

National Renewable Energy Laboratory
Request for Proposals Number RFH-0-40428
“Communications Support Services”

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**READ THIS DOCUMENT CAREFULLY**

This solicitation is being conducted under the procedures for competitive subcontracts established by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).

NREL will award Subcontracts based on the following:

- All Statement of Work (SOW) requirements being met
- The best combination of:
 - Technical factors (based on qualitative merit criteria)
 - and
 - Evaluated price (or cost)

Issue Date: 01/20/10

Due Date: **03/02/10**

Time Due: **4:00 PM Mountain Time**

Technical questions must be received via email only no later than 5:00 PM, Monday 02/01/10.

The following verbiage must be included in the **“Subject”** line for all email correspondence:

“RFH-0-40428”

1. **Solicitation Type** Best Value Selection
****100% Small Business Set-Aside****

Notice of Small Business Set-Aside:

A **“small business concern,”** as used in this solicitation, means a concern, including its affiliates that are independently owned and operated, not dominant in the field of operation in which it is bidding on Government contracts and NREL subcontracts, and is qualified as a small business under the size standards in this solicitation.

One hundred percent (100%) of this requirement has been set aside for award to small business concerns.

Submit offers to and request information from the NREL RFP Contact below.

The following verbiage must be included in the “**Subject**” line for email correspondence:
“**RFH-0-40428**”

2. **NREL RFP Contact** Patricia A. Schieler, Subcontract Administrator II
National Renewable Energy Laboratory
1617 Cole Boulevard, M/S 1533
Golden, CO 80401-3393
Email: patty.schieler@nrel.gov

Electronic (PDF) copies of forms and appendices can be found at:
http://www.nrel.gov/business_opportunities/related_docs.html

3. **Project description**

Under this solicitation, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) is seeking several subcontractors to provide a variety of communication support services on an as-needed basis for NREL’s Communications Office.

Full background descriptions for services required and tasks to be performed are as specified in Appendix A, Statement of Work, entitled “Communication Support Services”, dated 12/29/09.

Offerors may elect to submit proposals for one, two, three, or all four of the Categories specified in Appendix A, Statement of Work.

4. **Proposed Subcontract awards and period of performance**

It is the intent of NREL to award multiple Labor Hour and Expenses Subcontract(s) under this solicitation for the categories described in the Statement of Work.

The anticipated period of performance for each award is a base period (12 months) plus four, twelve-month option periods, for a potential of sixty (60) months, if all options are exercised.

Estimated total funding anticipated for all awards made under this solicitation over the sixty (60) month time period is as follows:

Category A – Writing/Editing - \$400,000.00 in total awards for each 12-month period, for an estimated total of \$2,000,000.00, if all options are exercised.

Category B – Web-related Communications Services - \$400,000.00 in total awards for each 12-month period, for an estimated total of \$2,000,000.00, if all options are exercised.

Category C – Video Production Services - \$1,000,000.00 in total awards for each 12-month period, for an estimated total of \$5,000,000.00, if all options are exercised.

Category D – Communications Project Coordination - \$1,000,000.00 in total awards for each 12-month period, for an estimated total of \$5,000,000.00, if all options are exercised.

5. **Competitive negotiated Subcontract using Best Value Selection**

This solicitation shall be conducted using Best Value Selection that results in one or more awards that are most advantageous to NREL based on the best value combination of (a) evaluated qualitative merit and (b) evaluated price (cost) of the offers submitted.

Best Value Selection is based on the premise that, if all offers are of approximately equal qualitative merit, award will be made to the offeror with the lowest evaluated price (cost). However, NREL will consider awarding to an offeror with a higher evaluated price (cost) if the offer demonstrates the difference in price (cost) is commensurate with the higher qualitative merit. Conversely, NREL will consider awarding to an offeror with a lower evaluated qualitative merit if the price (cost) differential between it and other offers warrant doing so.

6. Qualitative merit criteria for Best Value Selection

The Statement of Work in this Request for Proposals serves as NREL's baseline requirements that must be met by each offer.

The qualitative merit criteria establish what NREL considers the technical factors valuable in an offer. These qualitative merit criteria are performance-based and permit selection of a higher priced offer that provides higher qualitative merit.

The following qualitative merit criteria will be used to determine the technical value of the offer in meeting the objectives of the solicitation.

Each qualitative merit criterion and its assigned weight apply to **all categories** and are provided below.

6.1 Demonstrated Technical Abilities (50%)

Describe and substantiate offeror's technical abilities that demonstrate an understanding of the requirements in the Statement of Work. Each proposed category must be identified by Category Letter and Title; e.g., "**Category A – Writing/Editing**".

