

Off-Range Pasture Solicitation FAQs Updated 8/18/15

Why does the BLM have off-range pastures?

Under the authority of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages and protects wild horses and burros while working to ensure that population levels are in balance with other public rangeland resources and uses. Wild horses and burros have virtually no natural predators and can double in population every four years.

The current free-roaming population of BLM-managed wild horses and burros is estimated to be 58,150, as of March 1, 2015, which exceeds by more than 31,000 the number determined by the BLM to be the appropriate management level for the animals. The BLM is using population growth suppression (PGS) measures, and is supporting research to improve existing and develop new PGS tools to better control population growth on the range. As of July 2015, there were more than 30,000 wild horses being cared for in off-range pastures.

What is an off-range pasture solicitation?

An off-range pasture solicitation is the mechanism used by the BLM to request interested parties to submit a proposal that demonstrates they can provide a free-roaming environment for wild horses removed from Western public lands. If the proposal is accepted, a contract may be awarded to do business with the Federal government, in this case the BLM.

What are the general requirements for an off-range pasture contract?

The general purpose of the contract is to continue the maintenance of the federally protected animals, removed from Western public lands, in pastures large enough to allow free-roaming behavior. To meet the general requirements of the contract, the contractor shall provide all necessary land, food, water, facilities, personnel and supplies necessary to maintain the wild horses in good condition. The contractor must provide humane care for a one-year period, with a renewal option under BLM contract for a four-year or nine-year period. The BLM may require one or two public and/or media tours hosted by BLM staff and the contractor during the life of the contract.

Which states can apply to off-range pasture solicitation?

Historically, the states in the Great Plains Region have a higher chance of meeting the targeted specifications for the contract, such as the following states: Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming. However, the BLM makes a final determination of which states the solicitation will cover before each solicitation is announced.

What are the steps in applying to an off-range pasture solicitation?

Applicants who have never conducted business with the government must first obtain a Duns and Bradstreet number at www.dnb.com before registering at www.sam.gov/ to complete the initial process. The System for Award Management (SAM) is the official U.S. government system that consolidated the capabilities of Central Contractor Registration (CCR), Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA), and Excluded Parties List System (EPLS). There is no fee involved for either step. Once both steps are completed, you are ready to apply to the solicitation.

Where would I locate an off-range pasture solicitation?

When the BLM is actively soliciting for proposals, the announcement is posted to blm.gov and announced through various media/advertising outlets. Once announced, you would follow these steps: (1) go to www.fedconnect.net; (2) click on “Search Public Opportunities”; (3) under Search Criteria, select “Reference Number”; (4) put in the solicitation number “XXXXXXXXXX”(each solicitation has its own unique number and will be listed in the announcement.) ; and (5) click Search” and the solicitation information will appear. The solicitation form describes what to submit and where to send it.

For further assistance, visit the BLM’s Financial Assistance page. If you are located in Oklahoma, you can also check out the Oklahoma Bid Assistance Network (OBAN) website at www.okbid.org. If you are located in Kansas, you can check out Kansas PTAC (Procurement Technical Assistance Center.) Both organizations provide free assistance for some of the requirements that have to be met to solicit a proposal and provide links to current government solicitations.

What are some of the specific requirements that must be met for consideration?

(Refer to “General Services” section of the solicitation for a complete list of the requirements.)

