

Request for Proposals: Helicopter Operations (RFP#2026-HELI-01)

Addendum No. 1

Issued: April 13, 2026

Questions and Answers and RFP Clarifications:

Addendum Introduction:

The recent EarthScope RFP for helicopter services is meant to help us assemble a list of qualified vendors for the remote geophysical work that we do in Alaska and the Lower 48.

This isn't a selection of a single vendor to do one large job/project, nor does it include a specific statement of work describing tasks, timeline, and location. Rather it's a general request for proposal for your helicopter services. This general qualification will last until September 30, 2030, which is the end of our current National Science Foundation award.

Once this RFP is complete, then more detailed statements of work will be submitted to qualified vendors as work arises based on time and location.

Questions and Answers:

1. Where will the project be taking place?
-The "project" mentioned is not a specific helicopter-based project out for bid, rather it is the NOTA (Network of the Americas) Project, a network of earthquake monitoring stations throughout Alaska and the Lower 48 states. The location will be specified by future SOWs.
2. When will the project be taking place?
-The period covered by this RFP will extend until September 30, 2030.
3. How many days/weeks/months/years will the project last?
-Each specific job would be defined by a SOW. The period covered by this RFP will extend until September 30, 2030.
4. How many passengers?
-Typically 1-2 field engineers on board.
5. What are we slinging?
-Items ranging from net-loads of non-hazardous batteries, to fiberglass enclosures, to drill rigs. Generally won't exceed 2000 lbs.

6. Would the helicopter be on standby ready to fly on short notice or continuously on the move for the project during the duration of the contract?

-No. Each specific job would be defined by a SOW

7. Would one operator be chosen for the entire state of Alaska and lower 48?

-No.

8. Can you provide more details on the locations you need to service?

-Throughout Alaska, select locations in WA, OR, CA, and possibly other western states.

9. What sort of helicopter are you requesting?

-Light to medium utility, e.g. Robinson R66, AS350, Bell 206 or 407, Robinson R44, etc.

10. What are your operational dates?

-The period covered by this RFP will extend until September 30, 2030.

11. Since there is a requirement for SAM enrollment and the RFP says that items will be paid on a task order, is billing through an existing federal contract? If so, our rates on federal contracts are already set.

-This procurement is not being issued under an existing federal contract or task order vehicle. While funding is federally sourced, the purchase will be made directly by EarthScope under our federally funded cooperative agreement, rather than through a federal IDIQ, GSA schedule, or other contract mechanism. As such, this will be handled as a direct commercial purchase, and federal contract rates do not apply in this case.

12. Do you have an evaluation template or format that you would like the proposal submitted?

- We do not have a specific evaluation template or required format for proposal submission. We ask that proposals be organized in accordance with the scope of work, clearly addressing each requirement and deliverable outlined. Please feel free to structure your response in a way that best presents your approach, as long as it aligns with the scope.

13. We removed the "AMD" piece in the Vendor Minimum Requirement list, that was an inadvertent addition from a previous document. This was not a reference to the OAS carding required by some federal agencies, we do not require OAS carding.

14. Best efforts to adhere to AGL minimums described in FAR 135 (example, 500 feet AGL minimum when en route to destination) AGL requirements- Part 135 minimum safe altitude requirements for helicopters are as follows. Maintain a minimum of 300 ft AGL over congested areas (i.e., populated areas) and at an altitude that allows for an emergency landing if an engine

failure occurs. If you would like us to adhere to 500ft AGL while enroute when possible we are glad to oblige. We just want to be clear about the regulations.

- Thank you for highlighting the FAR 135 section, this is indeed what the example was referring to. Please again note the “Best efforts” part. Our point of emphasis here is to increase the margin of safety during all operations in the event that the aircraft need to be “at an altitude that allows for an emergency landing if an engine failure occurs”.

15. We will always send a more than qualified pilot to perform the work. 2000hrs as a minimum requirement is not always feasible and could reduce our availability especially in Robinson helicopters. The Department of Interior which conducts all government testing of pilots has a minimum of 1500hrs. If we can reduce the total time to that benchmark it will allow us more flexibility to continue to serve your needs as we have for many years.

- We recognize and respect the benchmarks set by DOI. However, after internal review, we decided on the 2000 hour minimum and will stick with that for this RFP. We are aware that this may limit availability, but the decision was made to prioritize maintaining that cushion of extra experience, even if it means missing opportunities for our field operations.

16. What is the anticipated duration of this resulting contract award?

a. 5 years

“All other RFP components remain the same”