



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
(RFP) NO.:
TITLE:
DATE RFP ISSUED:

AMENDMENT NO. 01
NIMH-02-SS-0003
"NIMH Information Support Center"
April 5, 2002

DATE AMENDMENT
NO. 01 ISSUED:

May 14, 2002

CONTACT PERSON:

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PROPOSAL RECEIPT DATE:

The due date for receipt of this proposal is hereby CHANGED from May 20, 2002 to a revised due date of June 3, 2002, no later than 4:00 PM local prevailing time.

PROPOSALS NOW DUE:

JUNE 3, 2002, no later than 4:00 PM local prevailing time

To all Offerors: The purpose of this amendment is to provide additional information and clarification to the offerors in a question and answer format and revise the due date for receipt of proposals. Please note that some questions received by offerors have been re-phrased for clarity. Further, where questions are repeated, in some cases, they may only be addressed once in this amendment to avoid repeated duplication of information.

RFP No NIMH-02-SS-0003

1. What systems does the IDMS system have to interface with?

SQL 2000 server

2. Are these timeframes for deploying this system final, or would the NIMH be willing to work with the contractor to develop more realistic timeframes? If not, would the NIMH be willing to take a phased approach to deploying the systems?

The awardee must be able to take, respond, and track inquiries, inventory, and provide required report(s), etc. within the time frame provided in the Request for Proposal (RFP). An automated system will not be provided. NIMH is willing to take a phased approach providing the above is accomplished and operational as Contractor takes over the inquiries response and inventory.

3. Will NIMH allow site visits prior to proposal submission?

Site visits are not being offered at this time.

4. Will the contractor have access to existing systems, including the current contractors, to assist in the design of the IDMS system?

The existing system is inadequate and a replacement system is required.

5. pg.7, Task 1 requires that "the Contractor shall develop, test, implement, enhance and maintain integrated web-based, multi-user, database systems with user friendly interfaces" for the key features of the IDMS. Option Item one (1) indicates that a separate proposal and cost estimate is to be provided if the Contractor already has such systems as described and proposes to use or adapt these systems to meet NIMH requirements. This approach prevents contractors with existing operational systems that meet the stated requirements to propose their best offer and price in terms of meeting the requirements of this performance based service contract. Under the present RFP guidelines, a contractor would be penalized for offering an existing, but responsive system. Will the Contracting Officer please revise the requirement to permit Contractors to propose their existing systems and any needed adaptations as part of their base proposal?

NIMH requires a new system for the NIMH Information Center. Offerors have the option of proposing: 1) the development of a new system, or 2) an existing operational system (and any needed adaptations) that will meet the requirement as stated in the RFP. A contractor would not be penalized for offering an existing system, but in fact can possibly assume a cost savings if a new system does not need to be developed.

6. pg. 13, the RFP states that the contractor is to manage and update the Institute's fax back system, FaxFacts by Copia Int'l. Is it acceptable to propose an alternate, existing system that offers the same and more functionality than FaxFacts?

Yes, however the NIMH faxback system operates with the user incurring the telephone charges. The fax response is returned on the users initiated call. NIMH requires that this function be maintained.

7. The RFP includes four options for additional services and instructs that individual proposals be prepared for each of the options. Will the government accept the option item proposals to be included within the body of the technical proposal, but separately marked and identified; i.e., in a separate tab labeled by option item number?

Yes.

8. Who is the incumbent contractor?

The CDM Group, Inc.
5530 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1600
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815
(301)654-6740
Contract Number: NO1MH70006
Current expiration date is September 30, 2002

9. Is the incumbent eligible to bid as prime contractor under the small business size standard established of \$6 million?

No.

10. What is the current contract total value and value for the final year?

We are unable to offer this information via this amendment, and further note that this information would not be useful guidance for the offeror in putting together their budget for this follow-on effort.

11. Please provide a list of bidders.

This information is not currently available. We will not have a final list of bidders until the proposals are received.

12. Is there any text missing at the bottom of page 18 (Subtask 5f) or just a missing period?

Missing period.

13. Subtask 4c, Distribution Services. Is the contractor responsible for conducting the 15 special mailings or do they go through DC ARC with the contractor's QC Specialist providing spot-checking?

DC ARC will do these mailings with QC provided by Contractor.

14. Will the contractor conduct the mailing of the information packets or is it done by DC ARC?

DC ARC will be responsible for 90-95% of all mailings. Information packet mailings resulting from the Institute's 800 number system with the Census Bureau's NPC will be accomplished by DC ARC with QC provided by Contractor.

15. Task 12, Exhibit Support. For estimating purposes, please provide the expected duration of each of the 15 exhibit shows to be supported by the contractor.

Task 12 requires an exhibit coordinator only who will work with an existing logistics contractor. Option item 4, if exercised, would require attendance at approximately 15 meetings, usually 2 to 4 days for each.

16. For how many exhibits and what size (e.g., portable, tabletop, floor model) will the contractor be responsible? Will there be any ancillary exhibit equipment (e.g., computers, continuous loop videos, podiums)?

There are currently 2 large floor exhibits 8 x 10 and 3 tabletop exhibits. Two to 3 additional exhibits may be provided by the NIMH. Large exhibits are usually put up by on-site contractors. Other equipment may be used at some exhibits, such as a VCR or computer, rented or provided by the NIMH.

17. Where will the exhibit structures be stored?

Exhibits are stored at the NIMH. Contractor should have ability to hold structures for several days between shipments/meetings if necessary.

18. Will the current Procedures Manual transfer to the new contractor?

No

19. Will current standard and custom responses transfer to the new contractor?

Yes

20. For what telephone-related expenses is the contractor responsible (e.g., long distance, toll-free service, etc.)?

301-443-4513, the 800 number 877-9MHEALTH, and FAX4U 301-443-5158 and TTY 301-443-8431 are billed directly to the NIMH. Contractor will bill for other lines needed for daily business and contact with NIMH Project Officer. Additional 800#s may be added during course of the contract, billed directly to NIMH.

