adequate price competition and a fair and reasonable price have been established, stop doing further price analysis.

#### **10.4.4 WHAT IS ADEQUATE PRICE COMPETITION?**

A price is based on adequate price competition when:

- a. Two or more responsible offerors, competing independently, submit priced offers that satisfy the Government's expressed requirement.
- b. Award will be made to the offeror whose proposal represents the best value (see 2.101) where price is a substantial factor in source selection.
- c. There is no finding that the price of the otherwise successful offeror is unreasonable. Any finding that the price is unreasonable must be supported by a statement of the facts and approved at a level above the CO.

#### **10.4.5 WHAT TO DO WHEN THERE IS NOT ADEQUATE PRICE COMPETITION**

The Government may use various contract price analysis techniques and procedures to ensure a fair and reasonable price in accordance with FAR 15.404-1(b)(2). Examples of such techniques include, but are not limited to, the following (**The first two techniques are the preferred techniques!**):

- a. Comparison of proposed prices received in response to the solicitation. Normally, adequate price competition establishes a fair and reasonable price.
- b. Comparison of proposed prices with historical prices paid, whether by the Government or other than the Government, for the same or similar items. This method may be used for commercial items including those "of a type" or requiring minor modifications.
- c. Use of parametric estimating methods or application of rough yardsticks (such as dollars per pound or per horsepower, or other units) to highlight significant inconsistencies that warrant additional pricing inquiry.
- d. Comparison of proposed prices with competitive published price lists, published market prices of commodities, similar indexes, and discount or rebate arrangements.
- e. Comparison of proposed prices with the IGCE.
- f. Comparison of proposed prices with prices obtained through market research for the same or similar items.
- g. Analysis of data other than certified cost or pricing data (as defined at FAR 2.101) provided by the offeror.

#### **10.4.6 GSA POLICY GUIDANCE**

Please see the GSA Procurement Information Notice (PIN) 2021-03 for further guidance regarding pricing and analysis on ASTRO.



### **10.4.7 BOTTOM LINE**

The OCO is responsible for analyzing order proposals and documenting the cost or price evaluation including determining that the final agreed to price is fair and reasonable, irrespective of contract type(s). When adequate price competition exists (see FAR 15.403-1(c)(1)) generally no additional information is necessary to determine price reasonableness. For cost-reimbursement task orders, a cost realism determination is also required.

### **10.4.8 COST-REIMBURSEMENT TYPE ORDERS**

All ASTRO contractors have accounting systems that have been determined to be adequate to support cost reimbursement orders.

### **10.4.9 IDENTIFICATION OF LABOR**

ASTRO master contract Attachment A establishes that “the contractor shall identify both Prime and Subcontractor labor using the ASTRO Labor Categories, as well as the corresponding SOC number and title that applies. The Labor ID# must have a G or C designator to represent the Government or Contractor site.” The contractor may deviate from the Junior, Journeyman, Senior, and SME definitions in **Section J.1, Attachment A.** of the ASTRO master contract, as long as the contractor clearly identifies the deviation in its proposal. The following levels of labor categories were established in the master contract:

- a. **JUNIOR:** Applies fundamental concepts, processes, practices, and procedures on technical assignments. Performs work that requires practical experience and training. Work is performed under supervision.
- b. **JOURNEYMAN:** Possesses and applies expertise on multiple complex work assignments. Assignments may be broad in nature, requiring originality and innovation in determining how to accomplish tasks. Operates with appreciable latitude in developing methodology and presenting solutions to problems. Contributes to deliverables and performance metrics where applicable.
- c. **SENIOR:** Possesses and applies a comprehensive knowledge across key tasks and high impact assignments. Plans and leads major technology assignments. Evaluates performance results and recommends major changes affecting short-term project growth and success. Functions as a technical expert across multiple project assignments. May supervise others.
- d. **SME:** Provides technical/management leadership on major tasks or technology assignments. Establishes goals and plans that meet project objectives. Has domain and expert technical knowledge. Directs and controls activities for a client, having overall responsibility for financial management, methods, and staffing to ensure that technical requirements are met. Interactions involve client negotiations and interfacing with senior management. Decision-making and domain knowledge may have a critical impact on overall project implementation. May supervise others.

