



AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE
FOR THE BLIND, INC.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: Graphic Design Support

The American Printing House for the Blind is distributing this Request For Proposal in order to select vendor(s) to provide graphic design support for the product development and product promotional efforts of APH products. Our goals are to: (1) Obtain competitive pricing for these services; (2) Select vendor(s) with a demonstrated capability of delivering high quality graphic design services across multiple projects simultaneously; (3) Provide a selection process fair to all vendors.

Our Company

[The American Printing House for the Blind \(APH\)](#) was founded in Louisville, Kentucky in 1858, making it the oldest institution of its kind in the United States. APH is the world's largest company devoted solely to creating [products and services](#) for people who are visually impaired. Our mission is:

To promote the independence of blind and visually impaired persons by providing specialized materials, products, and services needed for education and life.

Over 300 APH employees research, design, and manufacture braille, large print, recorded, CD-ROM, and tactile graphic publications, as well as a wide assortment of educational and daily living products.

Scope of Services

Summary:

Provide graphic design and production art services in support of the product development and product/services promotion of APH products. Additional services such as software art components, web development, special production art expertise, photography, videography, and systems improvement consultative services are to be provided within the contract on an "as-needed" basis.

Contractor to provide graphic art design and production to include but not limited to the following range of activities for APH:

- a. Direct product development support in the creation/compilation/design of manuals, logos, cases, physical product components, software art components, computer animation, packaging and other product development support activities as assigned by APH.
- b. Development, design and/or production of product/services brochures, catalogs, web site artwork/layout, displays, posters, and presentation materials in support of the promotion of APH products, services, and/or special events.
- c. Still photography, videographic services (i.e. photoshoots, editing, dvd authoring, etc)
- d. Consultative services in printing technology, graphic design, and project management.
- e. Other related activities as required and mutually agreed upon by both Contractor and APH.

We expect to enter into a multi-year contract with the vendor(s) selected from the responses to this RFP.

APH Product and Services to be supported

Graphic Design services are sought for two departments within APH: Communications and Research. The Communications Department is responsible for the creation and development of product and services promotional materials such as catalogs, brochures, posters, and also manages the APH web site. The Research Department is responsible for the development of new products and the on-going support of current product offerings. Each department has unique operational demands that require different project management approaches for the services they require.

The Communications Department Requirements:

The Communications department is responsible for the development of product catalogs and brochures, posters, and other promotional materials for both APH products and services offered by APH as well as special events.

The following is a link to accessible editions of APH catalogs:

[APH Products Catalog](#)

The number of product brochures, posters, fliers, signage for special events, and other product/services support material is quite variable as it is dependent upon needs that vary year-to-year. Our best estimate anticipates 50 of these types of projects during a calendar year.

The Communication Department is responsible for posting and maintaining the APH web site – www.aph.org. Consultative services in support of web design, content development, etc. fall within the scope of services sought for through this RFP. We expect approximately 20 of these types of projects per year.

The creation, design, and production of the APH Annual Report is another of the projects undertaken by the Communications Department. Like all APH promotional items, our Annual Report is made available in media accessible to blind persons, in this case PDF and HTML editions. In other cases, accessible media might include large print, braille, or audio materials. (Note: knowledge of braille is not a prerequisite for bidding on this contract.)

Another example of jobs overseen by the Communications Dept. are a wide range of materials created for our annual national conference held in Louisville each fall. This includes postcards, web graphics, video production, PowerPoint creation, still photography of meeting activities, still photography of artwork for our national art contest, signage, program booklets, etc.

The Research Department Requirements:

The Research Department is responsible for both new product development and on-going support of current APH products. At this time, we have 181 products/components in active development. The latest APH product catalog lists over twelve hundred products. A perusal of our catalog will attest to the extraordinary diversity of the APH product offerings. The bulk of the product are directed at the educational needs of the visually impaired K-12 student. We also provide assessment tools and supporting curriculum addressing a wide range of disciplines. Typically, these assessment products are packaged as kits containing a variety of custom-made manipulatives designed to meet the objectives of the kit.

