

Brand Name Justification

1. Agency and Contracting Activity:

- **Requesting Activity:** Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Human Resource Solutions (HRS), USA Staffing Program Management Office (PMO)
- **Specific Identification of the document:** Items peculiar to one manufacturer (Brand Name)

2. Nature and/or Description of the Action Being Approved:

This action is a competitive brand-name procurement justification for Zendesk Enterprise Support Suite software licenses and artificial add-ons pursuant to RFO 16.507-7. This requirement will be competed within the pre-vetted vendor pool of 4 small businesses to compete at the task order level through GSA's Learning System Licenses (LSL) (Multiple Award IDIQs) as a 100% small business set-aside under NAICS: 541519-other computer related services.

3. Description of Supplies or Services (Including Estimated Value):

- **Required Mission Outcome:** B27-047-082903-0177-Zendesk Licenses. This requirement will be a base plus four option periods to acquire an additional 1,251 units of Zendesk software Licences and artificial intelligence add-ons with the option to procure 900 additional units and another option for 384 units that are subject to the availability of funds. These additional Zendesk software licences and AI-Add-Ons will integrate with the existing ecosystem of 245 existing Zendesk software licenses and AI-Add units that were procured by the Office of Personnel Management in 2025. These software licenses will provide a secure, scalable, and operationally mature customer service management platform capable of supporting high-volume Federal staffing and recruitment support operations. The desired performance outcome is uninterrupted customer support capability, improved operational efficiency through automation, centralized reporting and analytics, continuity of service, and scalable operational support aligned with ongoing modernization initiatives and evolving mission requirements.
- The Zendesk Support Suite includes the following six components as one integrated offering:
 1. Zendesk Support-ticket management
 2. Zendesk Guide-self-service knowledge base
 3. Zendesk Chat-real time chat
 4. Zendesk Talk-voice support
 5. Zendesk Explore-analytics and insights
 6. Zendesk Sunshine-AI, customer data platform and extensibility layer

Total Estimated Value: [REDACTED]

4. Exception Permitting Item Peculiar to One Manufacturer (Brand Name) and Supporting Rationale:

- **The Circumstances:** Zendesk Enterprise Support Suite is the only brand-name solution that meets all the Government's mandatory urgent requirements. This software is already FedRAMP Authorized. This federal cybersecurity mandate, combined with the Government's technical, operational, and integration requirements, eliminates all reviewed alternatives from consideration. Moreover, Zendesk connects to OPM's established ecosystem which seamlessly integrates to OPM's Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS), Learning Management Systems (LMS), and Talent Management Systems (TMS) by serving as a centralized employee service platform that handles internal requests and workflows.
- **Existing Infrastructure and Operational Continuity:** The Government currently operates within an established Zendesk environment that includes configured workflows, ticket routing structures, reporting dashboards, automation rules, integrated support channels, and knowledge base content. The Office of Personnel Management had previously acquired Zendesk licenses through a competitively awarded firm fixed price task order through September 30, 2026. The prior procurement established the interoperability of the Zendesk platform as the operational foundation for the USA Staffing help desk environment, with all workflows, integrations, and reporting structures built within and around the Zendesk ecosystem. Transitioning to an alternate platform would require substantial migration activities, redevelopment of integrations, reconfiguration of workflows, retraining of personnel, and possible interruption of customer support operations — introducing unnecessary operational, schedule, and cost risk to the Government which cannot be effectively mitigated within the time available.

Unique Capabilities Supporting Brand Name Determination:

- (1) **AI-Powered Support Tools:** Zendesk Enterprise Support Suite provides natively integrated AI capabilities — including automated ticket categorization, intelligent routing, response suggestions, ticket summaries, and sentiment analysis — that directly improve operational efficiency and response quality at scale. These capabilities are fully embedded in the platform and require no third-party integration, separate licensing, or custom development. No reviewed alternative offers equivalent, natively integrated AI tooling at this level of maturity without substantial additional investment.
- (2) **Zendesk Explore – Reporting and Analytics:** Zendesk Explore enables the PMO to build and maintain real-time, customizable dashboards tracking key performance indicators — including average resolution time, agent workload, customer satisfaction scores, backlog trends, and ticket deflection rates — without coding or technical expertise. Other platforms reviewed were limited to static prebuilt reports or required dedicated technical staff to develop and maintain customized environments, adding cost, complexity, and risk.
- (3) **FedRAMP Authorization and Section 889 Compliance:** Zendesk is FedRAMP Authorized and GSA Section 889 represents mandatory cybersecurity and supply chain integrity requirements. This authorization has been rigorously assessed against federal

standards for confidentiality, integrity, and availability. As a cloud-based platform, Zendesk eliminates the need for complex on-premises infrastructure, facilitating rapid deployment and reducing workload on internal IT staff.

