

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: JAN 25 2013

From: Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (005A)

Subj: Brand Name Purchases for Network Components (7272330)

To: See List Attached

1. The VA Office of Information and Technology (OIT) is aggressively pursuing options to reduce the cost of maintaining the agency's network infrastructure. OIT is working on an effort to migrate away from proprietary protocols to open standard protocols on VA's data networks in order to increase flexibility and foster competition.
2. To this point, VA's network has been built primarily upon components of a single brand. In light of the new direction, you must receive approval from the VA Chief Information Officer (CIO) prior to initiating the information technology (IT) acquisition process for brand name purchases for any network components. This includes but is not limited to items such as routers, switches, wireless access points, modules for these devices, or any other device that operates primarily at the transport, network, or link layer and receives and re-transmits data, and their respective software components. This approval must be included as part of the IT Acquisition Request System (ITARS) submission in order to obtain ITARS approval.
3. To obtain VA CIO approval for purchase of brand name network products you must submit a Purchase Justification to the VA IT Acquisition Strategy mail group. The justification must include the following:
 - The specific name and part number for the product(s) being requested.
 - The quantity being requested and the cost.
 - Identification of competing products and their cost.
 - Summary of market research efforts conducted to assess competing products.
 - Justification describing how the single branded product provides the best value for fulfilling the requirement.
4. In the event that approval is granted for release of a brand name acquisition, the solicitation shall state that the government expects to see significant savings from prior purchases, and that in the event that those discounts are not offered, we reserve the right to cancel the solicitation.
5. Thank you for supporting OIT's efforts to contain IT costs by using competition to identify products that effectively meet the needs of VA users at the lowest possible costs. Questions regarding the purchase of brand name network products or the CIO approval process should be directed to Randy Brown at Randy.Brown1@va.gov or 205-943-2410.