21. Reference: A.General, IV, Personnel and Staffing. Page 37 of the SOW states that "Proposals will be evaluated on the extent to which the offeror demonstrates the availability of experienced and qualified personnel or staff, and through subcontracting or consulting arrangements, with the appropriate expertise."

Please provide the list(s) for:

a. Vendors and individual professionals who provide expertise and/or consultation to NIMH on mental illness and behavioral disorders. Vendors and individual professionals who provide expertise and/or consultation to NIMH on NIMH missions and programs, research, clinical studies, education programs, grant funding programs, causation (risk factors), prevention, epidemiology and statistics, intervention, symptom detection and diagnosis.

It is the responsibility of the Offeror to identify and propose personnel to meet the needs of this contract.

b. Researchers and others who are registered with NIMH and are interested in prevention and treatment, state-of-the-art articles, and experts in particular areas, health disparities, rural mental health, and services research and evidence based interventions.

It is the responsibility of the Offeror to identify and propose personnel to meet the needs of the Information Center.

c. Vendors and professionals who have requested this solicitation.

This information is unavailable.

22. Given the number of questions and the estimated time required to incorporate the Government's response into our proposal, we request a four week delay in proposal submission from the date the questions are answered by the Government.

A four week delay is excessive.

23. The lack of detailed information in the Request for Proposals (RFP) pertaining to numerous critical or substantive technical/procedural issues heavily tilts this procurement in favor of the incumbent contractor who has the benefit of "inside knowledge" of the requirements.

See answer to question 9.

24. General – What is the current contractor staffing level (i.e., number of labor hours by labor category) being used to satisfy the NIMH requirements? What level of performance (as described in the CPAF Contract Rating Table on pg 75) is the current contractor achieving with this staffing? What award fee percentage was awarded for the last performance period?

We are unable to offer this information via this amendment. The previous contract was not a performance based contract with an award fee. Please note that this follow on contract is a performance based contract, where the offeror is assumed to have the expertise to provide the work and demonstrate their approach in their proposal, including projecting staffing needs based on their approach.

25. General – Will the contractor be required to develop (as opposed to reproduce) any of the informational materials to be distributed to NIMH clients? If so, can the Government provide any annual estimate of new materials to be developed by category (e.g., fact sheets, brochures, etc.) and size (number of pages)?

Task 6 is the only product to be developed by the Contractor that will be distributed to NIMH clients.

26. Cover letter, para. 3 – Must the offeror submit bids on all four options listed in the statement of work (SOW) (i.e., the Government has the right to accept/not accept the “option” but there is no “option” for the offeror to not bid one or more of the requested items)?

Whether or not a proposal is submitted for the four (4) option items is the offerors own business decision.

27. General Requirements, pg 4 and Subtask 13b), pg 23 – Must the offeror provide and cost everything needed to perform the requested services? Is there any Government Furnished Equipment (GFE) (e.g., existing computer hardware and software, warehouse shelving, furniture, etc.) that will be transitioned from the incumbent to the winning contractor? If so, please provide a complete and detailed list of the GFE to be provided.

The only material being transferred from the incumbent contractor will be printed materials, NIMH publication archives and reference materials, the MentalHealth Fax4U computer (a Dell Pentium Pro will be transferred pending implementation of contractor’s upgrade system which will become NIMH property), and software for MentalHealth Fax4U. The Contractor will be required to purchase a server that will become NIMH property. No furniture or shelving will be transferred.

28. Task 1, Programming and Systems Management, 1st para, pg 7 – The offeror’s responsibility appears to include “migrating data from legacy systems.” Can the Government provide a complete list of such legacy systems including their respective database systems and the type and volume of data currently in the database(s)?

NIMH Publication archives database – has multiple databases and data files. Total file size 60 MB

Mailing keys database – has over 10,000 records

Mental health resources and referral database – approximately 300 records

Boilerplates, standard language paragraphs, autoreply, on a CD/disk – over 250 WORD text files

29. Task 1, Programming and Systems Management, 2nd para, pg 7 – Can the Government provide copies of the “NIMH/NIH standards” for the required computer hardware and operating system/application software?

NIMH Standards do not exist, and so this phrase would mean “generally recognized industry standards.” The “Contractor will consult with NIMH IT staff” after award.

30. Task 1, Security, 2nd para, pg 8 – Does the Government have an “operational availability” requirement for the Inquiry and Inventory Database Management System (IDMS) – that is, a specified percentage of time that the system must be “up and operating”? Does the Government require simple “database backup” (i.e., periodic copying to alternate media with offsite storage) or is it seeking true “disaster recovery” capability (i.e., redundant hardware/software and mirrored database(s) located at a geographically dispersed alternate site)?

IDMS System(s) must be available Monday through Friday, during normal business hours, on occasion may need to be available on weekends and evenings for a media/information/education event. Transmission of labels from the NIMH 800 numbers answered by the Census Bureau, are automatically transferred at 2 am, 7 days a week. Web based Online publications ordering system must be available 24/7.

Incremental backups are run daily. Full backups are run once a week. Backup tapes and/or CDs are stored at an off-site location.

The web ordering system, which should interface with the inventory system must have redundant backup capability.

31. Option Item Four, pg 22 – Can the Government provide details that would permit costing of the required exhibit support. For example: the typical size of the contractor staff required on-site at the exhibit site, the average number of days on-site, the typical geographic distribution of the exhibit sites, the volume (cubic feet and weight) of material that must be transported to/from the exhibit site, typical requirements for exhibit space (square feet, electric power, hospitality rooms, etc.), typical conference registration or exhibitor fees, etc.

See question 15. Most exhibits require 1 contractor staff member (NIMH staff often help staff exhibits). 2–4 meetings may require 2 Contractor staff. Meetings are held throughout the entire U.S. It is anticipated that 4 to 6 are held in the Baltimore Washington area. All material is shipped in advance of meeting and number of boxes varies widely from 2 or 3 to 15 or 20, depending on size of meeting. Contractor pays directly for booth space and all related expenses. Booth costs can range from \$500 to \$3,000.

Some meetings and conferences that NIMH attends routinely each year: American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, American Academy for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, National Mental

Health Association, American Public Health Association, Anxiety Disorders Association of America.