6.1.1 Category A – Writing/Editing

- A. Submit five (5) samples of work which thoroughly demonstrate the offeror's technical capabilities. The samples shall include:
 - Four (4) samples of a variety of deliverables (e.g., an audio or video script, marketing collateral, Web pages, newsletter, technical report, etc.).
 - One (1) editing sample that includes a before/after representation of the editing performed (e.g., the original document, unedited, and the edited document showing tracked changes).
- B. With each sample submitted, the offeror shall provide a one-page summary of the work which includes:
 - Client's name
 - Objectives of the deliverable/project
 - Target audience
 - Timeframe for completion of the work
 - Specific role(s) on the project
 - Measures of success
 - Constraints imposed by the client
 - Any other pertinent information related to the sample

6.1.2 Category B – Web-related Communications Services

- A. Submit three (3) samples of work which thoroughly demonstrate the offeror's technical capabilities. The samples shall include:
 - URLs, if the Web sites are current
 - PDFs of Web pages, if the URLs are no longer current

- B.** With each sample submitted, the offeror shall provide a one-page summary of the work which includes:
- Client's name
 - Objectives of the deliverable/project
 - Target audience
 - Timeframe for completion of the work
 - Specific role(s) on the project
 - Measures of success
 - Constraints imposed by the client
 - Any other pertinent information related to the sample

6.1.3 Category C – Video Production Services

- A.** Submit three (3) samples of work which thoroughly demonstrate the offeror's technical capabilities. The samples shall include:
- DVDs or URLs on which completed videos may be viewed
 - One (1) script and/or storyboard (for one of the completed videos provided above)
- B.** With each sample submitted, the offeror shall provide a one-page summary of the work which includes:
- Client's name
 - Objectives of the deliverable/project
 - Target audience
 - Timeframe for completion of the work
 - Specific role(s) on the project
 - Measures of success
 - Constraints imposed by the client
 - Any other pertinent information related to the sample

6.1.4 Category D – Communications Project Coordination

- A.** Submit written descriptions of three (3) specific projects coordinated which thoroughly demonstrate the offeror's technical capabilities. The descriptions shall include:
- A variety of projects (e.g., an event, a project with multiple deliverables, a report with input from a variety of subject-matter experts, etc.)
- B.** For each project described, the offeror shall provide a one-page summary of the work which includes:
- Client's name
 - Objectives of the deliverable/project
 - Target audience
 - Timeframe for completion of the work
 - Specific role(s) on the project
 - Measures of success
 - Constraints imposed by the client
 - Any other pertinent information related to the project

6.2 Specific Personnel/Expertise (30%).

Describe and substantiate offeror's specific personnel and expertise that demonstrate an understanding of the requirements in the Statement of Work.

- a. For each Category proposed, describe specific key personnel skills, expertise, experience, knowledge, availability, and responsiveness as described in the Statement of Work. Each proposed Category must be identified by Category Letter and Title; e.g., "**Category A – Writing/Editing**".
- b. For each Category proposed, provide resumes (do not include Social Security Numbers) for both in-house and external proposed key personnel and indicate the percent of time each person is proposed to dedicate to the Category, their role in the Category, and their responsibilities under the Category.

6.3 Demonstrated Performance (20%).

- a. For each Category proposed, provide a one-page summary which describes your experience in the category and clearly identifies the percentage and type of work that will be performed by both your firm and lower-tier subcontractors, if any. Each proposed Category must be identified by Category Letter and Title; e.g., "**Category A – Writing/Editing**". It is NREL's expectation that 75% of the total work under each work order awarded for each subcontract will be **self-performed**.

7. Price (cost) evaluation for Best Value Selection

After evaluation of the qualitative merit criteria, the following price (cost) evaluation will be used to determine the best value of the offer in meeting the objectives of the solicitation.

The combined qualitative merit value will be considered substantially more important than the price, as represented by the evaluated fully burdened hourly labor rates.

8. Evaluation process

NREL will evaluate offers in three general steps:

Step One—Initial Evaluation

An initial evaluation will be performed to determine if all required information has been provided for an acceptable offer. Offerors may be contacted only for clarification purposes during the initial evaluation. Offerors shall be notified if their offer is determined unacceptable. Unacceptable offers will be excluded from further consideration.

Step Two—Technical Presentations

NREL may request technical presentations from acceptable offerors to further evaluate performance capabilities for the proposed subcontract(s).