## **10.5 STEP 5: AWARD THE TASK ORDER**

### **10.5.1 ORDER AWARD DOCUMENTATION**

Document task order awards in accordance with regulation and local policy.

All ASTRO task order awards will be made in ASSIST.

### **10.5.2 GSA COPY OF THE TASK ORDER**

Submit an ASTRO Task Order Award Information Form with an electronic copy of the task order award to the ASTRO CO within five days after award. A copy of the Award Information Form is provided as **Appendix C** of this ordering guide.

### **10.5.3 PUBLIC NOTICE OF AWARDS NOT PROVIDING FOR FAIR OPPORTUNITY**

For orders based on an exception to fair opportunity, the OCO must post the required public notice within 14 days after placing the order. If the exception of urgency-unacceptable delay found at FAR 16.505(b)(2)(i)(A) is used, the public notice must be posted within 30 days after placing the order. This posting requirement includes posting the justification approved for the exception at the Government point of entry. Note the actions excluded from this requirement are disclosures that would compromise national security and small business set-asides authorized by FAR subpart 16.505(b)(2)(i)(F).

### **10.5.4 ORDER LEVEL PROTESTS**

All protests at the task order level are handled by the agency soliciting the task order. FAR subpart 16.505(a)(10) prohibits protests under FAR subpart 33.1 in connection with the issuance or proposed issuance of task orders against an MA IDIQ contract except for:

- a. A protest on the grounds that the Order increases the scope, period of performance, or maximum value of the contract.
- b. A protest on orders valued in excess of \$10 million.

FAR subpart 16.505(a)(10)(i)(B) grants the Government Accountability Office (GAO) sole authority to hear protests of orders in excess of \$10 million that are filed in accordance with the procedures at FAR subpart 33.104.

### **10.5.5 OMBUDSMAN**

GSA has appointed the required Ombudsman to resolve complaints related to fair opportunity in the ordering process. To submit a question or report an issue, please contact the GSA Ombudsman via email at [gsaombudsman@gsa.gov](mailto:gsaombudsman@gsa.gov).

### **10.5.6 REPORTING TASK ORDER AWARDS IN FEDERAL PROCUREMENT DATA SYSTEM-NEXT GENERATION (FPDS-NG)**

Contract actions are required to be reported in the FPDS-NG within three days after execution of the action. It is important that each ASTRO task order is reported as an order under the correct ASTRO contract number (i.e., correct Pool).

It is important that FPDS-NG accurately reflects the requirements ordered and task order solicitation procedures used against ASTRO. To that end, several of the many data elements in the FPDS-NG merit discussion. These discussions are based on the FPDS-NG Data Element Dictionary, Version 1.4.4, dated June 28, 2013. If a more current Data Dictionary is in force at the time of task order award, use the adjusted guidance accordingly.

To ensure that each agency gets proper credit for awards, make sure the FPDS-NG report accurately reflects the appropriate values in fields related to award data.

NAICS Codes: The FPDS-NG system will populate the NAICS code field in the task order action report with the NAICS code reported for the master (Indefinite Delivery Vehicle) IDV contract. Review **Appendix A** of this ordering guide containing ASTRO Pools and associated NAICS codes. The NAICS codes that should populate based on the Pool in which the task order was competed are as follows:

<b>ASTRO Pool</b>	<b>Primary NAICS Code</b>
Data Operations	541990
Mission Operations	541990
Aviation	488190
Ground	488999
Space	488190
Maritime	336611
Development/System Integration	541330
Research	541715
Support	541990
Training	611699

PSC Codes: Report the PSC code applicable to the requirement.

