Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
Authority
One Gateway Plaza
3rd Floor Board Room
Los Angeles, CA

Metro

Board Report

File #: 2024-0951, **File Type:** Contract **Agenda Number:** 14.

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 21, 2024

SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT SERVICES BENCH

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

AUTHORIZE the Chief Executive Officer to execute Modification No. 2 to Communications Support Services Bench Contract Nos. PS85397000 through PS85397015 to:

A. INCREASE the cumulative contract value of the Bench contracts in an amount not-to-exceed $18,000,000, increasing the cumulative contract value from $32,000,000 to $50,000,000; and

B. EXECUTE task orders for a Not-to-Exceed (NTE) total authorized amount of $5,000,000.

ISSUE

In September 2022, the Board approved the establishment of the Communications Support Services Bench (Bench) for an amount not to exceed $32,000,000 for a four-year term with 16 Small Business Enterprise (SBE) prime contractors. The Bench provides Metro's Customer Experience Department with supplementary communications services supporting Metro's projects, programs, and initiatives, such as community engagement programs, public information campaigns, and various public outreach activities.

The Bench has successfully provided professional communications support services to multiple and diverse Metro projects, programs, and initiatives. To date, a total of 28 task orders have been issued to the Bench, for a total cumulative value of $28,009,178, leaving only $3,990,822 in available contract authority.

BACKGROUND

With the passage of Measure M in November 2016, Metro's work effort has expanded significantly. To optimize the Agency's existing communications workforce and to ensure adherence to Metro's Vision 2028 Strategic Plan, Public Participation Plan, Equity Platform, Community Based Organizations Partnering Strategy, and Customer Experience Plan, additional contracted services is necessary. The Bench ensures that strategic and equitable communications support services are available to supplement Metro's staff resources.

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The Bench contracts have been in place for two years and consist of 16 full-service, multi-disciplinary teams that serve on an on-call, task order-award basis under six disciplines:

1. Strategic Communications
2. Interpretation/Translation
3. Special Events and/or Digital Production
4. Professional Facilitation
5. Mailing Services
6. Professional Technical Writing

To date, the contracts have proven to be successful in their utilization. Contract Nos. PS85397000 through PS85397015 have been executed with the following firms:

1. Arellano Associates
2. Communications Lab
3. Community Connections
4. Costin Public Outreach Group
5. Dakota Communications
6. Del Sol Group
7. Lazar Translating & Interpreting
8. Lee Andrews Group
9. MBI Media
10. Murakawa Communications
11. Natively Fluent
12. North Star Alliances
13. Pacific Graphics Inc.
14. Redwood Resources
15. The Robert Group
16. VMA Communications

Of the 16 firms, two have not been awarded a Task Order. One firm has not yet submitted a proposal during requests for Task Order solicitations. The other firm has submitted proposals for two solicitations but was not awarded task orders. Nevertheless, the firm has received debriefs about the quality of their proposals to help shape future submissions.

DISCUSSION

The unexpected increase in Bench utilization was attributed to task orders issued in support of Metro's programs, projects and initiatives, specifically Task Order No. 1 with Lee Andrews Group for K-Line Street Teams and the pilot Community Intervention Specialists.

To continue to meet the delivery of both current and approved projects in planning and construction, programs and initiatives through FY26, additional contract authority is being requested for the balance of the four-year authorized contract term.

Currently, Metro has numerous processes that require ongoing communications support services to

ensure strong public participation and education about Metro's projects and programs. Additionally, increased funding authority is requested to provide communications and community engagement support for major efforts in preparation for the 2026 FIFA World Cup and other new projects or initiatives. Further, there are high-profile community engagement programs currently being contracted through Bench Task Orders that may require future modification. These include:

