



Request for Quote **CMECS-08022010**

Key RFQ Dates:

RFQ Issued: August 31, 2010
Written Questions Due: September 9 to September 24
Submit Proposal By: October 4, 2010

REQUEST FOR QUOTE (RFQ) **Notice To Offerors Calling For Proposals** **Continuing Medical Education Consulting Services**

SfN holds its five-day annual meeting in October or November, drawing about 30,000 attendees yearly. Over 900 sessions take place during the meeting including lectures, workshops, poster sessions, symposia, minisymposia, and nanosymposia. Physician attendees may elect, for an additional fee, to supplement their registration and receive a CME certificate for up to 36 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits, based on one credit per hour of attending CME sessions. The activities that offer CME credit at the annual meeting are six Featured Lectures, 13 Special Lectures, about 25 Symposia, and about 25 Minisymposia. Approximately 500-600 physician attendees yearly participate in the CME program at the annual meeting.

The goal is to contract with a vendor who has expertise in assisting non-profit associations with ACCME re-accreditation. The firm must understand all aspects of ACCME's self study and reaccreditation process, assist SfN in maintaining compliance with regularly-updated ACCME criteria and policies, and assist in the development of a system to monitor and improve the effectiveness of CME activities for SfN's physician members.

It is SfN's intent to award a contract to one firm. This firm will be responsible for meeting the charge of the engagement as outlined in section 6, Scope of Services, of this document.

Please Note: Proposals received after October 4, 2010 will be considered at SfN's discretion.

We look forward to receiving your proposals from your firm and invite any questions you may have regarding this RFQ.

Sincerely,

Paul T. Troxell
Procurement Manager

Society for Neuroscience
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202-962-4000
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No. CMECS-08022010

REQUEST FOR QUOTE

THIS REQUEST FOR QUOTE (“RFQ”) IS NOT IN ANY MANNER TO BE CONSIDERED AN ORDER FOR, OR AN OFFER FOR, THE SERVICES / PRODUCTS SET FORTH HEREIN, NOR WILL THE SOCIETY FOR NEUROSCIENCE (SfN) INCUR OR BE LIABLE FOR ANY COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PREPARATION OF YOUR OFFER. SfN RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ACCEPT OR REJECT ANY OR ALL OFFERS. ACCEPTANCE OF YOUR RESPONSE IN NO WAY OBLIGATES SfN TO ISSUE SUBSEQUENT RFQ’S OR CONTRACT INFORMATION TO RESPONDING FIRMS.

BY ACKNOWLEDGMENT OR RESPONSE TO THIS RFQ, THE FIRM HEREBY CERTIFIES THAT NO GRATUITIES WERE OFFERED OR SOLICITED BY ANY SfN EMPLOYEE, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY. ANY SITUATION WHERE A GRATUITY IS SOLICITED BY A SfN ASSOCIATE MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY TO SfN’S DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT (202) 962-4000.

About Society for Neuroscience (SfN): SfN is a nonprofit membership organization of basic scientists and physicians who study the brain and nervous system. Neuroscience includes the study of brain development, sensation and perception, learning and memory, movements, sleep, stress, aging and neurological and psychiatric disorders. It also includes the molecules, cells and genes responsible for nervous system functioning. Recognizing the tremendous potential for the study of the brain and nervous system as a separate field, the Society was formed in 1970. It has grown from 500 members to nearly 42,000 and is the world's largest organization of scientists devoted to the study of the brain and nervous system.