Solicitation Procedures: (FPDS-NG data element 10M) Select “MAFO” (Multiple-Award Fair Opportunity) as the value for this data element.

Fair Opportunity/Limited Sources: (FPDS-NG data element 10R) If the task order was competed under fair opportunity procedures, select “FAIR” as the value for this element. If an exception (A through E) to fair opportunity was used, select the appropriate code under this data element for the exception that applies. For direct task order awards, use the value “SS” (sole-source).

## **10.6 STEP 6: ADMINISTER THE ORDER, EXECUTE THE WORK, AND CLOSE-OUT THE ORDER**

The OCO is responsible for administering the awarded task order, ensuring the contractor is executing the work in accordance with the awarded task order, and executing closeout procedures at the completion of the task order.

### **10.6.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE – CONTRACTOR SURVEILLANCE**

The OCO is responsible for ensuring contractor performance meets the minimum requirements established in the order, documenting the order file, and communicating with the contractor to ensure the Government is receiving the contracted services. Monitoring contractor performance should be delegated to a Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR). The specific authority/limitations of the COR should be delineated in an appointment letter, a copy of which should be provided to the contractor.

## **10.6.2 SUBCONTRACTING AND LIMITATIONS ON SUBCONTRACTING**

ASTRO includes NO provisions for limitations on subcontracting. Any such limitations necessary for task order performance must be included at the task order level.

## **10.6.3 PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

Each OCO is responsible for ensuring that the contractors' performance on each order is reported in the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) in accordance with the policies in FAR subpart 42.15. OCOs should follow agency procedures for preparation, review, and submission of performance reports. GSA will consider task order performance information as part of performance evaluations at the master IDIQ contract level. Task order performance may also be considered in placing contractors in a dormant status.

## **10.6.4 REPORTING MODIFICATIONS IN FPDS-NG**

All task order modifications must be reported in FPDS-NG. Review **Appendix A** regarding NAICS codes.

## **10.6.5 TASK ORDER CLOSEOUT**

Task order files must be closed out in accordance with the policies in FAR subpart 4.804-1; or, if the task order is administered by another office, the policies in FAR subpart 4.804-2 should be used. The procedures prescribed in 4.804-5 should be used except when it is appropriate to use the quick closeout procedures in FAR subpart 42.708.

## APPENDIX A: ASTRO POOLS

All ASTRO Pools have been assigned a single NAICS code and associated small business size standard. Task order solicitations should identify the functional Pool that best fits the associated task order requirement. Pool selection is what establishes the applicable NAICS and small business size standard.

NAICS codes for each Pool are as follows:

<b>ASTRO Pool</b>	<b>Primary NAICS Code</b>	<b>Small Business Size Standard</b>
Data Operations	541990	\$19.5 million
Mission Operations	541990	\$19.5 million
Aviation	488190	\$40 million
Ground	488999	\$25 million
Space	488190	\$40 million
Maritime	336611	1,300 employees
Development/System Integration	541330	\$47 million
Research	541715	1,000 employees
Support	541990	\$19.5 million
Training	611699	\$16.5 million

## APPENDIX B: SAMPLE DPA

MEMORANDUM FOR:           Ordering Contracting Officer (OCO)

FROM:                    Valerie Bindel  
                              Contracting Officer  
                              (817)-850-8375 (Office)  
                              [ASTRO@gsa.gov](mailto:ASTRO@gsa.gov)

SUBJECT:                 Delegation of Procurement Authority (DPA) as OCO to Compete, Award, and Administer ASTRO Task Orders

The purpose of this DPA is to establish the roles and responsibilities for the ASTRO Program Office and the OCO, and ensure proper use of the ASTRO vehicles while promoting public policy objectives.

The ASTRO Program Office retains sole authority and responsibility to administer and modify the basic Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) master contracts. The ASTRO Program Office will evaluate the performance of ASTRO contractors against the master contract terms and will also provide advice and guidance to OCOs on all ASTRO procurement matters.

