

Request for Proposal

Drone as a First Responder (DFR) Feasibility Study

The Northern Virginia Emergency Response System (NVERS) is seeking contract support on behalf of the Northern Virginia Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) Working Group to conduct a feasibility study and develop a recommended regional approach for a Drone as a First Responder (DFR) platform in Northern Virginia.¹

The purpose of this request for proposal is to enter a firm fix-priced contract with a qualified organization or individual to conduct a DFR feasibility study. The study and resulting detailed report should address the following aspects of implementing a DFR platform in Northern Virginia: cost, implementation strategy, infrastructure requirements, recommended deployment criteria and considerations, potential implementation challenges, best practices and lessons learned from other DFR programs, and return on investment and potential cost savings for public safety agencies.

Background and Overview

The United States and international counter-terrorism agencies have, for many years, tracked the use of drones by terrorist actors and organizations. Most recently, the wars in Ukraine and Gaza have demonstrated the ease with which commercially available drones can be weaponized to deliver damaging payloads. Unfortunately, with the proliferation of various online platforms, the tradecraft has gained international exposure. These seeds of information often lead some people to imitate or build on the designs and use them for nefarious purposes. A DFR program may help to enhance situational awareness when/if drones are used by bad actors.

Currently, Northern Virginia does not have a DFR capability. The purpose of the feasibility study is to determine an approach for implementing a regional DFR program, as well as identify initial and long-term costs.

Although a DFR can be used in a myriad of incidents, the best example is the response to highway incidents. A drone can be launched immediately after receiving the call and provide exact location and situational awareness to responding entities. A live feed from

¹ For the purpose of this study, “Northern Virginia” is defined as the City of Alexandria, Arlington County, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, and Prince William County, as well as the cities and incorporated towns within their jurisdictional boundaries.

the event can be fed to any authorized phone, tablet, or computer. The aircraft can be piloted remotely so the responding agencies can request camera positions.

This request for proposal is seeking contract support to conduct a feasibility study and develop a recommended regional approach for a DFR platform in Northern Virginia. The final document will include detailed information on the following:

1. Cost (e.g., initial equipment and personnel, as well as long-term sustainment) to implement a DFR program in Northern Virginia.
2. Implementation strategy for Northern Virginia (e.g., area coverage, response time, deployment model, etc.).
3. Infrastructure requirements for implementation in Northern Virginia (e.g., optimal locations to set up equipment, high impact locations, deployment areas to maximize potential coverage).
4. Recommended criteria or considerations for deployment in Northern Virginia (e.g., access to power, elevated locations).
5. Potential obstacles to implementation in Northern Virginia (FAA restrictions, policy requirements, etc.).
6. Best practices and lessons learned from programs implemented in other areas of the country (e.g., Montgomery County, MD; Chula Vista, CA).
7. Return on investment and potential cost savings for Northern Virginia public safety agencies (e.g., enhanced situational awareness/decision-making capacity, personnel time not spent on erroneous calls for service, wear on apparatus, fuel, responder safety, etc.).

NVERS' subject matter experts will be utilized to validate the feasibility study's outputs and ensure milestones and deliverables are being appropriately met.

Scope of Work and Technical Requirements

1. Recurring Project Planning Meetings

- a. Meet bi-weekly with project planning team members assigned by the Northern Virginia UAS Working Group to discuss project progress, needs, and direction.
- b. Collaborate with NVERS' regional partners to obtain points of contact, as needed, for established DFR programs.
- c. In coordination with the project planning team, validate project findings and direction prior to finalization of final documentation.
- d. Ensure tracking and timely follow up of action items for NVERS or planning team members arising from project planning meetings.

2. Review and Analyze DFR Program Elements

- a. Analyze program implementation costs, approaches, requirements, considerations, obstacles, best practices/lessons learned from established programs, and return on investment opportunities.
3. Prepare Written Findings and Recommendations
 - a. Contract support will coordinate with the project planning team to validate the written documents.
 - b. The documents will provide guidance and a recommended approach for establishing and implementing a DFR program in Northern Virginia. It will include content on:
 - i. Implementation Costs
 - ii. Implementation Approaches
 - iii. Implementation Considerations
 - iv. Potential Implementation Obstacles
 - v. Lessons Learned and Best Practices from Established Programs
 - vi. Potential Return on Investment
4. Submit Final Documentation
 - a. Contract support will provide a final guidance document that outlines a recommended regional approach to implementing a DFR program in Northern Virginia. This will include content related to implementation costs, approaches, requirements, considerations, obstacles, best practices/lessons learned from established programs, and return on investment opportunities.
 - b. Other final deliverables, such as a PowerPoint presentation outlining the assessment's findings, may also be requested. The audience for the presentation would be county/city leadership.

Access to References

For purposes of preparing a well-informed proposal to NVERS, prospective offerors may refer to established DFR programs previously referenced. Any additional questions can be directed to Julie Gall (Julie.Gall@nvers.org). If access to NVERS' subject matter experts or documentation is necessary, the offeror will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

Project Timeline

This contract will begin on or around June 16, 2025 and terminate on May 31, 2026. Grant funding from the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will be used to support this effort.

Minimum Proposal Elements

1. Offeror's name, address, contact information, and subcontractor companies (if applicable).
2. A detailed timeline to complete the project, and any observed obstacles to completing the work.
3. A preliminary work plan that describes the phases or segments into which the proposed project can logically be divided and performed.
 - a. This section should also contain a discussion of any changes proposed by the offeror that substantially differs from the project scope.
 - b. This section should include detailed descriptions of activities that are to occur, significant milestones, and anticipated deliverables.
4. A statement of qualifications (i.e., organizational and staff experience, references, and personnel assigned to work on this project – including subcontractors).
5. A firm fixed-price cost proposal to complete all milestones and deliverables.

Proposal Evaluation

Responsive proposals will be scored and competitively evaluated to the maximum extent practical. The contract for this project will be awarded to the responsible offeror whose proposal is most advantageous to the project, in alignment with the weighted evaluation criteria listed below.

1. Cost – 10%
2. Demonstrated understanding of the project goals and deliverables – 20%
3. Offeror qualifications and experience with similar projects – 30%
4. Proposed methodology – 20%
5. Proposed key personnel – 10%
6. Comfort with the overall proposal – 10%

Billing Requirements and Product Ownership

The successful offeror will be required to furnish all necessary data elements that compose their periodic invoices in accordance with federal reimbursement guidelines. All created products associated with this project will be the property of NVERS and the contractor may not use any deliverables in the future without the expressed written consent of NVERS. Additionally, the successful offeror will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) prior to beginning work on the project.

Proposal Submission

An electronic copy of the proposal must be sent to Julie Gall (Julie.Gall@nvers.org), no later than Friday, June 6, 2025. Offerors may direct questions to the above-listed email address during the application period.