DEVELOPMENT COSTS AND CONDITIONS

- Neither SfN nor its representatives shall be liable for any expenses a Firm incurs in connection with preparation of a response to this RFQ. Applicants should prepare their proposals simply and economically, providing a straightforward and concise description of the Firm's ability to meet the requirements of this RFQ.
- The issuance of this RFQ does not commit SfN to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal in response to this request or to actually procure the requested services.
- SfN reserves the right to reject any or all the RFQ applications submitted in response to this solicitation, due to the lack of responsiveness, changes in SfN's operating objectives, lack of funding, or for any reason determined by SfN and at the sole discretion of SfN.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Time Extension: SfN may for good and sufficient reason extend the response deadline, in which case all potential vendors will receive an addendum setting forth the new time and date.
- Request for Additional Information: Prior to the final selection, vendors may be required to submit additional information that SfN deems necessary to further evaluate the vendor's qualifications. As part of the evaluation process vendors shall furnish such additional information as SfN may reasonably require.
- Denial of Reimbursement: SfN will not reimburse vendors for any costs associated with the preparation and submission of a proposal or for any travel or other costs that are incurred.
- SfN will not be liable for any costs incurred by the vendor in connection with interviews (i.e., travel, accommodations, etc.) conducted as part of the evaluation or negotiation process.
- Gratuity Prohibition: Vendors shall not offer any gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value to any associate at SfN for the purpose of influencing consideration of this proposal. If an SfN associate solicits a gratuity, the vendor is obligated to inform SfN's Deputy Executive Director.
- Right of Withdrawal: A proposal may not be withdrawn before the expiration of one hundred and eighty (180) days from the proposal due date.
- Right of Negotiation: SfN reserves the right to negotiate with the selected vendor the exact terms and conditions for a contract.
- Liability and Insurance: The selected firm shall purchase and maintain insurance in the amounts and types as needed for the protection from claims caused by the contractor's personnel or work, or by any subcontractor performing work for the contractor.
- Legal Compliance: In connection with the furnishing of supplies or performance of work under the contract, the contractor agrees to comply with the Fair Labor Standard Act, Equal Opportunity Employment Act, and all other applicable Federal and State laws, regulations and executive orders to the extent that the same may be applicable.
- Disqualification: No award will be made to any firm, person or party, parent or subsidiary that is de-barred from providing services to the federal or state government, or with which SfN has an outstanding claim against or a financial dispute.
- Performance and Approval of Sub-Consultants: The vendor will perform the project as an independent contractor and not as an agent or employee of SfN. The vendor shall secure written permission from SfN before subcontracting any part of the project. Such permission should be obtained during the proposal evaluation stage.

- Licenses, Permits & Taxes: The price or prices for the work shall include full compensation for all taxes, permits, etc. that the vendor is or may be required to pay. SfN is a tax exempt entity.
- Minority/Women Business Enterprise (MWBE) Policy: It is the policy of SfN to provide minority and women owned business enterprises with equal opportunity for participating in the selling of goods and services to SfN. In cases where a vendor plans to sub-contract a portion of the work, it is required to make "A Good Faith Effort" to engage qualified MWBEs for such work. Vendors shall keep records of such efforts, when applicable, that are adequate to permit a determination of compliance with this requirement. If subcontracting is involved in the proposal, a Proposed Schedule of Minority/Women Business Enterprise Participation shall also be submitted.
- Revisions to this RFQ: In the event it becomes necessary to clarify or revise this RFQ, such clarification or revision will be by addendum. Any RFQ addendum will be distributed to all registered bidders via the e-mail provided.
- Bidder Responsibility: The bidder assumes sole responsibility for the complete effort required in the RFQ. No special consideration shall be given after bids are opened because bidder's failure to be knowledgeable of all the requirements of the RFQ. By submitting a proposal in response to this RFQ, the bidder represents that it has satisfied itself, from its own investigation, of all the requirements of this RFQ.

Please refer to the following items during preparation of your Proposal:

1. Project Summary:

SfN's CME program is organized by the Meeting Services Department and managed by the Assistant Director of Annual Meeting Programs. SfN has received four-year reaccreditation from ACCME since 1995. The current accreditation status runs through July 2012.

A CME consultant is sought to support SfN with all aspects of its CME program, including keeping apprised and compliant with the most updated ACCME criteria and policies. This also includes the consulting firm reviewing and providing guidance on SfN's upcoming self study and Performance in Practice activity files during the upcoming re-accreditation process.