Step Three—Discussion, Selection, Negotiation, and Award

All acceptable offers will be evaluated against the Statement of Work and the qualitative merit criteria listed above. Based on this evaluation, NREL has the option, depending on the specific circumstances of the offers received, to use one of the following methods of selection:

- (a) make individual selection(s), conduct negotiations, and make an award(s);
- (b) conduct parallel negotiations with all offerors and make award(s);
- (c) conduct discussions with all offerors, select successful finalists, conduct parallel negotiations with successful finalists, and then make award(s);

- (d) conduct discussions with all offerors, conduct parallel negotiations with the finalists, select successful finalist(s), and then make award(s);
- (e) select successful finalists, conduct successive negotiations, and make successive selections and awards;
- (f) make no award(s).

9. Proposal preparation information

- a. Each proposal must include a **title page**, including the RFP title and number, name of your organization and principal investigator (with postal address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address). The title page must also identify the Category Letter and Title (from the Statement of Work) which the proposal addresses, e.g., “**Category A – Writing/Editing**”.
- b. Formatting instructions:
 - A page is defined as one side of an 8½” x 11” sheet of paper.
 - Use a 12-point font.
 - Maintain at least 1-inch margins on all sides.
 - Originals may be either single or double sided; copies must be double sided.
 - Binding proposals individually with punch or coil is acceptable; 3-ring (loose-leaf) notebooks are discouraged.
- c. Provide a separate **cover letter for each Category proposed** that identifies the specific category for which you are proposing. Each proposal must be identified by Category Letter and Title; e.g., “**Category A – Writing/Editing**”.
- d. Provide a separate **technical proposal for each Category proposed** in an original and five (5) copies, each directed toward meeting the specific requirements for each category described in NREL’s Statement of Work and the qualitative merit criteria for each category (see item 6 above). The technical proposal for each category proposed shall not exceed two (2) pages (excluding sample summary pages and resumes).
- e. Provide a list of **three (3) business references for each Category proposed**. Each reference must include the individual’s name, company name, mailing address, e-mail address, telephone number, and a brief description of how the reference relates to the proposed category. By providing these references, offerors are authorizing NREL to contact them.
- f. Submit an original completed “**Labor Rate Proposal Form**” for each Category proposed (accessed via the NREL limited access website referenced in item 11 below). Each Labor Rate Proposal Form must be identified by Category Letter and Title; e.g., “**Category A – Writing/Editing**”. Each Labor Rate Proposal Form shall include the fully burdened direct labor rates for each personnel category proposed, for the base period and each of the four (4) option periods. Supporting documentation shall be provided for all labor rates proposed. Each Labor Rate Proposal Form must also identify and segregate labor rates for proposed lower-tier subcontractor(s), if applicable. Supporting documentation for all categories for the lower-tier subcontractor(s)’ labor rates shall also be provided.
- g. Submit **one** original completed “**Representations and Certifications**” form with your offer(s) (accessed via the NREL general access website referenced in item 12 below).
- h. Submit **one** original of either the “**Organizational Conflicts of Interest Representation Statement**” OR the “**Organizational Conflicts of Interest Disclosure Statement**”, as

applicable, with your offer(s) (accessed via the NREL general access website referenced in item 12 below).

- i. Submit **one summary cover letter** with your offer(s) which includes:
 - A **summary statement** indicating acceptance of the Statement of Work or any change with the reason(s)
 - A **summary of deviations/exceptions** (if any) to the Sample Subcontract schedule and/or the standard terms and conditions and/or the intellectual property terms and conditions in the appendices. The offeror will explain any exceptions (including deviations and conditional assumptions) taken with respect to the Subcontract schedule and terms and conditions. Any exceptions must contain sufficient amplification and justification to permit evaluation. Such exceptions will not, of themselves, automatically cause an offer to be termed unacceptable. A large number of exceptions or one or more significant exceptions not providing any obvious benefit to the Department of Energy or NREL may, however, result in rejection of such offer as unacceptable.
- j. This solicitation does not allow the submittal of facsimile or electronic proposals.
- k. This solicitation does not commit NREL to pay costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal in response to this RFP.