Additionally, APH offers instructional/informational videos promoting the use of specific products or providing additional instruction (as part of a kit). We are seeing an increase in the incorporation some type of video aspect to a project. This may be as simple as wanting to distribute video files captured during the research phase of the project in order to reinforce concepts represented in the manual. A more involved example would be a dvd programmed to present video segments on-demand through the use of a menu. Lastly, the project may require an 'html' approach whereby video segments are displayed when a link is engaged. Research is also responsible for the development of software specifically designed for the visually impaired oftentimes requiring the development for screen art and occasionally, computer animation.

The following new products have been introduced since October 1, 2007. This list, and the list of products “under development” following it, are provided to illustrate range of our graphic support needs.

APH Insights Calendar 2008 – Large Print/Braille embossed calendar featuring original art produced by visually impaired artists. Graphic design issues: photos of art, registration of print matching design template.

Turbo Phonics – Software program specifically designed to teach phonemic concepts to beginning visually impaired readers. Product consist of a Teacher’s Manual (316 pages in two volumes), Student Activity Book (56 pages), and a cd containing the program.

Functional Vision and Learning Media Assessment – This assessment leads the service provider, typically the teacher of the visually impaired, through a series of visual assessment culminating in the optimum media the student should be using in the classroom. Product consists of a Practitioner’s Guidebook (148 pages one third of which are graphical tables), and Protocols (approximately 90 pages presented in 5 booklets).

ToAD, Tools for Assessment and Development – This kit contains over 20 objects used to assess the visual acuity of a student and has tools to further develop their acuity. The accompanying manual, less than 100 pages, contains color photos of the objects as well as illustrations describing their use.

Azer’s Interactive Periodic Table Study Set – A comprehensive curriculum-based method for presenting the periodic table and atomic structure concepts to the visually impaired student. The product consists of: guidebook (80 color pages), tri-fold board, atomic model and accessories, storage binder, multiple sets of supporting manipulatives designed to facilitate the teaching and reinforcement of subatomic structure.

On the Way to Literature: 2nd edition – Reference manual design for service providers and parents of a visually impaired youngster, age birth to five, describing important concepts to literacy development and the strategies to reinforce and develop these concepts. The book also identifies a wide range of resources that should be brought to bear in assisting the VI youngster.

These products were also introduced since September 30, 2005 but required little or no graphic design support: EZ Track 2008 Calendar – Large Print

Appointment book and calendar, Braille Datebook Calendar 2008; Home Grown Videos, PermaBraille paper, Magnetachers

The following is a partial list of products we expect to have in development over the next 18 months:

Building on Patterns – “Patterns” is the premier braille teaching curriculum in use today in the U.S. We are in the process of revising the 1st and 2nd Grade levels of this product. We expect each level to consist of a teacher’s manual (the Kindergarten level is 290+ pages in length), student materials (approximately 120 pages), assessment materials, and post test materials.

Large Print Color Atlas – The product is reference text containing maps specifically design for the low vision student. It will be approximately 300 pages in length, contain over 90 maps and charts. Full color photos, tables, etc. will be interspersed through out the text.

Squid – This is a “Highlights for Children” type magazine containing tactile/print activities specifically design for the visually impaired student.

Sense of Science: Astronomy – Utilizes the tactile format described earlier to introduce visually impaired student to the basic concepts of astronomy. Will include multiple tactile overlays (requiring precise registration to thermoform patterns and each other), carrying case, and teacher’s manual.

This is just a sampling of anticipated projects. For a more in-depth look at our products, both in development and completed during FY2007, refer to the 2007 Research Report located at:

<http://www.aph.org/edresearch/ar2007/index.html> .

