

NOTICE INFORMATION

Agency/Office:
National Institutes of Health

Location,
National Cancer Institute, Office of Acquisitions

Title:
Enhancements and Support of the Automated Self-Administered 24 Hour Dietary Recall (ASA24)

Description(s):

This Small Business Sources Sought Notice (SBSS) is for information and planning purposes only and shall not be construed as a solicitation or as an obligation on the part of the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

THERE IS NOT A SOLICITATION AVAILABLE. THIS IS STRICTLY MARKET RESEARCH.

The purpose of this SBSS is to IDENTIFY QUALIFIED SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS including Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDB), Women-owned Small Business (WOSB), Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) Small Business, Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB), 8(a) Small Business, and Service-Disabled Veteran-owned Small Business (SDVOSB) that are interested in and capable of performing the work described herein. Small Businesses whose size classification relative to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code #541990 may consider responding to this notice. Your responses to the information requested will assist the Government in determining the appropriate acquisition method, including whether a set-aside is possible. An organization that is not considered a small business under the applicable NAICS code should not submit a response to this notice. The NCI does not intend to award a contract on the basis of responses nor otherwise pay for preparation of any information submitted.

Enhancements and Support of the Automated Self-Administered 24-Hour Dietary Recall (ASA24), a project within the Applied Research Program (ARP), Risk Factor Monitoring and Methods Branch (RFMMB), Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences (DCCPS), National Cancer Institute (NCI) is seeking capability statements from all eligible Small Businesses as stated above, under NAICS Code #541990 (All Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services) with a size standard of \$7,000,000 per annum.

The NCI, ARP/RFMMB is seeking support in maintaining and enhancing the ASA24, a web-based self-administered 24-hour dietary recall system freely available to clinicians and researchers. To perform the requirements of the project, the Contractor must possess sufficient technical and operational capabilities necessary for updating the question/food and food, nutrient, and dietary supplement databases on a yearly or bi-annual basis; identifying and fixing software bugs; completing scalability testing and adjustment; providing user support; creating a system for monitoring/tracking software versions and studies using the software; and performing software enhancements.

Summary of Project: The purpose of the anticipated requirement is to provide support and enhancement to the ASA24 System. The Contractor must be able to complete tasks in the following areas:

- **Update, Maintain, and Provide User Support for the ASA24 System.** The Contractor shall update and maintain the ASA24 system, including Researcher and Respondent User software and

Websites, to reflect the most current, up-to-date Automated Multiple Pass Method (AMPM) used in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). Access to the most current, up-to-date version of AMPM will be provided to the Contractor by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Contractor shall perform technical tasks including, but not limited to the analysis of AMPM data to determine the frequency with which probes are used and how a sequence of probes links to food codes, modification of wording to be user friendly consistent with the current ASA24 system, and the update or transfer of new foods and questions/probes into the ASA24 system. Updates to all food, nutrient and supplement databases and associated question sets and analytic programs will be required. In addition, the Contractor shall also update all downloadable and web-based content on the ASA24 system, including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and documentation of analytic programs for nutrients, food groups, supplements, and other data elements to reflect user feedback and the current updated version of the ASA24 Respondent and Researcher software. Finally, the Contractor shall provide user support by tracking and responding to user issues, concerns, and questions.

- **ASA24 Administration and Versioning.** In addition to maintaining the existing system capability of assigning roles and deleting Users, the Contractor shall create a tool or system to track, maintain, and manage usage of multiple versions of the ASA24 System. This tool should allow current users to maintain the status quo or upgrade to the most current version, based on preference. Versions may differ based on updates to nutrient/food group/supplement databases, updates to the Graphic User Interface (GUI), and updates for a country-specific version.
- **Enhancements of the ASA24 Respondent Website.** In addition to maintaining the existing system, the Contractor shall add new features to the GUI including the addition of more animation/movement to the existing animated agent to better guide respondents. The Contractor shall also create at least two additional agent characters to add interest to the software, and shall develop new tutorial and help systems. Updates to the search system are required, as is a thorough review and update of the existing food list used for browsing, to improve usability. Additional features that require development are the addition of a “Favorites” function allowing Respondent Users to create a list of foods they designate as commonly consumed that would be available to them upon subsequent administrations of ASA24), upon, and adaptations for children.
- **Enhancement of the ASA24 Researcher Website.** The ASA24 System includes a website to register Researcher Users. The Contractor will be responsible for improving the process for registering studies, including the import of files, validation of import files, the generation of passwords for Respondent Users, and the creation of study-specific logos. The Contractor shall also improve the display for respondent tracking, sorting of respondent identifiers, analytic modules for nutrients, food groups and supplements, and provide options for automated reports and updates for Researcher Users. The Contractor shall also provide ongoing support and trouble shooting for Researcher Users and shall continuously monitor all websites and website documents to be up-to-date and accurate.
- **General/Administrative Tasks.** The Contractor shall plan to attend all meetings, manage the costs and deliverables for the contract and document all software and website specifications, including a log of changes, updates and decisions. All source code would need to be available to the Government within 2 weeks of any request.