32. Para 2.A.(10).d)(2), pg 46 – The Government “reserves the right, in special circumstances, to limit the number of proposals in the competitive range to the greatest number that will permit an efficient competition.” Can the Government define what constitutes “special circumstances” and if those “special circumstances” occur what criteria will be used to select a subset of proposals from within those judged “most highly rated”?

See FAR Subpart 15.3- Source Selection

The FAR can be searched at:

<http://www.arnet.gov/far/>

33. Para 3.a), pg 48 – Does the requirement that “all ... personnel proposed, shall not be committed ... for more than a total of 100% of their time” preclude the offeror from proposing the use of “uncompensated overtime” by its professional employees?

See FAR Subpart 37.1- Service Contracts-General and FAR Part 22- Application of Labor Laws to Government Acquisitions

34. Para 3.g), pg 49 – Can the Government provide the offeror with a copy of the “DHHS Automated Information Systems Security Program Handbook (Release 2.0) dated May 1994” cited in the RFP as a required compliance document.

Document can be found on the DHHS web site

<http://irm.cit.nih.gov/policy/aissp.html>

35. Attachment 5, Para D.1, pg 69 – The cited Article B.2 provides the offeror the ability to list both a “Fixed Fee” and “Award Fee Possible” for each Period of Performance. Can the offeror include both a fixed (base) fee plus an award fee or is the Government’s intention that only a performance-based “award fee” be included?

How the offeror proposes is their own internal business decision.

36. Attachment 5, Para D.3, pgs 72 & 75 – The 1st para of the cited Article H states that “If the rating falls below 95, the Contractor will not receive an award for the rating period.” whereas the CPAF Contract Rating Table calls for the offeror to receive an “award amount based on points earned” for point scores in the range 80.0 to 100.0. In that Table a score of 95.0 equates to “Excellent” performance. Furthermore, the Table indicates that the offeror will not earned any fee only if its score is 79.9 or less, i.e., is performing at the “Poor” level. Please clarify this inconsistency? Is it the Government’s intention that only Excellent or better performance earned any fee at all?

Page 70, item 3.Under Section H: Award Fee, change “95” to “80.”

37. Specific Requirements, 1st bullet, pg 4 and para II.B. Facilities, pg 37 – Regarding the location of the offeror’s Information Center, what is the

Government's definition (in time or distance) of "within a reasonable commuting distance" and "conveniently located near the NIMH offices in Rockville, MD"? What is the necessity of having a facility within a reasonable commuting distance?

Courier service is required twice a week or more often to pick up from and deliver materials to the NIMH Rockville location and other NIMH and NIH offices in Bethesda, Maryland. Courier makes daily runs to DC ARC office in Washington, DC. In addition, Contractor must be able to provide emergency service on 2 hours notice.

38. Specific Requirements, 3rd bullet, pg 5 – Please provide a complete list of the electronic databases to be transferred along with a description of the software application that they were originated in and their format (for data transition/conversion planning).

NIMH Publication Archive - SQL

NIMH Mailing key – MS Access

Mental Health Information Resources and Referral database - SQL

39. Specific Requirements, 6th bullet, pg 5 – Will the offeror's responsibility for the two NIMH education programs listed be limited to receiving the electronic files from the National Processing Center (NPC) for "the mailing labels and packets" and making the required distribution of information (i.e., the offeror will have no responsibility for answering the toll-free lines)?

Correct. Contractor will be responsible for transmitting labels to DC ARC for fulfillment and mailing. Contractor will provide QC.

40. Task 1, Programming and Systems Management, 3rd para, pg 7 – Other than the specified annual growth in the level of inquiries, what other requirements does the Government foresee for "expanded storage and data retrieval"?

Additional inquiries and publications as a result of the development of new campaigns, new subject areas, and possible use of additional 800 numbers.

41. Task 1, Programming and Systems Management, 4th para, pg 7 – Can the Government identify the "possible interface[s] or integration with other systems"?

See response in question 1.

42. Task 1, Programming and Systems Management, 7th para, pg 7 – Does the Government require dedicated access lines for "access by authorized staff ... from multiple locations" or will access to the contractor's system via the Worldwide Web be acceptable (with suitable security provided)?

This is a web-based system. Suitable security is to be provided.

No, we do not provide dedicated access lines to/from other locations.

43. Task 1, subpara a), pg 8 – What "online ordering system" software application is currently operating on or in conjunction with the NIMH Web site?

SQL backend

44. Task 1, subpara d), pg 8 – What software application is used to maintain the existing “mailing key lists” that must be migrated/converted to the new system?

MS Access 2000

45. Subtask 1a), 2nd para, pg 9 – Where and how often do “walk-in” inquiries occur and how are they referred to the offeror for response?

The NIMH Information Center is not promoted as a walk-in center. It is rare that the Contractor will have a walk in requestor, but on occasion a person may pass by or otherwise be aware of the contractor facility and stop in for materials.

46. Subtask 2b), 7th para, pg 12 – What is the Government’s definition of “respond to the majority of questions at the time of the initial call”? Is 51% sufficient or is a higher percentage desired?

Contractor staff with subject matter expertise and in-depth knowledge of NIMH publications and other materials is expected to be able to respond to telephone questions on the spot at least 80% of the time. Written, fax, email inquiries are to be responded to in time frame as stated in RFP.

47. FAX 4U, pg 13 and IV. Performance Measures and Standards Chart, Task 2, pg 25 – Will the existing Copia International FaxFacts software and license be transferred to the winning contractor? What is the version number of the existing software? Does the Government have a realistic “operational availability” requirement for the system? Absolute “24/7 availability” will be extremely expensive or technically impossible to achieve.

Existing software and license will be transferred. Current version is “FaxFacts FFWeb V1.69, Copyright 1997-1999 Copia International Ltd, Webster Pro Control Copyright 1995-1998, Home Page Software Inc. The current system is fax-based (pulling some documents from the NIMH web site), and functions 24/7 with labor hours necessary to maintain, add or delete documents only.