Time Estimation

The following is offered as a gauge to the volume of graphic support we anticipate requiring on an annual basis. The actual amount will be dependent upon project needs and will undoubtedly vary from month to month.

Based upon our most recent experience and our projected work schedule, we estimate the average monthly graphic support requirement to be approximately 310 billable hours per month. You may use this figure as a reasonable work volume estimation. We estimate the average billable hours for video work and more higher sophistication of services to average less than 10 hours per month.

For purposes of responding to this RFP we define billable hours as:

A. The time recorded by Contractor employees involved in direct work effort such as, the creation/development of graphic design, layout, production art, copy writing, web graphic preparation, and software graphic art preparation.

B. The time recorded by Contractor in project management activities whether with APH staff or Contractor internal staff. Qualifying activities include meetings to define project deliverables, work scheduling, workflow, timeline monitoring, and related activities.

Uniqueness of our field of work

As stated earlier, APH delivers products specifically designed to meet the educational needs of the blind and visually impaired. This requires certain adaptations to what might be considered standards in graphic design approaches. Examples of these unique considerations include:

1. Fonts used - We typically utilize san serif fonts in our products since research show these types of fonts are easier to read for those with low vision. We also utilize simbraille and braille fonts in our products. These fonts are nothing more than a printed representation of the embossed braille dot pattern. We can provide assistance to the vendor in obtaining these fonts.
2. Enhanced print products – We define enhanced print to be at least 18 point in size. A significant portion of our products are produced for the low vision reader. These products are to be designed in accordance to the Enhanced Print Guidelines we have developed. These guidelines can be found at:
<http://www.aph.org/edresearch/lpguide.htm>
3. Tactile Graphics – Generally speaking tactile graphics are raised-line illustrations designed to facilitate an accurate representation of real-life objects to the visually impaired reader. The graphic designer involved in products having tactile graphic components must realize that the directions provided for the creation, placement, and design of the tactile graphic components supercede what might be considered graphic design best practices. The graphic designer will be asked to work from the layout of the original tactile design when designing/layout the accompanying text and illustrations. Many of our products utilize dual presentations of tactile and visual art that often demand close registration (within 1/16") between the two. It has been our experience that successful graphic design of tactile graphic products require very precise and effective communication between the product designer (Project Leader) and the assigned graphic

designer for the project. Additional information regarding tactile graphic design can be found at:

<http://www.aph.org/edresearch/guides.htm>

Design Considerations

Designing for Output at APH

Most products designed for APH will be printed at APH's Print Shop. To ensure that the respective output device(s) provides the expected finished product, APH requires some additional responsibility on the part of the graphic designer at the beginning of the design process, when prepping the final art files and, at times, after the file has been delivered. This work includes imposition, color matching, trouble shooting, file preparation (from native file formats to print-shop friendly formats. For example from InDesign to PDF).

APH uses digital output devices to print manuals, covers and some small components such as cards, reference guides and game pieces (to name a few):

iGen3

Full color

Maximum sheet size: 20.5"x14.33"

Designing for Output at Vendors Outside APH

APH may use print vendors and manufacturers outside APH depending on the needs of the given product or product component. For those products, the assigned graphic designer will work with APH's Technical Research staff and/or the awarded printing or manufacturing vendor to identify art file specifications.

Project Management, Work Flow, and Related Issues

We have two graphic designers on staff at APH who will have the responsibility of outsourcing graphic design work through the contractor(s) selected through this RFP. The work-flow models we expect to use are defined below:

1. Production work – In these cases the graphic design is performed by our in-house staff with the actual production work outsourced. Specific instructions will be provided to the Contractor detailing the placement text, photos, illustrations, etc. within a framework provided by the APH graphic designer. Contractor will receive work instructions and deliver work products to the APH designer.

