

**INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES
NIH - TASK ORDER**

RFTOP# **154**

TITLE: OER Grants Web Site Usability Studies

PART I – REQUEST FOR TASK ORDER PROPOSALS

A. POINT OF CONTACT NAME: Anthony Revenis

Phone- (301) 402-3073

Fax- (301) 435-6101

Proposal Address:

6011 Executive Blvd. Rm 529S

Rockville, MD 20892-7663

Billing Address:

Accounts Payable, OFM, NIH

Bldg 31, Room B1B39

Bethesda, MD 20892-2045

B. PROPOSED PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:

Study 1: 90 days from Study 1 Planning meeting, to be scheduled within 4 weeks of award.

Revisions: Revisions to Web site as needed within timeframe decided by OER.

Study 2: 90 days from the Study 2 Planning meeting.

Revisions: Revisions to Web site as needed within timeframe decided by OER.

Study 3: 90 days from the Study 3 Planning meeting.

C. PRICING METHOD:

Firm Fixed Price – Firm should provide a single price for the evaluation of all three phases of the usability studies. Please clarify the methods to be employed and the estimated number of employee hours required. Describe the development of task scenarios, paper prototypes and number of cycles involved in refining a prototype subject to the overall budget.

Currently available funding is limited to \$100,000. Firms that can fully perform for less will receive extra consideration. If in your opinion this amount is insufficient to fully perform this task please advise how best to proceed with this amount and how much additional funding will be required to complete this task.

D. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS: Proposals should be submitted to me by mail or e-mail. Please enter in the subject line the following text, "RFTOP# **154**–Proposal from {insert your firm's name}."

E. RESPONSE DUE DATE: September 15, 2003 at 10:00AM EDT

F. TASK DESCRIPTION:

Overview of Site

The Office of Extramural Research (OER) Grants Web site (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/OER.htm>) is the official NIH Web site for information, data, policies, procedures, guidelines, grant applications and forms relating to NIH extramural research grants. It is the single place where applicants obtain application instructions and forms for submitting grant applications to the NIH. The OER Grants Web site is very heavily used by the grant-seeking public and by NIH staff, and averages more than 600,000 user sessions per month.

Objective

The objective of the OER Grants Web site is to provide up-to-date and easy to find grants information. The long-term goal is to develop and maintain a site that is easily accessible to the majority of users, complies with the law, and provides the most up-to-date information in a manner which is easy to understand.

The site has gone through extensive updates in the past year bringing it into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 508. Now that the site is more accessible for those with disabilities, the next objective is to make information on the site more user-friendly for all users.

In keeping with the goal of providing the most up-to-date information in a manner that is easy to understand and find, the OER Web Development Branch desires to conduct three usability studies of key areas of the OER Grants Web site and address questions, such as the following:

- What are the most desired pages?
- How long does it take participants to find the pages currently?
- Is that length of time acceptable?
- How well does the OER Grants Web site meet user expectations in terms of site navigation and accessibility?
- How well does the OER Grants Web site explain what the OER Grants site is, and how it operates?
- Do participants realize, without being told, whose site they are working with — just from looking at the home page?
- Do participants click through pages or do they use Search?
- How do they react to the download time for specific pages?
- Do participants understand how the site is organized?
- What can we do to improve the site?

Answers to these questions will help the OER Web Development Branch determine not only the current level of user satisfaction with these pages, but the number and kind of design modifications necessary to achieve the highest degree of user satisfaction. The contractor will work closely with the OER Web Development Branch to review results of an online OER Grants Web Usability Survey currently being undertaken, to determine areas of the site needing improvement and will be the focus of the scenarios for three separate usability studies. Specific tasks for each usability study are detailed in the "Tasks" section below. The OER Web Development Branch will have the opportunity to sit in on testing sessions.

Facilities and Equipment

Contractor shall utilize the NCI Usability Lab and its equipment which includes:

- Sound-proofed testing room set up for a user and facilitator to use PC-based applications
- Observation room, with one-way glass/mirrors, allowing real-time observation of up to 12 people
- Control room with one-way glass/mirrors, facilities for videotaping and camera control, rapid prototyping, record taking, documentation and analysis
- Video cameras mounted on the walls
- Large video monitors or projectors to accommodate groups of observers

- An auxiliary computer monitor for observers that mirrors the computer monitor being viewed by the participant
- Additional video recorders to allow concurrent recordings in real-time

These facilities are available free of charge.

508 Accessibility Issues

The contractor shall accommodate persons with disabilities either at the NCI lab or at the person’s home or office. The contractor shall be familiar with hardware and software used by persons with disabilities. The contractor shall be familiar with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and its application to electronic media and Web sites.

Tasks

Deviations from the proposed tasks and/or timelines stated below may be considered if compelling reasons are presented in the proposal.