2. Schedule:

This request for proposal will be governed by the following schedule:

Release RFQ	August 31, 2010
Registration	September 11, 2010
Question and Answer Period	September 10 to September 24
Proposals Due	October 4, 2010

SfN may delay scheduled due dates if it is to the advantage of SfN to do so. SfN will notify respondents of all changes in scheduled due dates by written notice.

3. Registration:

All Firms that will submit an offer in response to this RFQ are required to register with SfN. To register, the Firm must send an e-mail containing a point of contact, statement of intent to file a proposal, and the Firm's e-mail address to rfp@sfn.org by COB September 11, 2010. The signed and dated "Nondisclosure" agreement must be received by SfN no later than September 20, 2010.

4. Supplier Questions:

Questions may be e-mailed to rfp@sfn.org until 12:00 PM EST on September 24, 2010. No further questions will be addressed after this date. SfN will respond to all questions submitted via the e-mail address provided by the registered participants. It is SfN policy to compile all questions and answers, unless they are so specific as to identify the firm, sending them out to all registered participants.

Written questions should be directly tied to the RFQ by the writer. Questions should be asked in constructive order, from beginning to end, following the organization of the RFQ. Each question should begin by referencing the RFQ page and section number to which it relates.

Short procedural inquiries may be accepted by telephone by the Procurement Manager, however, oral explanations or instructions given over the telephone shall NOT be binding upon SfN.

NOTE: Registered firms are to use the rfp@sfn.org email address and are NOT to contact any SfN associate directly without first clearing it with the Procurement Manager. You can contact the Procurement Manager at 202-962-4028 or use the above e-mail address. Anyone caught violating this rule risks being eliminated from the RFQ process.

5. Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions:

5.1 General

The bidder must follow instructions in this RFQ when preparing and submitting its bid proposal. The bidder is advised to read thoroughly and to follow all instructions. The information required to be submitted in response to this RFQ's has been determined to be essential in the bid evaluation and contract award process.

Each bidder is given wide latitude in the degree of detail it elects to offer of the extent to which plans, designs systems, processes and procedures are relevant. Each bidder is cautioned, however, that insufficient detail may result in a determination that the bid proposal is materially non-responsive.

- **Preparation of Proposal**

Each proposal shall be prepared simply and economically, avoiding the use of elaborate promotional material beyond those sufficient to provide a complete, accurate and reliable presentation.

- **Number of Proposal Copies**

Please submit one electronic copy of your proposal to - **Email:** ptroxell@sfn.org

- **Joint Venture**

If a joint venture is submitting a bid, the agreement between the parties relating to such joint venture should be submitted with the venture's proposal. Authorized signatories from each party comprising the joint venture must sign the bid proposal.

5.2 Management Overview

The bidder shall set forth its overall technical approach and plans to meet the requirements of the RFQ in a narrative format. The narrative should convince SfN that the bidder understands the objectives that the contract is intended to meet, the nature of the required work and the level of effort necessary to successfully complete the contract. The narrative should convince SfN that the bidder's general approach and plans to undertake and complete the contract are appropriate to the task and subtasks involved.

Mere reiterations of the RFQ tasks and subtasks are strongly discouraged as they do not provide insight into the bidder's ability to complete the contract. The bidder's response to this section should be designed to convince SfN that the bidder's detailed plan and approach proposed to complete the Scope of Work are realistic, attainable and appropriate and that the bidders proposal will lead to successful contract completion.

5.3 Contract Management

The bidder should describe its specific plans to manage, control and supervise the contract to ensure satisfactory contract completion according to the required schedule. The plan should include the bidders approach to communicate with SfN, including, but not limited to, status meetings, status reports, ect.

5.4 Contract Schedule

The bidder should include a contract schedule. If key dates are a part of the RFQ, the bidder's schedule should incorporate such key dates and should identify the completion date for each task and sub-task required by the Scope of Work. Such schedule should also identify the associated deliverable item(s) to be submitted as evidence of completion of the task and/or subtask.