2. Graphic design work – For this classification of projects the Contractor will receive a job ticket from our in-house graphic designer that details the project components and its graphic design requirements. The Contractor will directly interface with the Project Leader of this project to define deliverables, develop project timelines, and deliver work products. Our in-house graphic designer will be kept informed of the progress of the project by being copied on emails sent between the Contractor and APH Project Leader and by periodic progress reports submitted by the Contractor. The exact form and content of these progress reports will be agreed upon during contract negotiation.

Our in-house graphic designers will determine which of the work-flow models will be utilized for each project undertaken.

RFP Timeline

Our intent is to complete the vendor selection within the next few weeks. In order to meet this goal the following timeline will be followed for the RFP process:

RFP distributed	September 8, 2008
Response from vendor indicating desire to respond to RFP	September 12, 2008
Response due to APH	September 19, 2008
RFP awarded	one week after deadline
Contract development/execution	within that same week
Transition from current vendor completed	late September

RFP Critical Steps

1. The deadline for RFP submission is 4:30 PM on September 19, 2008.
 2. RFP awarded by
- All vendors will be notified, via email, of their status at each of these steps.

Responses should be addressed to:

John Aicken
American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.
1839 Frankfort Ave.
Louisville, KY 40206
jaicken@aph.org

All responses will be evaluated on the basis of our assessment of the materials/information submitted, cost estimates provided, and reference verification.

We will entertain a joint response from two vendors as long as the performance accountability is clearly defined within the response.

Structure of Response to our RFP

The response to this RFP must contain the following elements:

Company summary – Description of your company providing information regarding services provided, longevity, and recent projects.

Cost estimates for graphic design services – The Vendor is expected to provide an hourly rate for graphic services provided. Our preference is to have a “blended” rate representative of the average of the rates typically charged. However, we will consider responses having an additional rate based upon a higher sophistication of services delivered as long as those services are clearly identified. We have provided an estimate of our annual graphic services need and provided a proposed project management model. Based upon this information we anticipate that the prospective responder has sufficient information to accurately determine the “blended” rate.

In order to provide APH with maximum flexibility, we may elect to select multiple vendors. Vendors may submit multiple hourly rates based upon the amount of work performed. To this end, we suggest vendors provide up to three hourly rates based upon the following level of contracted work:

1. Exclusive – sole contractor
2. Up to 50% of contracted work
3. Up to 33% of contracted work.

Our preference is that the blended rate includes incidental costs such as – proof copies, cds/dvds (used to deliver product proofs and final files), archiving fees, etc. Through the first ten months of this fiscal year these cost have amounted to less than \$200 per month. We will, however, consider bids in which the Vendor has identified ancillary costs associated with the delivery of graphic design services.

Our project management model depends upon the use of one or more account reps to interface with various APH staff, primarily project leaders. Vendors must agree to the assignment of account rep(s), or their equivalents, to receive consideration under this RFP. The exact nature and responsibilities of the account reps will be mutually agreed upon during contract negotiations. Likewise, we have developed a reporting mechanism showing current deliverables and their expected delivery dates along with the most recent deliverable and when it was delivered for all current projects. Our goal is to replicate and improve upon the reporting instrument used with the selected vendor during the life of this contract which may include a web-based reporting mechanism.

References – Provide at least two examples of clients with whom you have completed graphic design services similar to the products and services we have described. We are particularly interested in clients with whom you have had several projects progressing simultaneously and those with whom you maintained contractual relationship spanning several years.

Our intent is to verify, through references you provide, not only your ability to provide high quality graphic design services, but also your ability to do so across multiple projects in progress at the same time.

Payment - Verification that invoice payment of net-30 are acceptable.

Additional considerations – Please advise us if you wish to be considered under federal guidelines as a small business, minority-owned vendor, woman's business enterprise, or other government minority classification.

Inquiries

All inquiries regarding this RFP should be directed to:

John Aicken

502 899-2318

jaicken@aph.org

In order to provide identical information to all vendors, responses to vendor inquiries will be sent to all vendors in addition to the vendor submitting the inquiry.