- Public Safety Advisory Committee Management & Administration Services
- Long Beach to East Los Angeles Corridor Mobility Investment Plan Engagement Services
- Bus Speed and Reliability Public Outreach Program
- Gateway Region Community Based Organizations Partnership Administration Services
- LIFE Outreach Street Teams
- I-405/Wilmington Project Community Engagement Program
- Vermont Transit Corridor Project Community Engagement Program
- Rail to River Segment B Outreach Program
- As-Needed Support services for various Special Events
- C-Line Extension to Torrance Community Engagement Program
- Mobility Wallet Phase 2 Outreach Program
- Joint Development Program Outreach
- Community Advisory Council Management & Administration Services
- Countywide Bus Rapid Transit Community Engagement Program
- As-Needed interpretation and translation services
- As-Needed mailing services

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Contractors may be required to conduct tasks on Metro property that may pose a safety impact. As appropriate, contractors will be required to meet established safety requirements to include requisite training and clearance as established by Metro Safety, Construction, Operations and Human Resources procedures.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Funding for the On-Call Communications Support Services Bench contract awards will be provided by projects utilizing the bench.

Impact to Budget

The funding for these task orders depends on the specific project being charged and could consist of federal, state, or local resources that are eligible for bus and/or rail operating expenses.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The On-Call Communications Bench contract task order awards advance Metro's commitment to equity and inclusion by ensuring communications activities provide targeted approaches to engage all stakeholders, with a specific focus on marginalized, vulnerable, and/or Equity Focus Communities

across the various disciplines noted in the Background section. Enhanced community engagement opportunities for marginalized or vulnerable groups improve equitable outcomes by elevating voices that might not otherwise be heard or included in decision-making on Metro's projects, programs, or initiatives.

There are several ongoing task orders that specifically request support services not only for community engagement but also for partnerships with various community-based organizations that serve Equity Focused Communities and other marginalized and vulnerable groups throughout Los Angeles County.

Future communications and public outreach activities, as Metro plans for the major world events soon coming to Los Angeles, will require firms to be innovative in reaching marginalized and vulnerable populations in accordance with Metro's Equity Platform and CBO Partnering Strategy.

The Bench contract has allowed the largest procurement route for Metro to partner with community-based organizations throughout Los Angeles. More than 75 CBOs have been contracted to deliver strategic and grassroots communications services on major projects, including the Vermont Transit Corridor, Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2, Long Beach to East Los Angeles Corridor Mobility Investment Plan, I-405 Sepulveda ExpressLanes, Mobility Wallet Pilot Program, Rail to River - Segment B, K Line Street Teams and Community Intervention Specialists. When appropriate, Bench task order solicitations include a CBO Partnership Program, as part of the scope of work, to ensure that CBOs are contracted to deliver continued targeted engagement with marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Further, the Communications Support Services Bench contracts provide business opportunities for 16 firms that are all certified as Small Businesses Enterprises. Additionally, 12 firms (75%) are minority-owned businesses, and 13 firms (81%) are women-owned businesses. Notably, of the 16 firms, eight (or 50%) are firms that are new to Metro as prime Contractors.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The recommended actions support the following goals:

Goal 1: Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling.
Goal 2: Deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system.
Goal 3: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity.
Goal 5: Provide responsive, accountable, and trustworthy governance within the Metro organization

The Communications Support Services Bench allows the agency to engage stakeholders in an authentic, meaningful, and responsive manner on all the agency's project, programs, and initiatives.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

1. Pursue procurement processes and solicit proposals for each task when the requirement arises. This alternative is not recommended as it would burden the small business community,

requiring them to expend significant and costly resources to respond to multiple procurement processes each year. It would also require extensive staff time to develop scopes of work, internal estimates and proceed with competitive procurements for task orders. This would also delay the provision of services and prevent the opportunity to expedite services when needed. Additionally, procuring services per assignment would impose a significant additional burden on the Customer Experience (CX) and Vendor/Contract Management departments.

2. Utilize existing CX staff to provide the required support services. This alternative poses challenges as Metro's current CX staff is fully at capacity supporting communications campaigns for existing projects, programs and initiatives. Due to these commitments, it is challenging for current staff to provide additional support for future projects, programs, and initiatives. If this alternative were exercised, Metro would need to hire further staffing resources with expertise in several disciplines to perform the desired work. Based on staffing trends and FY24/25 FTE allocations, the agency is unlikely to support this effort in-house.
3. Direct departments to procure services for their own needs. This option burdens the small business community, requiring them to expend significant and costly resources to respond to multiple procurement processes each year. It also is counter to Metro's External Communications Policy, which is designed to consolidate, optimize and strategically coordinate communications services across the agency.