The authority granted to you under this DPA is limited to those requirements of your agency that are within scope of the ASTRO vehicles. Your authority to administer ASTRO task orders covers all task orders awarded by you or another OCO possessing a valid DPA in your current warranting organization. The DPA authority does not extend to administration of task orders awarded by OCOs outside your current warranting organization. You will act as the central point of contact under each task order and are responsible for coordinating with the awarded contractor, the Client (the funding organization/receiver of goods or services), and the General Services Administration (GSA). This applies regardless of whether your contracting organization is acting as the Servicing Agency on behalf of a client outside your agency or is within the requiring Agency and is contracting for its own requirement. You will perform all required pre- and post-award functions associated with the task order subject to the following terms and conditions of this DPA:

- a. **Compliance** – You are expected to comply with the terms and conditions of the ASTRO master contract, the ASTRO Ordering Guide, the FAR and authorized agency FAR supplements or exceptions thereto, applicable agency-specific statutes and policies, and the additional responsibilities defined in this DPA.
- b. **Duration** – This DPA is effective until the expiration of the ASTRO master contract or completion and closeout of any awarded task orders in which duration extends beyond the expiration of the respective contract, whichever is later. You are also required to maintain a valid warrant authority. Notwithstanding the preceding, this DPA is portable under certain conditions. If you change organizations within the larger Agency or move to a new Agency but will continue to be warranted, the DPA is portable. However, you must notify the ASTRO COs of the move or reassignment and provide information on the new warrant when it is issued. Re-training is not required unless there is a break of more than ninety days in possession of a current warrant or serving in a Contracting Officer (CO) position. This DPA cannot be re-delegated.
- c. **Revocation** – GSA may revoke this DPA at any time for failure to comply with treaty, law, regulation, ethical standards, and applicable Federal acquisition policies and

procedures. GSA will be cognizant of the need to ensure task order continuity if such actions are initiated.

- d. **Scope Compliance** – The OCO must ensure that task order work is within the ASTRO scope. The ASTRO program team is available to assist with this determination at any time upon request.
- e. **Administrative Reporting** – Upon award, the OCO is responsible for reporting the task order award action in the Federal Procurement Data System – Next Generation (FPDS-NG). In addition to FPDS-NG reporting, the OCO is required to provide a complete copy of the task order (e.g., the signature page, the work statement, and the line items equivalent to Sections A-J of the Uniform Contract Format, or equivalent if a commercial services task order) and the task order information form(s) included with this DPA to the ASTRO Program Office at [ASTRO@gsa.gov](mailto:ASTRO@gsa.gov).

The OCO is responsible for complying with all FAR-based rules when competing, awarding, and administering task orders. The following list, while not all-inclusive, represents key areas of OCO responsibility:

1. **Fair Opportunity** – The OCO should ensure that all contractors are provided a fair opportunity to be considered in accordance with FAR 16.505, or authorized agency supplements or exceptions thereto, prior to task order award. Any exceptions to fair opportunity to be considered (“fair opportunity exceptions”) must be consistent with FAR 16.505, authorized agency supplements, exceptions thereto, or as otherwise required or allowed by statute. The OCO must comply with the requirements to prepare justifications and obtain approvals of justifications for exceptions to fair opportunity in accordance with FAR 16.505.
2. **Funding** – The OCO should verify that funding is available, comply with appropriations law and financial policy, and ensure timely obligation of funds and de-obligation and disposition of excess funds.
3. **Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR)** – If a COR is appointed to perform order monitoring and oversight functions, the OCO must ensure that the extent of their authority and responsibilities is clearly defined. The COR’s appointment should be in writing and a copy should be provided to the contractor in order to establish clear roles and responsibilities during task order administration. Ensure that any COR you designate is properly equipped, trained, and qualified to handle those responsibilities pursuant to your agency policy.
4. **Task Order Protests, Disputes, and Claims** – The OCO must receive and respond to task order protests, disputes, and claims. The warranting agency is responsible for the OCO’s decisions and actions as a warranted CO.
5. **Monitor, Evaluate and Report Contractor Performance** – The OCO must ensure the contractor complies with the task order terms and conditions. The OCO should take appropriate action to maintain the Government’s rights. The OCO should conduct contractor performance evaluations in accordance with FAR 42.15, and applicable agency policies. Interim performance evaluations are encouraged for each task order. The OCO should use their organization’s designated contractor performance reporting system to record performance.
6. **Cost or Price Analysis and Audits** – The OCO must perform and document cost analysis and/or price analysis, in accordance with FAR 15.4, as appropriate in