The Contractor may also be required to complete the following additional tasks:

- Explore and develop a reprogrammed GUI for the Respondent Website;

- Develop a Canadian version of ASA24 that includes modifications of food probes and databases specific to a Canadian population;
- Explore and develop specifications to create a version of the ASA24 Respondent Website that is accessible on a “smart phone” for use in research and potentially by members of the general public to obtain information about their diets;
- Develop a version of ASA24 Respondent Website that is accessible on a “smart phone” for use in research and potentially by members of the general public to obtain information about their diets;
- Add a feature on the ASA24 Respondent Website to allow respondents to report recipes and their intakes of foods made from these recipes for all ASA24 System versions; and
- Create an application on the ASA24 Researcher Website by which researchers can create customizable reports in both the Spanish and English languages to send to their Respondent Users.

DURATON: It is anticipated that the project will be completed in 60 months. Additionally, the NCI may reserve the right to exercise two options years, which would extend the period of performance by an additional 12 or 24 months.

CAPABILITY CRITERIA: Capabilities will be judged based on the following criteria:

- 1) **Understanding the Problem:** The development and use of self-reported dietary assessment is an important, active research area. Demonstration of knowledge of the complexities of various methods, available data systems and how they might be operationalized in a self-reported dietary software system requiring constant updating and versioning is necessary. Finally, demonstration of an understanding of the interactions among large and complex databases, web-services and GUI interfaces is essential.
- 2) **Technical Approach:** The tasks for the procurement are primarily technical. Therefore, a capability statement should include a broad description of technical approaches that the Contractor is capable of undertaking to update, improve, maintain, track and further develop the ASA24 System and its versions.
- 3) **Personnel:** The Contractor will be required to provide the necessary support staff to carry out all aspects of the work described above, such as a Project Manager/Programmer, a Senior Systems Manager/Programmer, a Senior Nutritionist, a Senior Flex Programmer, and a Junior Flex Programmer. A Project Manager/Programmer should have at least five years experience directing and conducting work related to software system planning, development, security, management decision systems, and trouble shooting. A Senior Systems Analyst/Programmer should have at least five years experience in managing, manipulating, and organizing dietary databases including food and nutrient databases and dietary probe databases. He or she should be knowledgeable about the United States Department of Agriculture’s Automated Multiple Pass Method (AMPM), Food and Nutrient Database for Dietary Studies (FNDDS), and My Pyramid Equivalent’s Database (MPED), as well as the National Center for Health Statistics’ National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) supplement database. A Senior Flex Programmer should have at least five years experience in programming GUI Flex applications, troubleshooting problems in Flex, and creating 508 compliant software applications for the Respondent and Researcher GUI Flex applications. A Junior Flex Programmer should have at least two to three years experience in Flex programming and should assist the Senior Flex Programmer in creating and trouble shooting on the Respondent and Researcher User Flex applications.
- 3) **Corporate Experience and Resources:** In addition to individual personnel experience and resources, the Contractor should have corporate knowledge and experience in: a) designing nutritional intake or web-related software that includes large and complex databases, and web-services; b) using dietary assessment tools in all types of dietary research; c) using AMPM, FNDDS, MPED, and the NHANES supplement database; d) using Microsoft.Net, Adobe Flex, Sequel databases, and web services for web-based software;

and, e) designing creative and engaging user-friendly web-based or other software to be used by research subjects or the general public.

Interested qualified small business organizations should submit a capability statement, not to exceed 15 total single-spaced pages using a 12 point font size at a minimum, that clearly details the ability to perform and that addresses the specific requirements described above. All proprietary information should be marked as such. Statements should also include an indication of current certified small business status; this indication should be clearly marked on the first page of your capability statement (preferably placed under the eligible small business concern's name and address). Responses will be reviewed only by NIH personnel and will be held in a confidential manner.

Disclaimer and Important Notes: This notice does not obligate the Government to award a contract or otherwise pay for the information provided in response. The Government reserves the right to use information provided by respondents for any purpose deemed necessary and legally appropriate. Any organization responding to this notice should ensure that its response is complete and sufficiently detailed to allow the Government to determine the organization's qualifications to perform the work. Respondents are advised that the Government is under no obligation to acknowledge receipt of the information received or provide feedback to respondents with respect to any information submitted. After a review of the responses received, a pre-solicitation synopsis and solicitation may be published in Federal Business Opportunities. However, responses to this notice will not be considered adequate responses to a solicitation.

Confidentiality: No proprietary, classified, confidential, or sensitive information should be included in your responses. The Government reserves the right to use any non-proprietary technical information in any resultant solicitation(s).

All capability statements sent in response to this SMALL BUSINESS SOURCES SOUGHT notice must be submitted electronically (via email) to Kristen Ratcliff, Contract Specialist at kristen.ratcliff@nih.gov either in MS Word, Wordperfect or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) not later than Friday, April 2, 2010, 3:30 PM EST. All responses must be received by the specified due date and time in order to be considered. **ANY RESPONSES RECEIVED AFTER THAT DATE AND TIME WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**