



Request for Proposal: Website Designer for the Justice and Health Data Exchange Initiative

Vera Institute of Justice
March 7, 2012

Request for Proposal

Vera Institute of Justice
233 Broadway, 12th Fl.
New York, NY 10273
www.vera.org

Proposal Request

The Substance Use and Mental Health Program at the Vera Institute of Justice—a preeminent nonprofit organization—is soliciting proposals for web design of its Justice and Health Data Exchange Initiative (JAHDE) “knowledge bank,” a repository of resources and learning aides aimed at helping government agencies use data sharing as a tool for improving outcomes for individuals with mental health or substance use problems who are involved in the justice system.

Proposals should address the challenges and requirements presented within this document, and explain how your solution is suited to the specific needs of the JAHDE “knowledge bank”. Proposals should also describe the process to be implemented throughout the life-cycle of the project.

According to our internal project plan, we are seeking to launch a beta version in August 2012 and the official website by December 2013. Please outline how you plan to work within this timeframe. If you are unable to work within these deadlines, please let us know and propose a schedule that can be achieved. The budget for this project is \$14,000 and preference will be given to proposals that can meet our needs most efficiently. Please include the budget within which you expect to work.

Please email proposals by 4 p.m. EST, Friday, March 30, 2012 to David Cloud at: dcloud@vera.org.
Subject line: Web Proposal

Project Contact Information

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About Vera

Mission

The Vera Institute of Justice is an independent nonprofit organization that combines expertise in research, demonstration projects, and technical assistance to help leaders in government and civil society improve the systems people rely on for justice and safety. Vera helps its government partners achieve measurable improvements in the quality of justice they deliver—and shares lessons learned with justice practitioners and the public—so that justice systems may become fairer, safer, more humane, and more effective.

Substance Use and Mental Health Program (SUMH)

Vera's Substance Use and Mental Health Program (SUMH) employs a range of methods to help public officials and community organizations develop empirically-driven responses to the substance use and mental health needs of people involved in justice systems. Current partners include corrections agencies, police departments, probation and parole, and providers of mental health and substance abuse treatment services. SUMH has extensive experience integrating justice and behavioral health data to provide public officials with information on the health needs of justice-involved populations.

Project Overview

Justice and Health Data Exchange Initiative (JAHDE)

Background

The criminal justice involvement of drug users and people with mental health problems is a growing public health crisis. As increasing numbers of people with behavioral health needs become involved in the justice system, it is important that behavioral health and justice agencies are able to communicate and coordinate care for people as they enter and leave correctional settings and divert people to community treatment alternatives when appropriate. Many jurisdictions recognize the potential for data sharing to improve coordination.

There is currently no central resource where practitioners and policymakers can obtain information describing the potential for data sharing initiatives to increase access to treatment, the kind of data sharing that is permissible, or straightforward guidance on ways to address commonly occurring barriers to exchanging data.

Purpose of Our Project: The JAHDE Knowledge Bank

In order to fill this gap, Vera has launched the Justice and Health Data Exchange (JAHDE) Initiative. JAHDE's mission is to increase the capacity of nationwide jurisdictions to share behavioral health and justice data in secure, legal, and ethical ways that maximize benefits to clients while reducing costs. Specifically, this project will create a "knowledge bank" website to disseminate a variety of web-based resources collected and created by the Vera team. The knowledge bank will provide guidance on determining the type of data exchanges that are legally permissible within the confines of local regulations, outline potential ethical pitfalls, and offer assistance with arranging data exchanges, including examples of proven strategies.

Content of Website

The knowledge bank will serve as a “one-stop-shop,” hosting a range of resources from basic tools that communicate the value of information sharing between health and justice entities to those that guide government policymakers through necessary steps and over common hurdles associated with designing and implementing information sharing initiatives. For example, the website will host resources that disseminate information on emergent best practices, outline legal and ethical standards, and provide guidance on overcoming obstacles to information sharing, including legal, ethical, cultural, and technological barriers. The website will also serve as a hub where jurisdictions can identify potential partners and technical assistance providers. The materials on the website will use a range of multimedia formats catering to different learning styles and communication preferences of website-users and reflecting the complexity of the issues.