determining the overall task order price to be fair and reasonable, as well as respond to any related audits.

7. **Prompt Payment** – The OCO must ensure prompt payment of contractor invoices and prompt rejection of nonconforming invoices.
8. **Task Order Closeout** – The OCO is responsible for completing closeout of task orders in accordance with FAR 4.804-5 and providing the ASTRO CO a task order closeout completion statement.
9. **Requests for Information (RFI)** – The OCO must respond to any RFIs pertaining to task orders awarded or administered by you including, but not limited to, Freedom of Information Act requests, and inquiries/audits by Congress, Inspectors General, the Small Business Administration, the Government Accountability Office, and the GSA.

Thank you for your interest in GSA's ASTRO program. We are committed to delivering acquisition vehicles that provide our customers with convenient access to the best qualified contractors in the professional services-based solutions marketplace. If you have any questions regarding this DPA, the ASTRO vehicles, or our program in general, please feel free to contact the ASTRO Program Office at any time.

For more information about the ASTRO contracts addressed in this DPA, links to copies of the ASTRO contracts, and other useful information including various points of contact, please visit our website at <https://aas.gsa.gov/astro/> or the AAS intranet location at

<https://sites.google.com/a/gsa.gov/aas-assisted-acquisition-services-site2/acquisition-resources/astro>



## APPENDIX C: ASTRO TASK ORDER AWARD INFORMATION FORM

*Instructions: Answer the following questions and email form to [ASTRO@gsa.gov](mailto:ASTRO@gsa.gov) within five calendar days of task order award*

1. Ordering Contracting Officer Name:
2. Ordering Contracting Officer Email address:
3. Client Agency Name:
4. ASTRO Pool:
5. ASTRO Contract Number:
6. ASTRO Contractor:
7. Solicitation Number:
8. Task Order Number:
9. Project Title:
10. Award Date:
11. Period of Performance (Including Options):
12. Predominant Contract Type:
13. Initial Obligated/Funded Amount:
14. Total Estimated Value (Including Options):
15. Primary Place of Performance (Address, City, State, Zip):
16. Task Order includes Outside Continental United States (OCONUS) work?  Yes  No
17. Fair Opportunity Utilized (FAR 16.505(b)(1)):
  - a.  Yes - Number of Offers Received:
  - b.  No - Which Exception Utilized (FAR 16.505(b)(2)): **(If No, check box below)**
    - i.  The agency need for the supplies or services is so Urgent that providing a fair opportunity would result in unacceptable delays.
    - ii.  Only one awardee is capable of providing the supplies or services required at the level of quality required because the supplies or services ordered are unique or highly specialized.
    - iii.  The order must be issued on a sole-source basis in the interest of economy and efficiency because it is a Logical Follow-On to an order already issued under the contract, provided that all awardees were given a fair opportunity to be considered for the original order.
    - iv.  A Statute expressly authorizes or requires that the purchase be made from a specified source
    - v.  Other: FAR Part 6.3 exception

Scope Review Process Utilized:  Yes  No

Specialized LCATs Utilized:  Yes  No

If Yes, provide reason LCATs on ASTRO contract were not sufficient:

Feedback for the ASTRO CO on your ASTRO ordering experience: (Ease of Use, Quality of Proposals, Behavior of Contractors, etc.):