48. Task 3, Telecommunications, 5th para, pg 14 – Are ASCII format files available for all relevant publications currently in the inventory? Must the offeror provide “printing” equipment to convert the ASCII into hard media Braille copies (as opposed to direct electronic downloads)?

Current NIMH publications are available in WORD, and on NIMH web site in pdf and html formats. Offeror must be able to convert to ASCII format. NIMH has not received requests for materials in Braille to date, but offeror must have access to this capability if needed.

49. Subtask 4a), 3rd para, pg 15 – How many cubic feet of material must be stored at the offeror’s facility to provide a “two-week supply of materials on hand”?

We estimate approximately 650± cubic feet.

50. Subtask 4c), pg 16 – What is the average size, i.e., cubic feet and weight, of the bulk shipments to be shipped by and billed to the offeror? What is the average number of “time-sensitive” shipments per month and what is the typical delivery date profile (e.g., x% overnight, y% third business day, etc.)

Bulk shipments by U.S. Postal Service or sent through the NIH mailing facility are billed directly to the NIMH. Use of Fed Ex, UPS, or other service are billed to the Contractor, regardless of where shipment originates—contractor facility or DC ARC. An average of 3 to 4 time-sensitive shipments per month are anticipated to be sent the most cost effective way.

51. Task 7, pg 19 – Is there any requirement for NIMH Project Office review and approval of the customer survey plan and survey instrument(s)?

Yes. Contractor will provide plan with recommendations for 1) need, 2) required OMB clearance & forms completion/justification 3) survey questions development and tabulation/evaluation, 4) timeline for accomplishment 5) estimated costs, 6) implementation and conducting customer satisfaction survey 7) evaluation outcome report and recommendations, etc. Consideration to be given to web based vs paper/telephone survey. Contractor to coordinate with NIMH OMB Clearance Officer.

Online resources for information:

NIH Office of Evaluation - <http://www1.od.nih.gov/osp/de/>

The OMB clearance information for online surveys is
<http://www.nih.gov/od/ocpl/resources/OMBClearance/index.htm>.

52. Task 8, 1st para, pg 19 – How many pickups per week on the average are to be made to “other NIH offices on or off campus”?

3-4 are anticipated at this time

53. Subtask 11a), 3rd para, pg 21 – Based on historical data, how many hours per year of “other than Spanish” translation services are required? What are the ten most frequently encountered languages requiring translation?

Spanish translations estimated at 6 – 8 hrs weekly

Other languages encountered: Canadian French; French; Italian; Vietnamese and other Asian languages. Use of translation services can be phased in as needed.

54. IV. Performance Measures and Standards Chart, Task 1, pg 24 – “Once per month average” for “error and shut down rate” does not provide any measure of the acceptable length of the outage (i.e., mean time to repair/restore). Can the Government clarify its requirements for system reliability/maintainability/availability?

How the NIMH is perceived by the public is dependent on our ability to respond to the public in a timely fashion, requiring that all systems be operating and accessible, with little room for shut down.

Provisions for back-up is needed (see question 30) to ensure rapid access to the system.

55. IV. Performance Measures and Standards Chart, Task 1a), pg 24 – What does the performance indicator of “No manual data entries” refer to? Certainly some of the required information must be manually entered into the IDMS.

NIMH online publications ordering system on NIMH web site is to be a fully automated system. No paper trail or manual entry of orders should be necessary. However, letters, faxes, paper order forms, telephone, and email requests received might require manual entry, unless offeror proposes an automated system.

56. IV. Performance Measures and Standards Chart, Task 8, pg 26 – What is the requirement to have a performance indicator for “transportation vehicle availability” when there are already requirements on “% of on-time deliveries” in the three criticality categories – particularly if the offeror decides to subcontract for delivery services and therefore does not maintain any offeror-owned vehicles?

As stated in the solicitation, “The table is subject to modification based on negotiations/discussions prior to award. Any modifications proposed by the offeror must be detailed in the original technical proposal.”

The chart, like the tasks numbered 1 – 13 are for the offeror’s informational purposes only. This is a performance based contract and it is not our intent to dictate to the offeror how to put together their proposal, but rather to provide a format sample and task information based in part on previous work performed by prior contractors and internal NIMH staff. We expect that the offeror will present their own work plan and description of tasks and that the performance standards table will be modified by the contractor to reflect their own unique approach as expressed in their work plan/tasks communicated in the technical proposal.

57. IV.A. General, pg 37 – Is the offeror required to provide actual resumes for its key personnel? If so, can the Government identify those staff positions that it considers to be “key positions”?

Key staff might include project director, IT personnel, lead information specialist, and writer.

58. IV.B., 7th bullet, pg 38 – Must the offeror identify by name each of the persons proposed to fill each position shown in the required “person-level, staff task-loading chart”? If a named person is not currently employed by the offeror, must the offeror provide a signed “letter of commitment” (i.e., are those individuals considered the “members” referred to in the 9th bullet)? If a specific individual has not yet been identified, can positions be shown as “To be hired post award”?

How the offeror chooses to present staff in their proposal is their own business decision. The offeror has received a copy of the technical evaluation criteria in the solicitation.

59. Para 3.b) a), pg 48 – This Past Performance Information paragraph requires the offeror to list contracts “completed during the last three years” whereas Para 3.III.A, pg 37 requires the offeror to list all contracts “awarded to or performed by the offeror within the past 4 years.” Which time limit is correct for citing previous contracts?

These are two separate sections to be included in your proposal which you appear to be trying to combine. One section is organizational capability and the other section is past performance. The offeror is advised to follow the instructions in the solicitation and submit the sections as directed.

60. Para 3.f) Other Considerations, pg 49 – In Para 3, pg 36 the offerors are admonished that “Your technical proposal should follow the same format and be divided in sections as presented below.” Where in the Technical Proposal does the Government wish to have the offeror discuss the listed “Other Considerations”?

Offerors are not “admonished” in the solicitation. How the offeror structures “other considerations” in their proposal is their own business decision.

61. Para 4.(4)J, pg 57 – Does the Executive Schedule Level 1 equivalent pay cap apply only to those named individuals directly billing to the NIMH contract or does it also include individuals within the company whose salaries are paid from and billed as “indirect costs” to the NIMH contract?