The bidder should identify the contract scheduling and control methodology to be used and should provide the rationale for choosing such methodology.

5.5 Implementation Plan

It is essential that SfN move forward quickly to have the contract in place. Therefore, the bidder must include as part of its proposal an implementation plan, beginning with the date of notification of contract award. Such implementation plan should include the following elements:

- A detailed timetable for the implementation period. The timetable should be designed to demonstrate how the bidder will have all services available within the time frame indicated in the RFQ.
- The bidder's plan for the deployment and use of management, supervisory or other key personnel during the implementation period. The plan should show all management, supervisory and key personnel that will be assigned to manage, supervise and monitor the bidders implementation of the contract within the implementation period.

NOTE – The bidder should clearly identify management, supervisory or other key staff that will be assigned only during the implementation period.

- The bidder's plan for recruitment of staff required to provide all services required by the RFQ on the contract start date at the end of the implementation period. The Bidder should submit a plan for the purchase and distribution of equipment, inventory, supplies, materials, ect., that will be required to fully implement the contract required start date.
- The bidder should submit plan for the use of subcontractor(s), if any in this contract.

5.6 Budget

The bidder should submit the budget it has developed for providing the services required by the RFQ. This information will be used for evaluation purposes and is intended to provide SfN with an additional perspective on how the bidder will allocate financial resources in undertaking the work required by the RFQ.

5.7 Potential Problems

The bidder should set forth a summary of any and all problems that the bidder anticipates during the term of the contract. For each problem identified, the bidder should provide its proposed solution.

5.8 Organizational Support and Experience

The bidder should include information relating to its organization, personnel, and experience, including, but not limited to, references, together with contact names and telephone numbers, evidence of the bidder's qualifications and capabilities to perform the services required by this RFQ.

5.9 Location

The bidder should include the location of the bidder's office that will be responsible for managing the contract. The bidder should include the telephone number and name of the individual to contact.

5.10 Organizational Chart

The bidder should include a contract organizational chart, with names showing management, supervisory and other key personnel (including subcontractor's management supervisory or other key personnel) to be assigned to the contract. The chart should include the labor category and the title of each such individual.

5.11 Resumes

Detailed resumes should be submitted for all management, supervisory and key personnel to be assigned to the contract. Resumes should be structured to emphasize relevant qualifications and experience of the individuals in successfully completing contracts of similar size and scope to those required by this RFQ. Resumes should clearly identify previous experience in completing similar contracts. Beginning and ending dates should be given for each similar contract. A description of the contracts should be given and should demonstrate how the individual's work on the completed contract related to the individual's ability to contribute to the services required by the RFQ. With respect to each similar contract, the bidder should include the name and address of each reference together with a person to contact for a reference check and telephone number.

5.12 Backup Staff

The bidder should include a list of backup staff that may be called upon to assist or replace primary individuals assigned. Backup staff must clearly be identified in the proposal as backup staff.

5.13 Organizational Chart

The bidder should include an organizational chart showing the bidder's entire organizational structure. The chart should show the relationship of the individuals assigned the contract to the bidder's overall organizational structure.

5.14 Experience of Bidder on Contracts of Similar Size and Scope

The bidder should provide a comprehensive listing of contracts of similar size and scope that it has successfully completed, as evidence of the bidder's ability to successfully complete the services required by this RFQ. Emphasis should be placed on contracts that are similar in size and scope to those required by this RFQ. A description of all such contracts should include and should show how such contract relates to the ability of the firm to complete the services required by this RFQ. For each contract, bidder should provide the name and telephone number of a contact person for the other contract party. Beginning and ending dates should also be given for each contract.

