# REQUEST FOR SERVICES –NIMAC EVENT PLANNER/CONSULTANT

## 1.1 Invitation to Submit

This Request for Services (“RFS”) is an open invitation to all qualified vendors to put forward a submission for the provision of services on behalf of the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC), located at the American Printing House for the Blind (APH). In responding to this RFS, you will be deemed to have taken into account all of the provisions of the RFS.

## 1.2 The Services

Information about APH and its requirements are set out in Supplement A (APH’s Information and Requirements).

## 1.3 Type of Contract

The selected Vendor will be expected to enter into a Statement of Work.

## 1.4 Definitions

Unless otherwise specified in this RFS, capitalized words and phrases have the meanings set out in the Master Agreement.

**"Business Day"** means any working day, Monday to Friday inclusive, excluding APH holidays, namely: New Year's Day; Memorial Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Thanksgiving Day and Friday following; Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

 **“Vendor”** means the applicant submitting the response to this RFS.

**“Statement of Work”** means the formal contract established between APH and a Vendor to provide the services described in this RFS.

## 1.5 Interpretation

All references to days in this RFS and in your submission are to Business Days, unless expressly set out otherwise.

## 2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

### 2.1.1 Timetable

The RFS timetable is tentative only and may be changed by APH in its sole discretion. The following is the schedule for this RFS:

* **Issue Date of RFS: 8/25/2023**
* **Submission Deadline: 10/01/2023**
* **Target Date to Begin Work: 11/01/2023**

### 2.1.2 Parties Shall Bear Their Own Costs

The parties will bear their own costs associated with or incurred through this RFS process, including any costs arising out of or incurred in: (a) the preparation and issuance of this RFS; (b) the preparation and making of a submission; or (c) the conduct of interviews, negotiations or other activities related to this RFS process.

### 2.1.3 Inquiries

All inquiries regarding this RFS should be directed by email (no phone calls) to APH Representative and will be accepted through 9/15/2023. APH will provide responses to questions within one business week and post the questions and answers on the NIMAC website (<https://nimac.us>).

## 2.2 VENDOR SUBMISSIONS

### 2.2.1 Submissions Made Only in Prescribed Manner

To be eligible for consideration, you must be a Vendor that has completed and submitted the Submission Form set out in Supplement B (Submission Form), and thereby acknowledge your acceptance of terms and conditions of this RFS.

You must demonstrate in your submission that each proposed trainer has the knowledge, experience and all other qualifications for the proposed work, and will be able to provide the requested services. You must provide the APH with the opportunity to interview each proposed consultant and must not charge APH in connection with any interview.

You must also submit a Pricing Schedule as “Schedule A” along with your proposal Submission Form.

There is not a special form for submitting this information; however, the Pricing Schedule must include:

* the full legal name of the Vendor
* the proposed Per Diem Rate
* the range of days to accomplish the work
* proposed budget range

You must identify all subcontractors that you propose to use, if any, and must also identify which consultant(s) are provided by which subcontractor.

You must specify the total number of days required to complete the services.

**Important note: Please supply the Pricing Schedule as a separate Word or PDF file from the rest of the submission.**

You should provide your submission by email to APH Representative. All submissions submitted by Vendors by email to APH Representative are deemed received once the email has entered into the email inbox of APH Representative. Submissions are to be directed only to APH Representative. APH shall not be responsible for any email delivery issues or technical problems with regard to the submissions.

### 2.2.2 Amending or Withdrawing Submissions

You may withdraw or amend your submission at any time prior to the execution of a Statement of Work.

### 2.2.3 Evaluation of Submissions

Submissions will be evaluated on the basis of the Vendor’s response to all information requested in this RFS, including but not limited to the proposed pricing, the qualifications of the consultant/trainer(s), and the quality of the proposed course outlined in the proposal. One (or more) successful Vendors may be selected to enter into a Statement of Work based on this RFS and the Vendors’ submissions.

## 2.3 EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT

### 2.3.1 Selection of Vendor

The Vendor selected by APH will be expected to enter into a Statement of Work. The agreement execution process is subject to the Terms of Reference set out in Section 2.6 and will not constitute a legally binding offer to enter into a contract on the part of the Vendor or APH before the execution of a Statement of Work.

### 2.3.2 Failure to Enter into a Statement of Work

The selected Vendor is expected to enter into a Statement of Work on or before the Anticipated Start Date set out in subsection 2.1.1. The failure to do so may result in the selection of another Vendor and may adversely impact the Vendor’s eligibility to participate in future RFS processes.

## 2.4 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

You must not engage in any Conflict of Interest. In this Request for Services, "Conflict of Interest" includes, but is not limited to, any situation or circumstance where:

(a) in relation to the Request for Services process, the Vendor has an unfair advantage or engages in conduct, directly or indirectly, that may give it an unfair advantage, including (i) having, or having access to, information in the preparation of its submission that is confidential to APH and not available to other Vendors; (ii) communicating with any person with a view to influencing preferred treatment in the Request for Services process; or (iii) engaging in conduct that compromises, or could be seen to compromise, the integrity or competitiveness of Request for Services process and render that process non-competitive and unfair; or

(b) in relation to the performance of its contractual obligations in a contract with APH, the Vendor’s other commitments, relationships or financial interests (i) could, or could be seen to, exercise an improper influence over the objective, unbiased and impartial exercise of its independent judgment; or (ii) could or could be seen to compromise, impair or be incompatible with the effective performance of its contractual obligations.