For more information check FAR 31.205-6 and

<http://www1.od.nih.gov/oma/manualchapters/contracts/6030-1/>

and 6308

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c107:H.R.3061.ENR:>

H.R.3061 Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2002 (Enrolled Bill (Sent to President))

“SEC. 204. None of the funds appropriated in this Act for the National Institutes of Health, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration shall be used to pay the salary of an individual, through a grant or other extramural mechanism, at a rate in excess of Executive Level I.”

62.Subtask 5f), pg 18 – What is the meaning of the acronym GYPRA? Did the Government mean to cite the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)?

Yes, GPRA.

63.According to the Sunshine Law, what was the total value of the last contract, if any? What was the cost of managing the facility if there was a pre-existing contract?

This question does not make sense in that this “law” has no bearing on releasing the value of the last contract. H.R.2341 Class Action Fairness Act of 2002 (Referred in Senate)

Sec. 1717. Sunshine in court records reads:

`No order, opinion, or record of the court in the adjudication of a class action, including a record obtained through discovery, whether or not formally filed with the court, may be sealed or subjected to a protective order unless the court makes a finding of fact--

`(1) that the sealing or protective order is narrowly tailored, consistent with the protection of public health and safety, and is in the public interest; and

`(2) if the action by the court would prevent the disclosure of information, that disclosing the information is clearly outweighed by a specific and substantial interest in maintaining the confidentiality of such information.

See question 10.

The Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. 552, provides individuals with a right to access to records in the possession of the federal government. For more information access the following link:

<http://www.nih.gov/icd/od/foia/index.htm>

64. If it's a turn key operation are there provisions in place for the existing personnel? Will they stay aboard or will the new contractors have to start from ground zero?

Offeror is responsible for hiring of all staff. No current Information Center staff are automatically transferred to the successful Offeror.

65.If the personnel is to remain in place is the next contractor only responsible for hiring management and the training staff to oversee the facility?

N/A

66. Is the fulfillment piece of the RFP for only the 5% of the fulfillment your current contractor is not handling?

DC ARC provides 90 to 95% of fulfillment. 5 to 10% is to be provided by the Offeror.

67. Can the call center and e-mail processing be conducted by an off-shore call center?

This is the offeror's own business decision which needs to be supported in the technical proposal.

68. Could you define the "cost plus reimbursement fee" you refer to in your April 5, 2002 memo?

If you will carefully re-read the memo you will see the correct term is stated "cost reimbursement **plus** award fee." For more information see attachment 5 of the solicitation.

69. What are the required average speed of answer, average talk time and abandon rate for the call center?

No data available for speed of call or average talk time vary (estimate 3-5 minute talk time). Abandon rate for the information center is approximately 3 %.

70. It is mentioned that travel will be reimbursed based on government per diem rates. Does the estimated travel budget still need to be submitted with the proposal?

Yes.

71. What percentage of customers should be surveyed in the Customer Satisfaction Survey? What is the desired response rate for the survey?

Offeror is to propose this based on analysis of calls for 2 previous years. Obviously, a high response rate will yield more accurate and usable data/analysis.

72. Can the fulfillment function be run out of an existing fulfillment shop not in the Washington, D.C. area?

This is the offeror's own business decision, however, keep in mind that this task falls under the JWOD program.

73. The middle paragraph on page 5 states:

“Process approximately 100,000 (estimated to increase 10% each year of the contract) requests per year about NIMH programs and activities, mental illnesses or mental health. Requests are received by mail (7,500), email (20,000), order forms-paper (2,000), Web orders (10,000), toll free #(30,000), fax and FAX4U (2,000) and, telephone (25,000). Processing inquiries from receipt through response by mail, telephone, e-mail, or fax.”

If the following statistics are available, please provide for the following items:

a. Inquiry Volumes by each Month (January through December) for the last year.

67,195 total for FY 2001

b. Inquiry Volumes by each Weekday (Monday through Friday) of either the averaged week or the annual statistics.

No data available. Use FY 2001 to estimate.

b. Inquiry Volumes by hour during the averaged day (8:30 AM to 5:00 PM)

No data available.

d. Breakdown of the Call Volumes for:

- **Calls requiring research**

Anticipating 2,400 custom letter requiring research

- **Calls that were transferred to NIMH due to the Call Center Staff was unable to respond (i.e. scientific or technical nature)**

No data available

74. The first paragraph on page 7 states:

“In order to carry out the tasks of this contract, the Contractor shall develop, test, implement, enhance, and maintain integrated web-based, multi-user, database systems with user friendly interfaces for a) inquiries and inventory management; b) mental health resources/referral; c) e-mail response and records retention systems, and; d) a mailing key/label systems. The inquiries tracking and inventory management system must be able to provide a publications online ordering system for linkage from the NIMH Web site...”

We interpret this paragraph to mean:

- **The Contractor must develop a Web Server System and develop the database systems incorporated into the Web System; and**

Yes

- **The Contractor’s Web Server System has to be linked (or integrated) into the NIMH Web System.**

Yes, for on-line ordering component

a. Is this interpretation correct? If not, please indicate which part of our interpretation is incorrect.

Yes

b. Please identify the “Legacy Systems” that are described in the bottom line of that paragraph.

NIMH mailing key system

75. Reference “Security” on page 8. Please identify the NIMH Network Contractor.

ORKLAND Inc. The contractor will be used for the next 1-2 years.

76. Reference “IDMS” on page 8

a. When (days after Contract Award) and how (which media, such as a CD) will NIMH transfer the current IDMS data for the Inquiry Processing/Inventory

Tracking and Management File and the Information Resources and Referral Database (IRRD) File to the new Contractor.

Files should be transferred 1 to 2 days after award of contract, most likely on a CD.

- b. **Does NIMH consider that the IRRD file contains sufficient information to develop an operation script to be used by the servicing Information Specialists? If not, please provide the missing information/data of the IDMS Database System in comparison with the sufficient information to respond to the inquiries. Excepting those inquiries that require the Research and Reference (i.e. transfer the call) to the appropriate NIMH Office due to the scientific or technical nature of the inquiry response.**

Current system does not employ scripts. Contract staff have knowledge, skills and abilities to respond to inquiries without scripting. Offeror must determine need for scripting and will be responsible for development of scripts they feel necessary. All scripts to be approved by the Project Officer.