5.15 Financial Capability of the Bidder

The bidder should provide proof of its financial capability to undertake and successfully complete the contract. A certified financial statement for the most recent fiscal year and current bank reference(s) are acceptable. If a bidder chooses not to include this information with its bid, this information may be requested from the bidder during the evaluation process. If the bidder is requested to submit this information during the evaluation process, the bidder will be required to submit, failure to do so will be cause for finding the bid non-responsive.

5.16 Subcontractor(s)

Should bidder propose to utilize a subcontractor(s) to fulfill any of its obligations, the bidder shall be responsible for the subcontractor's: (a) performance; (b) compliances with all of the terms and conditions of the contract; and; (c) compliance with the regiments of all applicable laws.

Bidder should provide detailed description of services to be provided by each subcontractor. The bidder should provide documented experience demonstrating that each subcontractor has successfully performed work on contracts of a similar size and scope to the work that subcontractor is designated to perform for the bidder.

6. Scope of Services:

CME RFQ Scope

Accreditation Criteria Analysis:

- a) Contractor must meet with SfN to evaluate current accreditation practices by gathering critical information regarding staff and documentation processes. The Contractor must provide a detailed, personalized assessment of SfN's CME program and current practices. in order to prepare a current practice report.
- b) Contractor shall direct discussions with SfN on procedural or policy adjustments required in order to conform to ACCME's most updated criteria.

Self Study Report

- c) Contractor must assist SfN in the development and writing of the ACCME Self Study (July 2012 Decision) by describing and demonstrating through specific examples compliance with ACCME's most updated accreditation criteria. The Contractor must be able to share experiences from recent self-studies completed under ACCME updated accreditation criteria.
- d) The Contractor must assist SfN with reviewing CME Activity Files that provide evidence of performance in practice for each specific accreditation criterion, identifying and selecting specific activities that have been planned in observance of that specific criterion.
- e) Contractor must provide dedicated personnel to manage and direct all aspects of the self-study and oversee SfN staff's writing of the self study chapters.
- f) Contractor must provide expert strategies from recent self study experiences conducted under the most updated ACCME criteria and provide exemplary samples from previous studies.
- g) Contractor must be willing to be present at the official interview by ACCME surveyors in 2012.

File Preparation and Documentation

- h) Contractor must provide assistance in the critical task of ensuring performance-in-practice activity files meet the new ACCME accreditation criteria. Contractor will assist in preparing each sample in accordance with ACCME self-study requirements in order to determine if current practices conform to ACCME policies.
- i) Contractor must provide assistance working with SfN staff in identifying and preparing current practice exemplary samples, and reviewing fifteen files pre-selected by ACCME for evaluation of compliance with their accreditation standards. The Contractor will provide feedback to SfN upon review of the selected files for evaluation and compliance.

Policy Manual Revision and Updates

- j) Contractor shall review existing policies pertaining to ACCME policy mandates on content validation, conflicts of interest, commercial support and other aspects of CME program management. The Contractor will assist in any revisions, modifications, and additions to SfN's CME Policies and Procedures manual in order to ensure these conform to ACCME policy.
- k) All policies and procedures related to new ACCME criteria must be reviewed and updated and included in the self-study report.

Mock Survey

- l) Contractor must provide an intensive mock survey to prepare staff for impending official review by ACCME surveyors in 2012. The Contractor shall provide sample interview questions, recommended appropriate answers, and review strategic points in each criterion. Contractor will assist in developing and preparing open address for official interview.
- m) Contractor will assist SfN staff reviewing the final version of the self-study materials and other related materials in order to prepare for the mock survey and official ACCME interview.

- n) Contractor will generate a briefing report at the conclusion of the mock survey highlighting strengths and weakness of the interview process, and provide strategies to improve areas of weakness.

7. Cost Proposal

Bidder must submit their cost proposal for the work as outlined in this RFQ. Bidder should include comprehensive listing of all labor categories that may be used to perform the work listed herein or any additional work and/or special projects. Loaded hourly rates are to be submitted for all labor categories that the bidder anticipates may be performed herein.