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, staff will execute Modification No. 2 to the Communications Support Services Bench Contract Nos. PS85397000 to PS85397015 and continue to award individual task orders for communications support services.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Procurement Summary
Attachment B - Contract Modification/Change Order Log
Attachment C - DEOD Summary

Prepared by: Lilian De Loza-Gutierrez, Executive Officer, Communications, (213) 922-7479
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Carolina Coppolo, Deputy Chief Vendor/Contract Management Officer (Interim), (213) 922-4471

Reviewed by: Jennifer Vides, Chief Customer Experience Officer, (213) 922-4060

Stephanie N. Wiggins
Chief Executive Officer

ATTACHMENT A

PROCUREMENT SUMMARY

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT SERVICES BENCH
PS85397000 THROUGH PS85397015

1.	**Contracts Number**: PS85397000 through PS85397015			
2.	**Contractors**: Arellano Associates, Communications Lab, Community Connections, Costin Public Outreach Group, Dakota Communications, Del Sol Group, Lazar Translating & Interpreting, Lee Andrews Group, MBI Media, Murakawa Communications, Natively Fluent, North Star Alliances, Pacific Graphics Inc., Redwood Resources, The Robert Group, and VMA Communications			
3.	**Mod. Work Description** : Increase the Not-to-Exceed (NTE) cumulative bench contract value			
4.	**Contract Work Description** Provide as needed communications support services			
5.	**The Following Data is Current as of** : 10/11/2024			
6.	**Contract Completion Status**		**Financial Status**	
	Bench Contracts Awarded:	9/22/22	**Bench Contracts Award Amount:**	$32,000,000
	Notice to Proceed (NTP):	N/A	**Total of Modifications Approved:**	$0
	Original Complete Date:	9/30/26	**Pending Modifications (including this action):**	$18,000,000
	Current Est. Complete Date:	9/30/26	**Current Bench Contract Value (with this action):**	$50,000,000
7.	**Contract Administrator**: Antwaun Boykin		**Telephone Number**: (213) 922-1056	
8.	**Project Manager**: Lilian De Loza-Gutierrez		**Telephone Numbers**: (213) 922-7479	

A. Procurement Background

This Board Action is to approve Modification No. 2 to the Communications Support Services Bench Contract Nos. PS85397000 through PS85397015 to increase the NTE cumulative bench contract value and continue to provide supplementary communications services on an on-call basis.

Contract Modifications will be processed in accordance with Metro's Acquisition Policy and the contract type is task order based, firm fixed unit rate.

In September 2022, the Board approved the award of 16 Contract Nos. PS85397000 through PS85397015 to provide communications support services for a four-year term.

One modification has been issued to date.

Refer to Attachment B – Contract Modification/Change Order Log.

B. Price Analysis

The fully burdened hourly rates for the term of the bench contracts were established as part of the competitive contract award in September 2022. Rates remain unchanged and are lower than current market rates for similar services. Task Orders will be subject to technical analysis, price analysis, and negotiations to determine the fairness and reasonableness of price prior to award.

CONTRACT MODIFICATION/CHANGE ORDER LOG

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT SERVICES BENCH
PS85397000 THROUGH PS85397015

Mod. No.	Description	Status (approved or pending)	Date	Amount
1	Added Special Provision SP-20 Drug Free Workplace Policy	Approved	5/23/23	$0
2	Increase the not-to-exceed cumulative bench contract value	**Pending**	**Pending**	**$18,000,000**
	Modification Total:			**$18,000,000**
	Original Contract:		**9/22/22**	**$32,000,000**
	Total:			**$50,000,000**

DEOD SUMMARY

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT SERVICES BENCH
PS85397000 THROUGH PS85397015

A. Small Business Participation

To date, twenty-eight (28) Task Orders (TO) have been awarded to fourteen (14) of the (16) sixteen Small Business (SB) Primes on the Communications Support Services Bench contract. Contractors made various Small Business Enterprise (SBE) commitments on this TO-based contract. The contract is 64.43% complete and the overall level of SBE participation across all SBE Primes is 62.62%. Eleven (11) bench participants are meeting or exceeding their SBE commitment(s), two (2) are not meeting the SBE commitment, one (1) bench participant has not reported payments to the SBE's to-date, and two (2) have not received any TO awards to-date.