- 77. Reference Subtask 1c) on page 10 regarding the “Smart Packet Handling” system: Is the Smart Packet Handling system to be transferred to the new contractor? Is the Smart Packet Handling system a commercially available system? If so, please identify the vendor or developer.**

Smart packet handling is not currently employed. Contractor needs to develop this as a part of the IDMS.

- 78. The second paragraph from the bottom of page 12 states:**

“Determine if a caller is to be transferred to the NIMH, e.g., if the subject is scientific or technical, of a sensitive or political nature, involves Institute funding programs, or concerns policy issues specific to the NIMH or NIH.”

Please identify the correct procedure for transfers from the following methods:

- a. **Using the auto-dial, transfer the calls to the appropriate NIMH office(s) while the caller is waiting on “hold” and then hang-up.**
- b. **Using the auto-dial, contact the appropriate NIMH office while the caller is on “hold, then receive and follow the instructions from the NIMH office.**
- c. **Provide the office contact information to the caller.** Possibly for some offices such as press office if not responding or busy signal is gotten. This will be determined in conjunction with the Project Officer at contract start.
- d. **Any combination of the above (please specify). A and B will vary.**
- e. **All of the above is incorrect. If so, please specify the correct procedure.**

- 79. Reference TASK 4 on page 14, which states:**

“DC ARC will provide fulfillment for approximately 90 – 95% of the inquiries processed by the Contractor.”

To complete the warehousing and mailing with the remaining 5 – 10% of the fulfillment, please provide an approximate estimation of the office space is required.

See response to question 49.

80. Reference TASK 6 on page 19.

- a. Is the implementation of the Annual Catalog to be in the NIMH Web Server System or the Contractor’s Web Server System?**

SOW requires a printed catalog (printing will be procured by NIMH). Offerors may propose an online version and hosting with seamless linkage to NIMH Web site. NIMH will consider either web server system.

- b. If the implementation will be in the NIMH Web Server System, then will it be the Contractor’s responsibility for the implementation or will the Contractor be responsible only to prepare all the necessary materials (i.e. color pictures with descriptions in an executable form) on an electronic medium?**

Contractor will be responsible for development and updating of entire catalog including graphics, pictures, etc. Contractor must provide camera-ready copy or other print ready format to the NIMH. Printing will be the responsibility of the NIMH.

The contractor will be responsible for implementing and maintaining the English and Spanish publication order form on their server(s), which ties directly into the IDMS database for processing request. NIMH will link to their site from a web page containing frames that have the appearance that users are accessing the page from the NIMH web site.

81. Reference TASK 7 on page 19.

- a. Is this task a Caller Recontact Survey?**

No, it is a customer satisfaction survey. Customers may have contacted the Information Center by telephone, mail, email, weborders, fax, etc.

- b. Can the Contractor use a certain Survey Information Technology Tools such as the Survey Data Analysis Software System (SUDAAS) and/or Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI).**

Requirements as indicated by the Office of Management and Budget

See response to question 59.

82. Reference TASK 11a) on page 21, which states:

“At least two (2) information specialists must possess an in-depth knowledge of these topics, although cross-training of all information specialists is required.”

- a. Please specify the criteria for “In Depth” with respect to education, training and experience (i.e. months and years), if possible.
- b. It is very difficult (if not impossible) to find staff possessing in-depth knowledge of all of the following RFP-listed topics:

NIMH mission, programs, research, clinical studies, education programs, grant funding programs, causation (risk factors), prevention, epidemiology and statistics, intervention, symptom detection and diagnosis, prevention and treatment, state-of-the-art articles, and experts in particular areas, health disparities, rural mental health, and services research and evidence based interventions, NIMH publications and other printed material.

Will Government change the requirement , “in-depth”, to “broad”?

- c. The Contractor may organize the Information Resources and Referral Database (containing the detailed information that addresses mental health and mental disorders, related health information, and relevant NIMH research interests – from page 10) to be used by the serving Information Specialist in finding the responses by topics in subject.

Also, we will adhere the SOW instruction (page 12)

“Determine if a caller is to be transferred to the NIMH, e.g., if the subject is scientific or technical, of a sensitive or political nature, involves Institute funding programs, or concerns policy issues specific to NIMH or NIH.”

Is it necessary to have at least Two Information Specialists who possess the in-depth knowledge of the topics?

What the offeror proposes is their own business decision. Remember, these tasks were offered for information purposes only with the following disclaimer.

TASKS ONE (1) THROUGH THIRTEEN (13)

The following tasks contain numerous details which identify practices or methods successfully utilized in the past to carry out similar work. Although these practices have been identified for the offeror, the Government does not endorse these practices, in that the risk for successful performance remains with the Contractor. It is up to the Offeror to fully describe in their technical proposal the practices/methods which they propose to employ to ensure successful achievement of the contract requirements.

The staff proposed need to have the level of knowledge that the contractor deems appropriate for the success of the contract.

83. Reference Subtask 11b) on page 21. Please provide what support NIMH will provide (training by NIMH staff) in the initial and ongoing call center staff training by the topics (i.e. mental health and mental disorders), and others.

Project Officer will work closely with Contractor staff and include other NIMH staff for specific tasks as necessary. NIMH IT staff will consult as necessary with Contractor. Some of the initial training will be at the NIMH Rockville offices.

84. COST AND GENERAL QUESTIONS

a. Regarding:

- **The long-distance cost for the toll-free numbers to be accessed from anywhere in the USA;**
- **The connection between the NIMH Telephone System and the Contractor's Telephone System for 301-443-4513 and 877-964-3258.**

These are billed directly to the NIMH

Should or should not the long-distance telephone costs be included in the Cost Proposal?

Yes, there may be some long distance costs (i.e., to update mailing keys and the information resources database).

b. Regarding the computers (Servers and Workstations) systems and telephone systems (including the ACD, IVR, and CTI):

Can we specify these costs in ODC?