- (4) **Scalability:** The platform supports flexible license scaling in increments aligned to evolving workload demands, without requiring re-architecture or new procurement actions — essential for a multi-year task order spanning a base period plus four option periods.

Brand Name Determination — Conclusion:

Zendesk Enterprise Support Suite is the only commercially available brand-name solution that satisfies all the Government's mandatory requirements for this procurement. While two potential alternatives were identified, ServiceNow and BMC Helix, each would require extensive customization, separate licensing, and third-party integrations to approach comparable functionality — introducing cost, schedule, and operational risks the Government cannot accept at this time.

Beyond compliance, no alternative platform can replicate Zendesk's combination of natively integrated AI automation, no-code enterprise reporting, and full compatibility with the Government's existing operational environment — an environment built on, and dependent upon, the Zendesk ecosystem through a prior competitively awarded contract. Transitioning would require full redevelopment of all workflows, integrations, and reporting structures, with material risk of service interruption to Federal staffing operations. The Zendesk Enterprise Support Suite is critical as OPM serves as the central nervous system for human resources across all executive branch departments, its failure would create a cascading gridlock. It would block hiring, stop the resolution of workforce disputes, disrupt retirement benefits for millions, and spark severe legal vulnerabilities across the federal enterprise.

The Zendesk brand name is therefore essential to the Government's requirements. The brand name, product, and features are peculiar to one manufacturer and cannot be met, or modified to meet, the agency's needs by any other commercially available product. This determination is made in accordance with RFO 16.507-7.

5. Determination of Fair and Reasonable Cost:

I have determined the anticipated price is fair and reasonable based on:

- **Method:** Pursuant to RFO 15.404-1(b)(1), Comparison of proposed prices received in response to the Request for Task Order Quote (RFTOQ).

6. Any other facts Supporting the Justification:

Per **RFO 10.001**, market research confirming the market's limitations.

- **GSA Market Research as a Service (MRAS):** On July 9, 2026, GSA requested Product Market Research (PMR) to research the OPM Bill of Materials and manufacturer parts numbers listed for the Zendesk software suite and optional add-ons such as Copilot, Advanced Data Privacy and Protection, and premier support. Nonetheless, the PMR analysis indicated that none of the items were available through GSA Advantage.

- **OneGov & GSA MAS Findings:** On August 21, 2026, the GSA Cloud Acquisition SME within the Office of IT Products Service Center confirmed Zendesk is not in the OneGov LTO discounts. However, GSA's competitive ID/IQ for USAL Learning Licenses has a competitive pool of 4 small pre-vetted vendors that can compete for the brand name task order.

6. Actions to Remove or Overcome Barriers to Competition:

- **Pre-established Contract Vehicles:** The strategy involves beginning to conduct market research earlier to establish a viable acquisition strategy to allow for adequate competition and a potential transition.

7. Certifications:

Contracting Officer's Certification:

I hereby certify that this justification is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Prepared by GSA Contracting Officer:

Signed by:
[Redacted Signature]
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9/11/2026 | 18:38:08 BST

Date

GSA Contracting Officer:

Signed by:
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9/15/2026 | 16:02:07 BST

Date

Review/Concurrence:

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Signed by:
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9/15/2026 | 17:48:54 BST

Date

Approval Authority:

I determine that the cited exception applies to this order.

Signed by:
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9/15/2026 | 13:41:40 EDT

Date

8. Technical Requirements Certification:

I certify that the supporting data and technical rationale which form the basis for this justification, and which are the responsibility of technical or requirements personnel, are complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Technical Expert:

Signed by:
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9/11/2026 | 13:41:24 EDT

Date