Failure to include a labor category with the loaded hourly rates will exclude that category from eligibility to perform additional work and/or special projects under the contract resulting from this RFQ. Each bidder may submit labor categories for additional work that are not included in the base proposal to perform the Scope of Work required by this RFQ.

Each bidder may also submit any additional price or cost information that the bidder feels may be required to perform any additional work and/or special projects required by this RFQ.

ONLY price and costing information provided by the bidder in its original bid proposal submitted in response to this RFQ may later be used for additional work and/or special projects to be paid against the contract resulting from this RFQ.

8. Proposal Evaluation and Contract Award

8.1 Proposal Evaluation Committee

Proposals may be evaluated by an Evaluation Committee comprised of members of affected departments together with members from purchasing. On occasion, the Evaluation Committee may choose to make use of the expertise of an outside consultant in an advisory role.

8.2 Oral Presentation and/or Clarification of Bids

A bidder may be required to give an oral presentation to the Evaluation Committee concerning its bid proposal. The Evaluation Committee may also require a bidder to submit written responses to questions regarding its bid.

The purpose of such communication with bidder, either through an oral presentation or a letter of clarification, is to provide an opportunity for the bidder to clarify or elaborate on its bid. The original bid, as submitted, however, cannot be supplemented, changed, or corrected in any way during the evaluation period. **No comments regarding other bids are permitted.** Bidders may not attend presentations made by their competitors.

It is within the Evaluation Committee's discretion whether to require a bidder to give an oral presentation or require a bidder to submit written responses to questions regarding its bid. Action by the Evaluation Committee in this regard should not be construed to imply acceptance or rejection of a bid. The Procurement Manager is the sole point of contact regarding any requests for an oral presentation or written clarification.

8.3 Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria categories, not necessarily listed in order of significance, will be used to evaluate the bid proposals received in response to this RFQ. The evaluation criteria categories may be used to develop more detailed evaluation criteria to be used in the evaluation process.

- 8.3.1 The bidder's detailed approach and plans to perform the services required by the Scope of Services section of the RFQ.
- 8.3.2 The bidder's documented experience in successfully completing contracts of similar size and scope of those required by this RFQ.

- 8.3.3 The qualifications and experience of the bidder's management, supervisory or other key personnel assigned to the contract, with emphasis on ACCME re-accreditation experience as required by this RFQ.
- 8.3.4 The overall ability of the bidder to mobilize, undertake and successfully complete the contract. This judgment will include, but not be limited to, the following factors: the number and qualification of management, supervisory and other staff proposed by the bidder to complete the contract, the availability and commitment to the contract of the bidder's management, supervisory and other staff proposed and the bidder's contract management plan, including the bidder's contract organizational chart.
- 8.3.5 The bidder's cost proposal.
- 8.3.6 **SfN's right to consider additional information.**
- 8.3.7 The Procurement Manager may obtain any information determined to be appropriate regarding the ability of the bidder to supply and/or render the services required by the RFQ.
- 8.3.8 The Evaluation Committee may consider such other factors that, in the opinion of the team, are important in evaluating the bidder's proposal.
- 8.3.9 The Evaluation Committee reserves the right to request all bidders to explain the methods used to arrive at any costs or pricing figures.
- 8.3.10 When making the contract award decision, SfN may consider evidence of formal or other complaints against the bidder(s) by local, state and federal government agencies or other non-profits.
- 8.3.11 SfN reserves the right to check bidders financial capacity and ability to successfully undertake and complete the services required by this RFQ by any means deemed appropriate.
- 8.3.12 SfN reserves the right to conduct site inspections of any facility(s) services by the bidder(s) to assist in judging the bidder's ability to provide the services required by this RFQ. This applies to all facilities services by the bidder or any sub-contractor to the bidder.

9. Contract Award

The contract shall be awarded with reasonable promptness by written notice to that responsible bidder whose bid, conforming to the invitation for bids, will be most advantageous to SfN, price and other factors considered.