

PUBLIC INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION SERVICES (PICS)
NIH - TASK ORDER

RFTOP# 138

TITLE: NCCAM Communications Support

PART I – REQUEST FOR TASK ORDER (TO) PROPOSALS

A. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:

Point of Contact Name: Victor S. Buyny
Contracting Officer

James Carder
Contract Specialist

Proposal Address: Research Contract Branch, OM
[U.S. Mail] National Cancer Institute
6120 Executive Boulevard
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Bethesda, MD 20892-7196

Proposal Address: Research Contract Branch, OM
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National Cancer Institute
6120 Executive Boulevard
Executive Plaza South
Suite 600, Room 6114
Bethesda, MD 20892-7196

B. PROPOSED PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: The award is anticipated on or about August 1, 2003 **with a period of performance of August 1, 2003 to July 31, 2004, plus one (1) one-year option, and one (1) option for ten (10) months. If all options are exercised, the period of performance will be on/about August 1, 2003 through May 14, 2006.**

C. PRICING METHOD: Cost Plus Fixed Fee (Level of Effort)

D. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS: Proposals **shall be submitted electronically** to carderj@mail.nih.gov Please enter in the subject line the following text, "RFTOP#138 - Proposal from {insert your firm's name}." A signed task order form should be submitted electronically or will later be requested from the selected firm. Proposals shall be limited to fifteen (15) pages 1.5 – spaced, typewritten pages (excluding CVs or resumes).

ESTIMATED LEVEL OF EFFORT

It is anticipated that approximately 3,300 labor hours will be required to complete this contract per year.

NOTE: The estimate is not intended to be restrictive for proposal purposes.

BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

For the purposes of establishing a proposed budget, offerors should assume:

Approximately 3,300 hours/year of staff time

8 telephone focus groups

5 1-hour in-depth telephone interviews

1 5-minute promotional video using existing footage

1 radio media tour

1 video news release

\$10,000 for clinical trial retention giveaways

\$8,000 for clinical trial recruitment mailings (includes mailing lists and mailing service; does not include postage as mailings will be delivered through NIH mailroom)

\$15,000 for 120 recruitment kits and collateral materials (includes printing)

\$12,000 for clinical trial recruitment advertisements

\$10,000 for selection and orientation of consumer advisory board (mailings, advertising, and orientation materials)

No travel or costs related to meeting logistics

E. RESPONSE DUE DATE: July 15, 2003 at 2:00p.m. EDT.

F. TASK DESCRIPTION:

Background

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practices are best described as those not presently considered an integral part of conventional medicine. CAM usage has been continually on the rise. Historical precedent predicts the promise of CAM modalities to expand the health care repertoire; however, there is to date little definitive scientific evidence to establish their safety and efficacy.

In 1998, Congress established the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) at the National Institutes of Health. NCCAM is dedicated to exploring complementary and alternative healing practices in the context of rigorous science; training researchers; and disseminating authoritative information to the public and professionals. To achieve these goals and to ensure that NCCAM's actions are commensurate with the public trust, the Center has developed a 5-year strategic plan entitled, *Expanding Horizons of Healthcare*. The plan was written to address four strategic areas: 1) investing in research, 2) training CAM researchers, 3) expanding outreach, and 4) facilitating integration. (See the NCCAM website, www.nccam.nih.gov.) Effective communications play a vital role in furthering each aspect of NCCAM's mission.

Within the goal of expanding outreach, NCCAM is committed to disseminating science-based, accurate, and timely information about CAM research, research opportunities, and findings.

NCCAM's Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL) has developed its first strategic communications plan, outlining goals, objectives, and strategies for effective communications activities. To help prepare and implement the plan, OCPL is seeking the assistance of a communications firm experienced in working with government health agencies.

Communications Goal

Raise the public's awareness of issues unique to CAM and to raise the awareness of NCCAM as the central source for credible and authoritative CAM-related information. The OCPL will do this by delivering proactive, creative, communication products and services; providing clear, accurate, science-based information; and increasing awareness of NCCAM's efforts to improve public health.

III. Tasks/Statement of Work

The contractor will be responsible for assisting NCCAM's Office of Communications and Public Liaison in a range of communications activities to include: program planning and evaluation, formative research, message development and testing, product creation, and promotion of NCCAM and its programs to the public, "conventional" and CAM health care practitioners, and researchers.

During the first year, NCCAM and the contractor will focus efforts on developing messages, materials, and program plans to reach the general public. Concurrently, the contractor will support NCCAM with ongoing communications initiatives, including patient recruitment and retention to a national cardiovascular clinical trial, and development of a consumer advisory board for NCCAM.