Again, this is the offeror's own business decision.

85. Regarding the current Incumbent Contractor, please provide:

The number of current project staff by:

- **Information Specialists**
- **Mailing Staff**
- **Research Staff**

Current staffing not applicable to the follow on contract. Again, staffing will be the offeror's own business decision based on how they propose to complete the work using their own unique method and approach as detailed in the offeror's work plan/specified tasks/technical proposal.

86. Given the significant statement of work and expertise required, will you consider expanding the solicitation to include alternate NAICs with higher size standards, such as 541513 or 514191.

We are unable to change the NAICS code.

87. Will the U.S. Census Bureau's National Processing Center in Tuscon, AZ continue to provide the toll-free telephone service for this, or will it be awarded to the winning respondent?

The Census Bureau will maintain these lines.

88. How is the current incumbent's performance?

We are unable to provide you information regarding current contractor performance via this amendment.

89. What area's is the current incumbent not performing? Cost over runs, Late deliverable's, Quality of people performing the work.

See answer to question 88.

90. How many FTEs' should this requireme nt support?

NIMH is not in a position to dictate the number of FTEs, this is the offeror's own business decision.

91. How many TTY calls per year?

2-5 per year, plus several relay calls.

92. What is the current cost for DC ARC support services?

This information is unavailable via this amendment.

93. Will NIMH procure all software and hardware at the end of the contract period?

Software developed and paid for with contract funds would transfer. Contractor provides and owns hardware, with the exception of the server referenced in Task 1, 2nd paragraph and the Mental Health FAX4U computer, Task 2, subtask 2C. These are to be Government property.

94. Who is responsible for all the publishing of the NIMH materials to be disseminated as required? Will we need to have a secured storage area to maintain a certain level of inventory? If need to maintain a certain level of inventory of the

various publications can NIMH share a high-level statistics on such inventory to be maintained at our site? (The reasoning behind the question is to plan for required storage space and so forth.)

NIMH will procure printing for materials. Contractor will need a [storage and](#) processing area for 5 to 10 percent of materials sent from contractor's offices. Space estimated at 650± cubic feet.

95. Are there various response time requirements for the requests coming in through various mediums or all of them will be queued and served to on "First come first serve basis"?

This information is already presented in the SOW and deliverables.

96. Are the telephone call requests received through the toll free numbers (30,000) separate from the 25,000 requests received mentioned in the paragraph that reads "Process approximately 100,000 (estimated to increase 10% each year of contract) Processes inquiries from receipt of request through response by mail, telephone, e-mail and fax.

They are separate

97. We need to get a high-level requirement of the amount of data that is currently in place in the NIMH file server and get an understanding of the growing requirements of information stored electronically in these file servers?

NIMH Publications archives database – has multiple databases and data files.

Total file size 60 MB

Mailing keys database – has over 10,000 records

Mental health resources and referral database – approximately 300 records

Boilerplates, standard language paragraphs, autoreply, on a CD/disk – over 250 WORD text files

All files anticipated to increase 10% per year.

98. Will the inventory of the various publications be maintained by the various sites provided the required interface is available or is it required for us to constantly get updates from the various sites and then update internally?

All orders will be entered into the IDMS and the inventory should automatically adjust at all locations based on the order being placed. DC ARC monthly inventory is then compared to IDMS inventory for any notable differences and adjustments made as needed.

99. Is it the responsibility of the contractor to update the information of resources and referrals or will NIMH be providing this information to us and we in turn keep the information updated in our system.

Contractor will be responsible for continuous updating and maintaining.

100. Is it OK for the contractor to record all information of the caller such as first name, last name, SSN, Address, email address, or telephone numbers which will provide the respective information to get back to the requestor while fulfilling requests. Further, this will be necessary since it is required for the users to come in and make requests via the web with a valid user ID and password. The user can self register and logon to the system and put in the request. We need to keep in mind that the user can forget his or her user ID and password, will be contacting the center to get the information. It then becomes important to store and track all the users of the system with their respective USER Ids and Passwords.

Contractor will record all personal information except the SS#. E-mail address and telephone number are optional. Contractor should make every effort to capture as much information as possible without putting undue burden on the caller.

Currently, no password is required for orders. Currently a new record number (aka, order #, id #) is given each time the requestor calls. Offeror may propose alternate system.

101. On page 10 Para 2 will NIMH be providing all of this information to us on a specific format or update the information directly to the system?

Existing files will be transferred on a CD or tape to the new contractor. Contractor is responsible for updates on the IDMS.

102. Who will own the equipment at the call center and fulfillment facility?

The only material being transferred from the incumbent contractor will be printed materials, NIMH publication archives and reference materials, the MentalHealth FAX 4U computer (a Dell Pentium Pro will be transferred pending implementation of contractor's upgrade system), software for MentalHealth FAX 4U. The Government will own all equipment being transferred, the upgraded FAX 4U computer, and the server referenced in Task 1, 2nd paragraph. No furniture or shelving will be transferred.

103. Define any existing systems that would need to be migrated onto the new system, including OS, DB, platform, data held.

NIMH Publication Archive – SQL

Standard Paragraphs/Boiler plate letters file, MS Word/Text files

Mental Health Information Resources and Referral database - SQL

104. What systems is the DCARC using to track inventory?

Monthly hand count and internal tracking sheets sent to Contractor each month. Contractor to work with DC ARC for online inventory capability at DC ARC facility, that will integrate into the IDMS. NIMH will provide DC ARC with needed hardware and software.

105. Who are the providers of the current telecommunications systems?

MCI WorldCom

106. What printing systems are currently in place, will they be transferred to the contractor?

See question 102.

107. What other systems will the IDMS get data from or pass data to?

IDMS will be a new web-based system developed by the offeror or an existing operational system adapted for the NIMH. See question 12 for information on files to be transferred. The IDMS is to be available to selected IRIB staff to be able to access online analysis reports, inventory, etc. See Task 1.

108. Will there be a bidder's conference.

No bidder's conference is planned.

109. We request any previous RFPs for the Information Center effort as it is currently being conducted.

This information is not available via this amendment.