- *Case studies.* Case studies will be used primarily to provide real-life examples of cross-boundary health and justice system information exchange, and may also describe initiatives from related fields that use instructive models or have overcome important challenges. Case studies will take a variety of formats, including short reports, and podcasts.
- *Policy briefs and technical guidelines.* The JAHDE team will gather existing resources addressing behavioral health and justice data sharing efforts and translate lessons from similar work in adjacent fields.
- *Links to other online resources.* Resources will be referenced on the JAHDE website with concise summaries and links to full documents and relevant organizations (if applicable). This central repository will be categorized by topic providing a “resource map” to enhance the ease and speed with which interested stakeholders can find and access resources relevant to their specific needs.
- *Toolkits.* The Vera team will develop toolkits with step-by-step strategies and practical tools to address common obstacles to data sharing, which may be adapted for use according to the specific context of a given jurisdiction. This might include PDF files or templates for model interagency information sharing protocols; examples of technology used in other information sharing projects; organizational charts detailing responsibilities of agency employees; and logic models of how information can be shared between agencies.
- *Webinar Trainings.* We will produce at least three webinars on a variety of topics, for 15-25 participants to be recorded and posted online, to reach larger audiences.

Features & Functionality

The JAHDE Initiative Knowledge Bank is looking for a site design and architecture that promotes its work, engages and informs its web audience, and extends its impact and reach. The initiative is also looking for a web designer who can create a ‘scalable’ design, where some of the site’s features are initially masked and then can later become functional as the project develops. For example, a blog may be something initially masked and then made operational at a later time.

Below are some of the features we believe will help accomplish these objectives:

- JAHDE logo
- Blog (initially masked)
- Webinars
- Events calendar (initially masked)
- Email alerts
- Social networking/outpost badge (Twitter, Facebook)
- Embedded video
- Links page
- Word cloud
- PDFs (e.g. white papers, templates)
- Home Button
- Edit
- Search Box
- Terms of Service
- Social media policy
- Date last updated
- Disclaimer checkbox (this is not legal advice, etc.)
- FAQ
- Contact Us
- Copyright

Web Audience

The website's resources and tools will address a variety of topics, making the project accessible and instructive to jurisdictions at various stages of developing information sharing initiatives and with different levels of capacity and technical expertise. Additionally, the site must appeal to practitioners, policymakers, and academics in both the fields of health and criminal justice. Please see the Appendix for a more detailed explanation of the intended audience.

Graphic Design

The JAHDE website is to be visually simple, intuitively navigable, and accessible to a wide range of users with varying technological proficiencies who are at different phases of exploring information sharing initiatives.

The following are some of the specific components we seek:

- *Efficiency.* Professionals working in criminal justice and public health are commonly time-constrained, so it is imperative that the knowledge bank's design and organizational layout is clear, uncluttered and efficiently directs its range of users to the most relevant information.
- *Accommodation of different learning styles.* The organization and presentation should be appealing and accessible to distinct learning styles.
- *Strong Logo.* JAHDE also needs a professional logo designed that is both memorable and symbolizes the conceptual objectives of the project (collaboration between justice and behavioral health via information sharing to improve public health and safety).
- *Maintenance.* Vera prefers to utilize a content management system (perhaps WordPress) that permits staff without programming skills to easily add new content, increase utilization of certain features over time (e.g. blogs, webinars), and perform requisite maintenance in the event the project acquires additional funding and expands its functionalities and services.

Peer Sites

The following sites, while not thematically consistent, have been identified as peers that may serve as useful templates for JAHDE's knowledge bank website. Though none are perfect, there is something to learn from each. Please note that this is not considered to be a final list.

<http://soilhealthknowledge.com.au/>

<http://www.liftonline.org/>

<http://www.housingequality.org/index.html>

<http://energizebedford.org/>

<http://www.knowledgebank.irri.org/rice.htm#>

<https://www.caresharehealth.org/>

Dissemination

The JAHDE team will advertise the website and resources by: presenting the project at national conferences; leveraging Vera's national contact database of nearly 11,000 policymakers, practitioners, and researchers; and posting links to the JAHDE website on related justice and health websites including www.vera.org, which receives an average of 13,500 hits per month.

To disseminate beyond Vera's existing network, the project may have the option to capitalize on a recent grant for the online advertising program, Google AdWords. Vera's communication staff will help identify additional strategies (e.g. guest-blogging, emailing professional organizations and stakeholders).