Specific activities:

Program planning

The contractor shall work with NCCAM to identify priority projects, and develop detailed program and evaluation plans. Plans should be based on social marketing and health communications practices.

Formative research and evaluation

The contractor shall work with NCCAM to conduct formative research as needed, and may include such tasks as: literature reviews, focus groups, interviews, and surveys, to identify and characterize key audiences, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, information needs, and to test messages and materials. In addition, to the extent possible, the contractor shall evaluate the impact of communications activities.

NOTE: NCCAM is currently seeking a generic clearance from the Office of Management and Budget to conduct formative and evaluative research. The contractor will prepare instruments, methodology, and other documentation for submission to OMB to conduct specific research activities under the generic clearance, as needed.

Message development

Using formative research, the contractor shall work with NCCAM to develop salient messages targeted to our key audiences.

Materials and other product development

As needed for various programs or for NCCAM as a whole, the contractor shall work with NCCAM to develop materials and other communications products. Products shall

incorporate key messages and may include such products as: fact sheets, brochures, print and/or broadcast public service announcements, videos, video news releases, slide presentations, CD-ROMs, etc. The contractor shall have the capability to provide graphic design or production services as needed.

Support ongoing communications initiatives

The contractor shall provide support to NCCAM's current communications initiatives, including:

- Patient recruitment and retention for a clinical trial assessing chelation therapy for people with heart disease (see <http://www.nccam.nih.gov/news/2002/chelation/q-and-a.htm>). Support will include the following activities:
 - Development of recruitment kits for study sites
 - Development of a participant newsletter
 - Development of a recruitment and retention Web site, including an interactive discussion board
 - Coordination of communications with study sites
 - Recruitment of minority participants including targeted media, public service announcements and advertising, and outreach to minority-focused medical associations
 - Discrete media relations activities, including development of media materials, coordination of national media events including conference calls, radio media tour, and targeted pitching
- Support for a consumer involvement program, which may include:
 - Gathering feedback on NCCAM Strategic Plan (arranging and promoting 3 public meetings throughout the country and collating comments received through meetings and through Web site)
 - Establishing and supporting a consumer advisory board for NCCAM (soliciting and selecting members, orientating and communicating with members, and attending 2 meetings/year in Bethesda for up to 10 people)

Management and Administration

The contractor shall provide a plan for management and administration of the contract. The plan should address tasks, timelines, staffing, and other resource requirements to carryout the menu of tasks outlined in the statement of work.

Deliverables

The contractor shall prepare the following:

- Workplan and timeline
- Program planning documents
- Evaluation plans
- Research and evaluation reports

- Draft and final communication products
- Monthly and annual progress reports
- Annual Progress reports
- Task Order Close Out reports
- Reports required by the Master Task Order Contract
- Other deliverables as needed

G. EVALUATION FACTORS

The technical proposal will receive paramount consideration in the selection of the Contractor for this Task Order. All evaluation factors, other than cost or price, when combined are significantly more important than cost or price. However, *cost/price* may become a *critical factor* in source selection in the event that two or more offerors are determined to be essentially equal following the evaluation of all factors other than cost or price. *In any event, the Government reserves the right to make an award to that offeror whose proposal provides the best overall value to the Government.*

Evaluation factors will be weighted according to the percentages below:

1. Personnel (35%)

The Offeror shall include a detailed description of proposed staff in the proposal. The staffing plan should include as Key Staff:

- a project director with extensive health communications and public relations experience who can serve as senior counsel and oversee staffing, reporting, and all communications activities.
- an experienced project manager to attend to day-to-day activities.

It is also important that the staff include seasoned health, science, and copy writers with experience in writing for all literacy levels. The Offeror should also demonstrate exemplary graphic design capabilities, Web programming skills, and media relations expertise.

2. Relevant Experience (30%)

The Offeror shall demonstrate previous experience in health communications planning, message development, social marketing, evaluation, media and other outreach activities. The Offeror should have previous experience supporting the communications activities of other Federal health agencies. The Offeror shall submit up to three samples of pertinent products that demonstrate capability to perform the tasks in the Statement of Work.

3. Technical Approach (35%)

CONTRACTOR SHALL NOT EXCEED THE ESTIMATED LABOR HOURS OR ESTIMATED TASK ORDER AMOUNT WITHOUT THE WRITTEN APPROVAL OF THE CONTRACTING OFFICER & PICS COORDINATOR

APPROVED: _____
FAX-301-435-6101 Signature –Anthony M. Revenis, J.D., NIH-PICS Coordinator Date