110. Will you provide a list of those companies that have indicated an interest in this RFP (responded to the Sources Sought Notice, submitted questions for RFP clarification, and/or submitted a Proposal Intent Response Sheet)

This information is not available via this amendment.

111. Will the Information Center be required to have personnel to provide a Crisis Center capability or counseling capability?

Scripting will be used by the contractor staff to respond to these calls. No counseling is to be provided.

112. Will the Information Center be required to research and/or respond to inquiries concerning insurance (coverage, payments, MEDICAID, MEDICARE,etc.)

Responses(and referrals) to calls for these will be covered with boilerplate language.

113. Are there current Information Center metrics available indicating the types of inquiries by category and frequency (Counseling, Crisis response, general information, Institute Programs, Policies, and Activities,Insurance related, Mental Health Facilities, Education Programs, Research Programs, Clinical Studies, etc.)

Samples of charts and graphs provided and are available as a power point file entitled, "Sample Charts for NIMH-02-SS-0003.ppt." This file can be found at the NIMH website at <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/grants/indexcon.cfm>. Contractor would be required to produce numerous similar reports monthly, quarterly, etc.

114. Are there current Information Center metrics available indicating time-to-respond to inquiries by category, length of calls, research time required per inquiry, ?

Inquiries by category are in the SOW. Length of calls and research time are not available.

115. What do you anticipate the breakdown of Black & White reproductions and Color Reproductions required in the estimate in Task 9: Reproductions. With up to 1.9 million pages, the breakdown between Black & White and Color is needed.

Estimate 85-95% are black and white.

116. Are there any special sized reproductions or will they all be 8.5 x 11.

Almost all are 8 1/2 x 11.

117. Please describe how the current system interacts with DC ARC. Will the Inquiry Processing/Inventory Tracking and Management system be expected to connect to DC ARC's current IT systems?

Currently, there is no link from the contractor to the DC ARC. See item 76.

118. Is there a currently used IDMS?

No, existing system needs to be replaced with IDMS.

119. If so, will the currently used IDMS be available for hosting to ensure that there is no disruption to any IRIB services during the development, testing, and

implementation of the integrated web-based, multi-user, database system required in Task 1?

See responses to questions 1 and 38. We do not anticipate any disruption in service during transition period.

120. The RFP mandates that "the following information shall be provided on the first page of your pricing proposal (Reference Form 2043 Attachment 5). It then lists 9 specific items. The RFP mandates that "You must provide the following information on the first page of your pricing proposal". It then lists 11 specific items. Which list should be used on the first page of the pricing proposal?

You are confusing two separate sections. The list of 11 items is included in the section "Just in Time." In review, the solicitation provides the following instruction regarding Just in Time. This RFP contains special procedures for the submission of business management proposals. These special procedures are designed to reduce the administrative burden on offerors without compromising the information during the initial evaluation of proposals. Certain documents will no longer be required to be submitted with initial proposals, but will be requested at a later stage in the competitive process. Specifically, the travel policy, the annual financial statement, the total compensation plan, the subcontracting plan, and certain types of cost/pricing information will only be required to be submitted from those offerors included in the competitive range, or the apparent successful offeror.

The list of 9 items are included now. "The following information shall be provided on the first page of your pricing proposal (Reference Form 2043 Attachment 5)."

1. Solicitation, contract, and/or modification number;
2. Name and address of Offeror;
3. Name and telephone number of point of contact;
4. Name, address, and telephone number of Contract Administration Office, (if available);
5. Name, address, and telephone number of Audit Office (if available);
6. Proposed cost and/or price; profit or fee (as applicable); and total;
7. The following statement: By submitting this proposal, the offeror, if selected for discussions, grants the contracting officer or an authorized representative the right to examine, at any time before award, any of those books, records, documents, or other records directly pertinent to the information requested or submitted.
8. Date of submission; and
9. Name, title and signature of authorized representative.

121. Attachment 5, Paragraph B.2 (SUBMIT WITH BUSINESS PROPOSAL)

mandates that a specific form be used and gives a location to find it which contains an Excel workbook. The instruction page of the workbook contains the following statement: "This worksheet is intended to help you prepare your cost proposal. If you provide us with an electronic copy of the cost proposal, we can save time by not recreating it. This will help speed up the review/award process and perhaps reduce the number of questions we need to ask in order to understand your proposal." This statement implies that submission of a completely electronic proposal is possible. Is that, in fact, true and may we submit original and copies of our proposal on separate CDs?

No, please submit paper copies at this time. Later on, you might be requested during the cost analysis phase to submit certain worksheets electronically.

122. The personnel requirements, such as those under task 11 for a computer programmer are prescriptive. Is there flexibility available to the offeror to propose staff with alternate qualifications.

What the offeror proposes is their own business decision. Remember, these tasks were offered for information purposes only with the following disclaimer.

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The following tasks contain numerous details which identify practices or methods successfully utilized in the past to carry out similar work. Although these practices have been identified for the offeror, the Government does not endorse these practices, in that the risk for successful performance remains with the Contractor. It is up to the Offeror to fully describe in their technical proposal the practices/methods which they propose to employ to ensure successful achievement of the contract requirements.

The staff proposed need to have the level of knowledge that the contractor deems appropriate for the success of the contract.

This is a performance based contract. More information about performance based contracts is available at the following website:

<http://www.knownet.hhs.gov>

123. The above-referenced RFP referred me to "General Clauses" at URL: <http://amb.nci.nih.gov/clauses/clauses.html> . for standard FAR clauses. However, I did not see a listing there for Cost Reimbursement Award to Small Business. Which list should I look at?

Standard FAR clauses such as those under "item 9. Negotiated Cost-Reimbursement Service Contract" most closely applies, however, please note that clauses per the FAR

Matrix available at which are applicable to your contract will take precedence. You may access the FAR at <http://www.arnet.gov/>

124. I was expecting to see a 51% prime contractor requirement in the RFP, but I couldn't find it. Is there one?

Thank you. The Limitation on Subcontracting Clause 52.219-14 applies. Also 52.219-6, Notice of Total Small Business Set-Aside applies.