1. Provide land, forage, salt, minerals, water, and fences necessary to properly care for and maintain a minimum of 100 up to a maximum of 5,000 wild horses (based on what the applicant is proposing).
2. Pastures, or combination of pastures, shall be of sufficient size to allow horse’s freedom of movement and the ability to exercise for good health, natural hoof trimming, and to continue their free-roaming behavior.
3. Pastures must be capable of producing sufficient standing forage for a period of at least 8 months or longer. Supplemental feeding may need to occur for a period of up to 4 months. Contractor must also provide supplemental feed as necessary to maintain the horses in good condition (i.e. during periods of drought, deep snow, ice storms, fire, during times when the forage is depleted of protein content or when other circumstances warrant).
4. Pastures should have sufficient rock and soil type to maintain proper hoof size and shape without trimming. In situations where pastures do not have sufficient rock and soil type, horses will have to have their feet trimmed by the contractor (a chute will be provided).
5. Perimeter fences shall be a minimum of 48” in height and completely enclose the facility and shall be of barbed wire. All division fences shall consist of four strands of barbed wire or other acceptable fencing materials. In some areas, wildlife-friendly fences will need to be constructed. The need for modification of any existing fences or the construction of any new fences to meet wildlife-friendly guidelines will be identified as mitigation during the BLM’s Environmental Assessment (EA) process. The one constant is that the height of the fencing shall not be any lower than 48”. Gates, rather than cattle guards, should be used at all road crossings or fence openings to keep horses in pastures.
6. Provide corrals and adequate facilities to load and unload wild horses on an as-needed basis.
7. **Any land that is included in the proposal must be privately owned lands owned by the offeror or controlled by the offeror for a period of time no less than the contract period. The offered lands cannot include unfenced public lands; therefore, Forest Service or BLM lands may NOT be included in the proposal. If any unfenced public lands are located within the privately owned or controlled lands, the public lands must be fenced out.**



Is there anyone that can assist me in developing the proposal?

The BLM is aware of two companies, but you may google the internet to see if you can find additional sources. The BLM does not endorse any company, but the following two companies have provided us with permission to release their names: 1. Fed Biz Solutions, Inc., Attn: Dale Wells, 970-660-7100/303-895-8822 www.FedBiz-si.com; 2. Reba Payne, 405-401-9718, rebap@allegiance.tv

If you are located in Oklahoma, you can also check out the Oklahoma Bid Assistance Network (OBAN) website at www.okbid.org. They provide free assistance for some of the requirements that need to be met to solicit a proposal. If you are located in Kansas, you can check out Kansas PTAC(Procurement Technical Assistance Center.) Both organizations provide free assistance for some of the requirements that have to be met to solicit a proposal.

How many off-range pasture contracts are awarded per solicitation?

The number of contracts awarded by the BLM is based on the number of acceptable proposals received and number of animals each proposal can accommodate to meet the BLM's current needs, without exceeding the budget.

What does the BLM pay a contractor to hold horses on an off-range pasture?

The applicant must submit a business plan that supports the dollar amount needed per head/day to conduct business with the government. The BLM cannot provide a suggested rate, but the average rate is \$1.85/head/day, as of August, 2015.

Does the BLM visit the property before making a decision?

Yes. If your proposal meets the BLM's needs, several BLM technical experts will complete an on-site visit before making a final recommendation to award a contract. Additionally, throughout the contract's period of performance, a BLM contract specialist will be your immediate point of contact, and he/she will closely monitor your performance for compliance.

If awarded a contract, when does BLM begin shipping horses?

The BLM begins shipping animals to an off-range pasture only after the offered property meets the minimum requirements outlined in the contract specifications together with any mitigation or additional requirements identified in the BLM's Environmental Assessment (EA.) Shipment of animals to the off-range corral normally occurs within 120-150 calendar days from the date of award. No payments are made until after animals are received at the pasture and have resided there for one month.

If awarded a contract, how many horses are shipped?

Horses are typically shipped 34-36 animals at a time using a semi-truck and trailer. Contractor will need to be able to offload horses using a loading chute. Access to the off-range pasture should be on all-weather road. A BLM representative will coordinate all loads prior to arrival at the off-range pasture.

Each awarded contract will receive all mares or all geldings. The BLM does not ship a mix of genders to any contractor to reduce the chance of any additional animals born in captivity. However, the contracts that receive all mares will have to wean some foals during the first year. The BLM does not do a pregnancy check on mares removed from the range.

What is the standard payment timeframe for an off-range pasture contractor?

Each contractor keeps track of the number of horses on the off-range pasture and invoices the BLM once a month. After approval of the invoice, funds are distributed on a monthly basis.

How do I find out when the BLM is soliciting for additional off-range pasture contracts?