Community Connections, LLC (CCL), made a 55% SBE commitment and the current level of overall participation at 35.81%, representing a shortfall of 19.19%. CCL has a shortfall mitigation plan on file and contends that the shortfall is due to budget allocation for the non-SBE subcontractor's work being greater than initially expected, as confirmed by Metro's Project Manager. CCL further reported that to mitigate the shortfall, they plan to allocate the additional change order work to their staff and expect to meet the SBE commitment at the end of the contract.

The Lee Andrews Group (LAG) made a 70% SBE commitment and the current level of overall participation is 56.47%, representing a shortfall of 13.53%. LAG has a shortfall mitigation plan on file and attributes the shortfall to changes requested by Metro to increase the involvement of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and dedicated Community Impact Specialists (CIS), as confirmed by Metro's Project Manager. LAG indicated it will make every effort to mitigate the shortfall as future task orders are awarded.

1. Arellano Associates – 5 Task Orders Awarded

Small Business Commitment	**30% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**97.39% SBE**

2. Communications Lab (Barrios & Assoc.) – 1 Task Order Awarded

Small Business Commitment	**40% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**100% SBE**

3. **Community Connections – 1 Task Order Awarded**

Small Business Commitment	**55% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**35.81% SBE**

4. **Costin Public Outreach Group – 0 Task Orders Awarded**

Small Business Commitment	**30% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**0% SBE**

To-Date no Task orders have been awarded to Costin Public Outreach Group

5. **Dakota Communications – 0 Task Orders Awarded**

Small Business Commitment	**65% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**0% SBE**

To-Date no Task orders have been awarded to Dakota Communications

6. **Del Sol Group – 1 Task Order Awarded**

Small Business Commitment	**100% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**100% SBE**

7. **Lazar Translating & Interpreting – 2 Task Orders Awarded**

Small Business Commitment	**60% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**61.40% SBE**

8. **Lee Andrews Group – 5 Task Orders Awarded**

Small Business Commitment	**70% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**56.47% SBE**

9. **MBI Media – 2 Task Orders Awarded**

Small Business Commitment	**70% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**100% SBE**

10. **Murakawa Communications – 1 Task Order Awarded**

Small Business Commitment	**30% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**100% SBE**

11. **Natively Fluent – 1 Task Orders Awarded**

Small Business Commitment	**100% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**0% SBE**

To date, No payments to SBE's have been reported

12. **North Star Alliances – 3 Task Orders Awarded**

Small Business Commitment	**60% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**61.78% SBE**

13. **Pacific Graphics Inc. – 3 Task Orders Awarded**

Small Business Commitment	**100% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**100% SBE**

14. **Redwood Resources – 1 Task Order Awarded**

Small Business Commitment	**40% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**100% SBE**

15. **The Robert Group – 1 Task Order Awarded**

Small Business Commitment	**100% SBE**	**Small Business Participation**	**100% SBE**

16. VMA Communications – 1 Task Order Awarded

Small Business Commitment	85% SBE	Small Business Participation	100% SBE

[1]*Current Participation = Total Actual amount Paid-to-Date to DBE firms ÷Total Actual Amount Paid-to-date to Prime.*

B. Living Wage and Service Contract Worker Retention Policy Applicability

The Living Wage and Service Contract Worker Retention Policy is not applicable to this modification.