## 2.5 TERMS OF REFERENCE

These provisions apply to this RFS:

(a) this RFS process is not intended to create a formal, legally binding procurement process and shall not give rise to the legal rights or duties applied to a formal, legally binding procurement process; if you are the successful Vendor, you will be expected to enter into a Statement of Work with APH;

(b) neither party shall have the right to make claims against the other with respect to this RFS process, the selection of any Vendor, the failure to be selected to enter into a Statement of Work, or the failure to honor submissions prior to the execution of a Statement of Work;

(c) no legal relationship or obligation regarding the procurement of any services shall be created between any Vendor and APH prior to the execution of a Statement of Work;

(d) APH may make public the names of any or all Vendors;

you consent to APH’s collection of the information as contemplated under this RFS for the uses contemplated under this RFS;

(e) APH may elect not to consider a Vendor whose submission contains misrepresentations or any inaccurate, misleading or incomplete information; APH may cancel this RFS process at any time;

(f) you agree to all of the terms of the procurement process set out in this RFS.

# SUPPLEMENT A - APH’S INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

## 1.1 CONTACT INFORMATION

APH: National Instructional Materials Access Center, American Printing House for the Blind

APH Representative: Nicole Gaines

Title: National Director of Digital Access Initiatives

Email address: ngaines@aph.org

## 1.2 PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name: National Instructional Materials Access Center

Service Category: Event Planning Services / Consulting / Writing

**Work Start** **Target Date**: 11/1/2023

**Work End** **Date**: On or before September 30, 2024

## 1.3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) established the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) to serve as the national source file repository for K-12 instructional materials. The NIMAC receives XML-based source files from educational publishers and makes these files available to states for use in the production of accessible formats such as braille, large print, DAISY and EPUB, for use by qualifying students in elementary and secondary schools.

The only file format that the NIMAC can accept into the repository is the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard, or NIMAS, which was defined in the IDEA 2004 regulations.

Once produced from the NIMAS file by an accessible media producer, an accessible format can then be reproduced and distributed to any number of qualifying students for the life of the textbook.

The goal of NIMAS and the NIMAC is to make the first-time production of accessible formats for students as efficient as possible by providing a national, central repository of source files—in the legislatively mandated national source file format.

To date, the repository has accepted over 73,500 files from about 180 educational publishers. All 50 states, as well as the eligible U.S. territories and DoDEA, participate in the NIMAC. There are roughly 450 registered users of the NIMAC, and over 50,000 files have been downloaded since the NIMAC began operations in late 2006.

As mentioned above, the NIMAS technical specification, which was published in the IDEA 2004 regulations, is the only file format that the NIMAC can receive. Because it is defined in the regulations, the NIMAS technical specification can only be altered/updated through legislative or regulatory action.

While the educational landscape has changed considerably since IDEA 2004 went into effect, the IDEA legislation has not yet come up for reauthorization. The NIMAS specification, in turn, has not been updated since it was codified in the IDEA regulations. The NIMAC is interested in exploring what updates to the specification would be advantageous in supporting the needs of today’s students and students in the foreseeable future.

In the summer of 2023, the NIMAC received a supplementary award from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to engage in a process of information gathering related to updating the NIMAS specification. In 2023 and 2024, the NIMAC is undertaking several activities to gather input from a range of stakeholders/critical partners, including educational publishers, NIMAS conversion vendors, accessible media producers, braille transcribers, software vendors, assistive technology vendors, and others.

The work will be launched with a survey in late summer to key stakeholder groups. This and additional meetings, possibly virtual and in-person, will culminate in an in-person convening of stakeholders for meetings in Washington, DC, in spring or early summer of 2024. The input from all of the information-gathering activities will then be collected in a report of findings.

The NIMAC is seeking one or more contractors to assist with 1) engaging with and advising NIMAC leadership on the project, including possibly attending or helping to facilitate a related “listening session” at ATIA 2024; 2) leading the planning for the in-person DC event; and 3) report writing.

While not necessarily required, training or experience related to assistive technology, accessible educational materials, NIMAS and other digital file formats, or providing services to students with disabilities would be helpful.

## 1.4 APH’S REQUIREMENTS

**Scope of Services and Deliverables**

The ideal vendor will be able to assist with the three areas of work below:

1. Engaging with and advising NIMAC leadership on the project overall. This may include:
	1. assisting in the analysis of survey results and using these as a basis for planning subsequent meetings and the convening in DC;
	2. possibly attending or helping to facilitate a related “listening session” at ATIA 2024; and/or
	3. facilitating or assisting with related virtual events.
2. Leading the planning for the DC event, including:
	1. assisting with planning out the meetings themselves including advising on
		1. the format of the meetings
		2. scheduling the day(s) of the meetings
		3. on-site meal planning for participants
		4. the ideal number of participants based on meeting format and resources.
	2. administrative responsibilities such as managing travel reimbursements for participants, etc.
3. Report writing, including:
	1. collecting the input from the surveys, virtual and in-person meetings, and the convening in DC; and
	2. drafting the final report for review by NIMAC leadership and submission to OSEP.

**Administrative Services and Supplies –** All administrative services and supplies used by the Vendor to complete the Services will be provided to APH at no additional charge.

Preference is given to applications from small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises.SUPPLEMENT B - SUBMISSION FORM

Request for Services Number: RFS23240NG01

To: American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.

(a) The full legal name of the Vendor is:

(b) Please identify any other relevant name under which the Vendor conducts business:

(c) The Vendor’s address, telephone number and email address are:

(d) Please identify the contact person for this RFS and provide their telephone number and email address:

(e) Describe the qualifications and experience of the Vendor:

* the education, training, and experience of the staff relevant to this RFS;
* information regarding similar work performed in the past;
* the contact information for two (2) references.

(f) Complete and submit a Pricing Schedule as “Schedule A” along with the Submission Form. (See section 2.2.1 above for details on how to submit your proposed budget for the project.)

**Note: There is not a designated form for supplying the Pricing Schedule; however, it must be submitted as a separate Word or PDF file.**