The BLM posts all solicitations on the official Government-wide Point of Entry (GPE) portal at www.fbo.gov and www.fedconnect.net. Once a solicitation is posted, a press release/announcement is posted at www.blm.gov and through media outlets. Advertising is procured based on budget availability.

You can also check out the Oklahoma Bid Assistance Network (OBAN) website at www.okbid.org. They post all government contract solicitations.

How many off-range pastures are currently under contract with the BLM?

The BLM has more than 20 off-range pasture contracts that range in size from 1,000 acres up to 35,000 acres; the average size is 20,000 acres. The pastures are currently located in Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and South Dakota. There are more than 30,000 wild horses living in the current off-range pastures. They were gathered from one of nine Western states: California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, or Wyoming. There are no off-range pastures for wild burros.

What are the BLM's current population numbers on and off the range?

Per population estimates as of March 1, 2015, the BLM estimates that 58,150 wild horses and burros (about 47,329 horses and 10,821 burros) are roaming on BLM-managed rangelands in 10 Western states. That means the current West-wide on-range population exceeds the appropriate management level (AML) by 31,435. There are an additional 46,492 wild horses and burros being cared for in the BLM's off-range pastures and corrals, as of August, 2015.

Why does the BLM continue to remove animals from the range?

Under the authority of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, as amended, the BLM manages and protects wild horses and burros on western public lands while working to ensure that population levels are in balance with other public rangeland resources and uses. The BLM removes animals from the range to control the size of herds, which have virtually no natural predators and double in population every four years. The BLM attempts to place animals removed from the range into good private care. For animals that are not placed into private care remain in holding, the BLM is seeking high quality, lower cost holding space.

What health care does the BLM provide to wild horses before shipping to off-range pastures?

When wild horses are removed from the range, they are shipped to an off-range corral for an overall health inspection by a veterinarian. They are also vaccinated, dewormed, freeze marked, tested for EIA, and aged. A health and gather history is created for each animal and entered into the BLM's national database for tracking until the animal is adopted, sold, or dies.

In the case of wild horses shipping from an off-range corral to an off-range pasture, a four-digit hip freeze mark is added to assist in visual tracking by the BLM compliance inspectors and contractors.

What health care does the BLM expect for the wild horses after arrival to off-range pastures?

In the event a wild horse is observed to have a health issue, unless it is impacting the quality of life, the BLM expects the contractor to leave the horse alone to heal naturally as it does in the wild. In the case of a health issue that impacts the animal's quality of life, the animal will be evaluated consistent with BLM policy.

What is the life expectancy of wild horses living on off-range pastures?

The horses may live up to 30-plus years of age. Wild horses that are six years old or older may live out the rest of their lives on an off-range pasture.

Are population growth suppression measures used on the off-range pastures?

All wild horses that go to off-range pastures live in non-reproducing herds. Prior to shipment, all males are gelded. The mares and geldings are kept in separate pasture contracts to prevent possible reproduction. If mares are pregnant upon arrival, they will foal in the large off-range pastures. After the foals are weaned, they are shipped to off-range corrals for placement in the adoption program.

In July, 2015, the BLM announced plans to initiate 21 research projects aimed at developing new tools for managing healthy horses and burros on healthy rangelands, including safe and effective ways to slow the population growth rate of the animals and reduce the need to remove animals from the public lands.

The BLM will work with leading university and U.S. Geological Survey scientists to develop tools that will better enable it to manage wild horses and burros on the range and reduce the need for off-range pastures and corrals. Scientists working on these projects will pursue the development of safe and humane on-range management techniques, including BLM's priority to develop longer lasting fertility-control vaccines, as well as methods for spaying and neutering wild horses. The BLM anticipates the total cost of the university and USGS projects to be \$11 million over 5 years.

How do I obtain general information about the BLM's Wild Horse & Burro Program?

You may visit BLM's Website at www.blm.gov or phone 866-468-7826 or e-mail wildhorse@blm.gov. You can also follow the program on [Facebook](#) to read about great success stories and updates on the program.

