

Sources Sought Notice

This is a Small Business Sources Sought notice. This is **NOT** a solicitation for proposals, proposal abstracts, or quotations. The purpose of this notice is to obtain information regarding: (1) the availability and capability of qualified small business sources; (2) whether there are small businesses; HUBZone small businesses; service-disabled sources; veteran-owned small businesses; 8(a) small businesses; veteran owned small businesses; woman-owned small businesses; or small disadvantaged business; and (3) their size classification relative to North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code for the proposed acquisition. 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.**

A determination by the Government not to compete this requirement as a set-aside based upon responses to this notice is solely within the discretion of the Government.

Interest parties are expected to review this notice and the draft Statement of Work to familiarize them with the requirement of this project; failure to do so will be at your firm's own risk.

Background:

The NCI Animal Production Program (APP), administered by BTB, within DTP is responsible for supplying genetically defined inbred rodents to the many NIH/NCI research efforts. This includes NIH campus, research contractors, collaborators and grantees. These rodents must be monitored to insure they are genetically identical. This allows investigators to duplicate research and use rodents identical to the ones used previously. It allows for consistent research results. The baseline genetic profiles have been developed for each inbred NCI strain and will be compared to all future test results to insure there is no genetic drift in the foundation colonies.

Purpose and Objectives:

The purpose of this Small Business Sources Sought Notice is to identify qualified small business concerns including HUBZone small businesses; service disabled, veteran-owned small businesses; 8(a) small businesses; women-owned small businesses; or small disadvantaged businesses that are interested in and capable of performing the work described herein. The NCI does not intend to award a contract on the basis of responses received nor otherwise pay for the preparation of any information received.

As a result of this SBSS notice, the NCI may issue a Request for Proposal (RFP). THERE IS NO SOLICITATION AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME. However, should such a requirement materialize, no basis for claim against the NCI shall arise as a result of a response to this Small Business Sources Sought Notice or the NCI's use of such information as either part of our evaluation process or in developing specification for any subsequent requirement.

If a RFP is issued, the NCI anticipates multiple awards may result from the issuance of the RFP.

Project Requirements:

The contractor shall supply all labor, materials, equipment, facilities supplies, not otherwise provided by the Government under the terms of this contract, to perform the following tasks:

1. Monitor the genetic background of the mice and rats with a DNA-based testing method that utilizes DNA microsatellites. Simple sequence length polymorphisms (SSLPs) or microsatellites are DNA regions containing di-, tri- or tetra-nucleotide repeats that are found randomly yet abundantly throughout the genome. The number of these repeats is highly polymorphic among different strains of mice and rats allowing them to serve as genetic markers that can distinguish between DNA derived from different strains. In addition, microsatellites can be quickly and efficiently assayed by PCR-based approaches making them a highly effective tool for genetic monitoring. A multiplexed panel of microsatellite markers, shown to be polymorphic among a number of strains, was used to create unique strain specific genetic profiles. DNA from each animal in the foundation colony is analyzed with this panel of microsatellites to generate an animal-specific genetic profile that is then compared to the established genetic profile for the strain and/or colony. This type of regular monitoring allows detection of deviations from the established strain profile that have occurred in individual animals.

2. Perform validation and verification of genetic background on approximately 2000 rodents, 18 inbred mice and 1 inbred rat strain as scheduled by the Project Officer. Samples will be furnished by the government at no charge to the contractor and sent at a rate of approximately 50 to 200 samples per week.

All animals will be tested year 3 of the contract. Contract years 1, 2, 4 and 5 samples will be submitted as needed to screen strains with abnormal coat color, change in production and other changes that justify testing.

3. All testing results shall be reported to the Project Officer electronically or in writing as accumulated with a maximum turn-around time of 3 weeks. Results that deviant from the expected shall be reported to the Project Officer immediately by telephone or e-mail. The format for reports will be approved by the Project Officer.

4. Create unique strain-specific genetic profiles using a multiplexed panel of microsatellite markers, shown to be polymorphic among a number of strains. For all inbred mice and rats new to the NCI Animal Production Program (APP).

5. Perform back-up methods of testing utilizing biochemical markers and skin grafts as requested by the Project officer.

6. In SCID mice, it has been documented that increased microsatellite instability occurs due to the nature of the SCID mutation. Therefore genetic monitoring in strains that carry the SCID mutation is done by single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) analysis and gene-specific genotyping for the SCID mutation. Similar to the microsatellite analysis, a panel of SNPs is used to generate a strain-specific genetic profile and the genetic profiles of individual animals are compared to this strain profile to look

for deviations. The gene-specific genotyping assay to confirm the presence of the SCID mutation will be performed on approximately 300 samples. Samples will be furnished by the government at no charge to the contractor and sent at a rate of approximately 50 to 200 samples per week. All animals will be tested year 3 of the contract. Contract years 1, 2, 4 and 5 samples will be submitted as needed to screen strains with abnormal coat color, change in production and other changes that justify testing.

Anticipated Period of Performance:

The period of performance for this requirement is five (5) years, consisting of a one year base period, and four one-year options. The anticipated start date is on or about January 10, 2013.

Other Important Considerations:

A copy of the draft Statement of Work (SOW), which is subject to revisions, may be accessed on the NCI Officer of Acquisitions Website at <http://rcb.nci.nih.gov/> . Once there, click on Current Requests for Proposals.

NAICS Code and Size Standard:

In event an RFP is issued, the NAICS code is 541940 and a size standard of \$7 million dollars

Capability Statement/Information Sought:

Tailored capability statements shall demonstrate a clear understanding of all tasks specified in the draft SOW, to include document understanding of the multi-step preparation sequences as outlined in the draft SOW. Tailored Capability Statements for this requirement shall also address the following areas:

- A. Personnel
 - 1. Extent of experience and expertise of the Principal Investigator in the narrow field of rodent genetic testing.
 - 2. Demonstrate experience and ability of staff members to perform DNA-based methods, skin grafting and biochemical procedures.
- B. Facilities and Equipment
 - 1. Adequacy of the facility and equipment for performance of this contract.
- C. Technical Approach
 - 1. Adequacy of proposed procedures for applying and interpreting results.
 - 2. Suitability of proposed procedures for completing the testing and reporting within the prescribed turn-around time.

D. Organizational Experience and Expertise

1. Record of successful performance in rodent genetic testing procedures at the level and quantity required by the RFP.

Information Submission Instructions:

1. **Page Limitations:** Interest qualified small business organizations should submit a tailored capability statement for this requirement not to exceed twenty-four (24) single-sided pages including all attachments, resumes, charts, etc. (single spaced, 12 point font minimum) that clearly details the firm's ability to perform the aspects of the notice described above and in the draft SOW. Tailored capability 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) as well as the eligible small business concern's name, point of contact, address and DUNS number. All pages must be numbered including attachments, resumes, charts, etc.

2. **Deliver Point:**

All capability statements sent in response to this Small Business Sources Sought notice must be submitted electronically (via email) to Heidi Crawley, Contracting Officer at crawleyha@mail.nih.gov in MS Word or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). The subject line must specify HHS-NIH-NCI-SBSS-TSB-37001-05. Facsimile responses will not be accepted.

3. **Common Cut-Off Date:**

Electronically submitted tailor capability statements are due no later than 2:00 PM (Eastern Prevailing Time) on Friday April 6, 2012. CAPABILITY STATEMENTS RECEIVED AFTER THIS DATE AND TIME WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

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 organizations 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 notice 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 response. The Government reserves the right to use any non-proprietary technical information in any resultant solicitation(s).