10. Solicitation Provisions—full text provided

a. Late submissions, modifications, and withdrawals of offers

Offers, or modifications to them, received from qualified organizations after the latest date specified for receipt may be considered if received prior to award, and NREL determines that there is a potential price (cost), technical, or other advantage, as compared to the other offers received. However, depending on the circumstances surrounding the late submission or modification, NREL may consider a late offer to be an indication of the offeror's performance capabilities, resulting in downgrading of the offer in the technical evaluation process. Offers may be withdrawn by written notice received at any time before award. Offers may be withdrawn in person by an offeror or an authorized representative, if the representative's identity is made known and the representative signs a receipt for the offer before award.

b. Restrictions on disclosure and use of data

Offerors who include in their proposals data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the government or NREL, except for evaluation purposes shall—

1. Mark the title page with the following legend:

"This offer includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the government or NREL and shall not be used or disclosed—in whole or in part—for any purpose other than to evaluate this offer. If, however, a subcontract is awarded to this offeror as a result of—or in connection with—the submission of this data, the government or NREL shall have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting subcontract. This restriction does not limit the government or NREL's right to use information contained in this data if

obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained on pages [insert page and line numbers or other identification of pages] of this offer”; and

2. Mark each page of data it wishes to restrict with the following legend:

“Use or disclosure of data contained on this page is subject to the restriction on the title page of this offer.”

c. [RESERVED]

d. Disclaimer

NEITHER THE UNITED STATES; NOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY; NOR ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE ENERGY, LLC; NOR ANY OF THEIR CONTRACTORS, SUBCONTRACTORS, OR THEIR EMPLOYEES MAKE ANY WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, OR ASSUME ANY LEGAL LIABILITY OR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCURACY, COMPLETENESS, OR USEFULNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE OF ANY OF THE TECHNICAL INFORMATION OR DATA ATTACHED OR OTHERWISE PROVIDED HEREIN AS REFERENCE MATERIAL.

e. Solicitation disputes

The Government Accountability Office and the Department of Energy do not accept or rule on disputes for solicitations for Requests for Proposals issued by Management and Operating Contractors for the Department of Energy (operators of Department of Energy National Laboratories). Should an offeror have any concerns regarding the NREL solicitation process or selection determination, the offeror may contact Mark Barela, Advocate for Commercial Practices, at (303) 384-7559. NREL will address each concern received from an offeror on an individual basis.

f. Cyber-Security Requirements

Prior to subcontract award, if NREL determines the work effort requires systems access to NREL’s electronic information (websites excluded), the Subcontractor shall be required to complete and submit a “**Third Party Information Technology Security Questionnaire**”.

11. Solicitation provisions—incorporated by reference—general access

This solicitation incorporates one or more solicitation provisions by reference with the same force and effect as if they were given in full text. The following documents can be downloaded from the NREL **general access** website at http://www.nrel.gov/business_opportunities/solicitations_rfps.html or the NREL RFP Contact (see item 2) will make full text available upon request.

- Statement of Work dated 12/29/09 (with all Attachments)
- Sample Labor Hour and Expenses Subcontract Schedule
- Labor Rate Proposal Form
- Third Party Information Technology Security Questionnaire (See Section 10f, above)

12. Solicitation provisions—incorporated by reference—general access

This solicitation incorporates one or more solicitation provisions by reference with the same force and effect as if they were given in full text. The following documents can be downloaded from the

NREL **general access** website at http://www.nrel.gov/business_opportunities/related_docs.html or the NREL RFP Contact (see item 2) will make full text available upon request.

- NREL Standard Terms and Conditions:
 - Appendix B-6 (01/18/10);
- NREL Intellectual Property Provisions:
 - Appendix C-3 (10/22/98);
- NREL Terms and Conditions for Subcontracts in excess of \$500,000.00
 - Appendix D-1 (10/01/08);
- NREL Travel Requirements:
 - Appendix E (07/08/05) [if required; to be determined prior to subcontract award];
- Representations and Certifications for Subcontracts (05/10/07); and
- NREL Organizational Conflicts of Interest Forms (09/19/05).

13. This is a total small business set-aside procurement

NAICS Code and Small Business Size Standards

- a. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes for this solicitation are:
- 541430 (Graphic Design Services)
 - 541511 (Web page Design Services Custom)
 - 541990 (All Other Professional, Scientific and Technical Services)
 - 512110 (Motion Picture and Video Production)
 - 512191 (Teleproduction and Other Postproduction Services)

- b. The small business size standards are as follows:

- 541430 - Graphic Design Services - \$7M in annual receipts
- 541511 - Web page Design Services Custom - \$25M in annual receipts
- 541990 - All Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services - \$7M in annual receipts
- 512110 - Motion Picture and Video Production - \$29.5M in annual receipts
- 512191 - Teleproduction and Other Postproduction Services - \$29.5M in annual receipts

(Annual receipts of a business concern means the annual average gross revenue for the last three fiscal years.)