Three separate usability studies will be conducted, which involve the same tasks and deliverables, as detailed in the table below. However, the scenarios and questions to be asked in each study may change based on the previous study and information known at that time of each of the three planning meetings. When final reports are provided for each study, OER Web Development Branch staff will determine length of time between studies required for them to make recommended revisions to site. After revisions are made, the Planning meeting for the next study will be scheduled. It is expected that each study will be completed within 90 days after the respective Planning meeting. Tasks for each of the three studies are as follows:

	Task	Deliverable	Timeframe
Study 1,2 and 3			90 days per study
1a	Planning meeting – Contractor shall meet with the OER Web Development Branch to discuss potential scenarios	On-site meeting	
1b	Task scenarios – Contractor shall work with OER Web Development Branch to develop and refine scenarios to answer general questions about the site.	List of tested scenarios	
1c	Create Facilitator’s Guide/Script – Contractor shall work closely with OER Web Development Branch staff to develop a script for the study facilitator. Script should include general instructions for the participant, overview questions, specific tasks and follow-up questions/participant debriefing as well as time estimates for each section of the study. OER Web Development Branch staff will have opportunity to refine questions and discuss proposed strategies.	Facilitator’s Guide/Script	

1d	<p>Participant Recruitment – Contractor shall review user statistics and results of the Online OER Grants Web Usability Survey to determine target population from which to select participants and shall do recruitment in-house or through recruitment company as sub-contractors. This selection process shall be done in conjunction with the OER Web Development Branch. 6-8 participants shall be selected from target population. Arrangements for study times and dates and honorarium will be coordinated through the contractor or sub-contracted recruitment company.</p>	List of participants and schedule of study times and dates	
1e	<p>Testing sessions – Contractor shall conduct pilot testing of scenarios and facilitator’s script. Actual scenario facilitation and note-taking will utilize NCI’s usability lab free of charge. OER Web Development Branch staff may choose to observe some or all of the sessions and may make slight changes to the facilitator’s guide between sessions.</p>	Notes, videotapes from testing sessions	
1f	<p>Data analysis and report – Contractor shall review facilitator notes, videotape and notes/comments from other observers to compile a highlights tape, detailed report and executive summary, which should include recommendations for modifications to web page layouts and navigation schemes and site language and any other indicated changes.</p>	Videotapes from testing sessions, taped highlights of report relating to recommendations, complete report in Word format and Executive Summary in PowerPoint format	
1g	<p>Data analysis and report presentation – Contractor shall provide an on-site presentation of the study findings and shall outline recommendations for changes to the site.</p>	On-site presentation	

G. EVALUATION FACTORS

The contractor shall provide a proposal which will be evaluated by the following criteria:

1. Technical/Management Approach

Contractors are to provide a written proposal describing in detail the proposed approach, scheduling, and assignment of tasks to experienced personnel.

Contractors shall also state experience and references relating to the following tasks:

- Recruiting subjects from target populations for usability testing
- Preparing and conducting task analysis usability studies
- Evaluating results of survey questionnaires

- Preparing and conducting user interviews as part of a usability study
- Recording and analyzing usability response data
- Preparing reports from the usability analysis data
- Preparing reports summarizing recommendations for modifications to web page layouts, navigation schemes, language, and content.

2. Corporate Experience

Contractors are to provide brief descriptions of no more than four projects demonstrating the contractor's ability to provide a successful usability study. Selection will be based, in part, on previous experience and performance, and customer satisfaction.

3. Personnel Experience

The contractor shall summarize the relevant experience and skills of each of the individuals proposed for the task order. The summaries should highlight experience pertaining to past usability study or health-related web site design and evaluation. The summaries are in lieu of full-length resumes.

4. Price

While price will not be the most important evaluation factor, proposed prices will be considered in determining the firm that represents the best value to the government.

Task Order # NICS-154 TITLE: OER Grants Web Site Usability Studies
PART II - CONTRACTOR'S REPLY: CONTRACT #263-01-D-0_____

Contractor:
Points of Contact:
Phone- Fax-
Address:

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: Pricing Method: FFP
TOTAL ESTIMATED NUMBER OF HOURS:
PROPOSED COMPLETION DATE:

FOR THE CONTRACTOR: _____
Signature Date

SOURCE SELECTION:

WE HAVE REVIEWED ALL SUBMITTED PROPOSALS HAVE DETERMINED THIS FIRM SUBMITTED THE BEST OVERALL PROPOSAL AND THE PRICE/COST IS REASONABLE.

Billing Reference # _____
Appropriations Data: _____
(ATTACH OBLIGATING DOCUMENT IF AN ROC WILL NOT BE USED.)

RECOMMENDED:

FAX # Signature - Project Officer Date

APPROVED:

FAX # Signature - Contracting Officer Date

NIH APPROVAL -

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

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