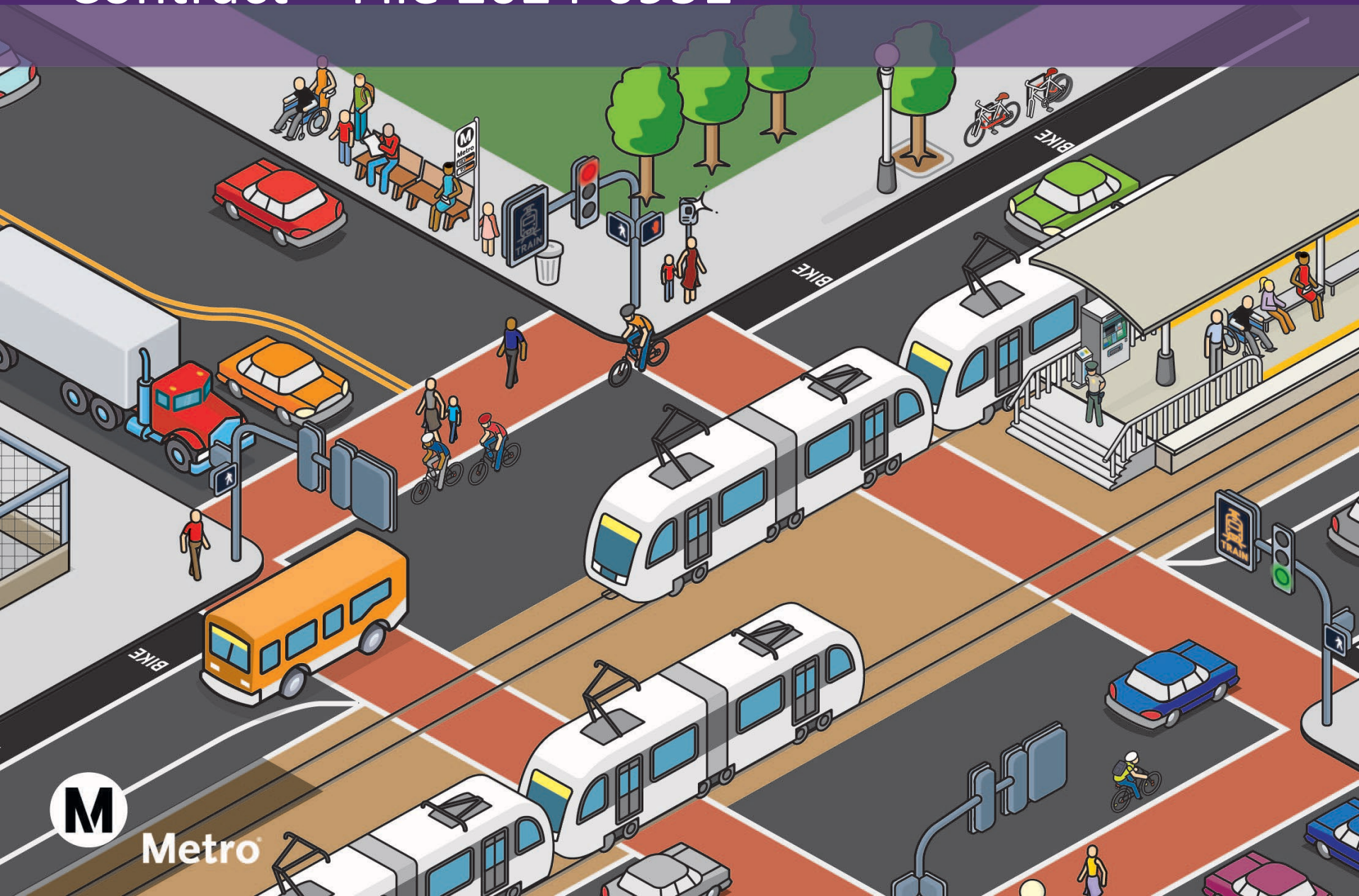
C. Prevailing Wage Applicability

Prevailing wage is not applicable to this modification.

D. Project Labor Agreement/Construction Careers Policy

Project Labor Agreement/Construction Careers Policy is not applicable to this Contract. PLA/CCP is applicable only to construction contracts that have a construction related value in excess of $2.5 million.

On-Call Communications Support Service Bench Contract – File 2024-0951



Background

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Recommendation

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Thank You!
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