Measures of Success

A successful design will result in a website that:

- Reflects and builds upon the reputation of Vera’s Substance Use and Mental Health program as a leading nonprofit organization in the field of social justice
- Clearly conveys the mission of the JAHDE Initiative
- Uses an effective logo
- Operates using an intuitive navigation structure tailored to variations in user expertise
- Is user-friendly and appealing to multiple learning styles
- Provides a capacity for future development and functional expansion
- Reaches our diverse target audience
- Encourages practitioners to rely seek more assistance from Vera
- Has a minimalist themed homepage that is simple, visually appealing, and serves as a logical roadmap to the rest of the site
- The organization of the site reflects the “why”, “how to”, and “what next” of information sharing to users
- Provides links to other resources in a way that does not steer users to away from JAHDE’s knowledge bank
- Promotes academic conversation about the value of information exchanges between public health and criminal justice

Evidence of Successful Web Design:

- Vera will monitor website traffic on a monthly basis, including number of visits to the website, number of unique visitors, and the number of times that project deliverables (documents, podcasts and webinars) are downloaded or viewed. Success will be achieved if our traffic and downloads indicate our target audience is using the site’s resources.
- Online surveys of both users and webinar participants will be used as a way of requesting feedback on the quality, content, and ease of use of the JAHDE website.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will form the basis upon which the Substance Use and Mental Health Program at the Vera Institute of Justice will evaluate proposals.

Mandatory Criteria:

- A PDF version of the proposal must be received by 4pm EST on Friday, March 30th, 2012. Send proposals to dcloud@vera.org, Subject Line: Web Proposal
- Proposals must include a budget.
- Costs associated with the proposal should be described in a flat rate, fee-for-service format.

Proposals that meet the mandatory requirements, as stated above, will be evaluated with the following criteria:

Suitability of the Proposal: The proposed solution meets the needs, budget, and criteria set forth in the RFP.	25
Skills and qualifications: Demonstrated expertise in recommending and communicating appropriate technical and user-friendly aesthetic solutions that engage the intended audience. Please provide indication of education, training, or professional experience.	25
Presentation: The proposal information is presented in a clear, logical manner and is well organized.	15
Experience and Capacity: Candidate has successfully completed similar projects for government or non-profit organizations with comparable missions, timeframes, and budgets. Candidate demonstrates an ability to effectively communicate with Vera's staff.	15
Value/Pricing Structure and Price Levels: the price is commensurate with the value offered by the proposal. Preference will be given to candidates who can maximize output while making efficient use of time and resources.	15
Knowledge or experience in social justice: A demonstrated understanding of the project's mission and/or prior experience in social justice, public health, or related field.	5

Contractual Obligations

The final contract for this work will be negotiated after all proposals are reviewed. Because this work is pursuant to a federal grant, however, there are terms (presented below) that must be part of any agreement:

1. *Patents.* Any discovery or invention that arises during the course of the contract shall be reported to Vera. The contractor must disclose promptly inventions to Vera (within 2 months) after the inventor discloses it in writing to contractor personnel responsible for patent matters. The Department of Justice shall determine how rights in the invention/discovery shall be allocated consistent with "Government Patent Policy" and 37 CFR Part 401.
2. *Rights in Data and Copyrights.* This clause shall state that, all documents and other materials produced or prepared in consequence of the performance of this contract are deemed, individually and together, "Work Product," and that Vera shall retain all intellectual property and other proprietary rights including, but not limited to, copyrights and trademarks, with regard to all Work Product; provided, however, that the Department of Justice reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes, the copyright in any Work Product.
3. *Examination of Records.* This clause shall state that Vera, the Federal grantor agency, the Comptroller General, or any of their representatives shall have access to any books, documents, papers and records of the contractor which are directly pertinent to this contract for the purpose of making audit, examination, excerpts, and transcriptions. The clause shall further state that the contractor shall retain all required records for three years after Vera makes final payments and all other pending matters are closed.
4. *Equal Employment Opportunity.* Contractor shall comply with Executive Order 11246 and shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and disability. Also Contractor shall not discriminate in the delivery of services or benefits on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and age. In addition, all recipients must comply with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) guidelines.
5. *Termination.* Only Vera shall have the right to terminate the contract. There are two types of termination: a) Termination for Convenience, and b) Termination for Cause. Vera has the option of tailoring the termination clause to fit the type of contract, i.e., fixed price or cost reimbursement. Vera, by written notice, may terminate the contract, in whole or in part, when it is in Vera's interest.

- a. *Termination for Convenience*. Contract is terminated due to reasons known to Vera, i.e., program changes, changes in state-of-the-art equipment or technology, insufficient funding, etc. This type of termination is utilized when the contractor is not in violation of the contract terms and conditions.
- b. *Termination for Cause*. Contract is terminated due to actions by the contractor, i.e., failure to perform, financial difficulty, slipped schedules, etc. A termination settlement may include reprocurement costs to be paid by the contractor.

Termination settlements shall be accommodated by negotiations carefully planned (and embodied in the final contract) in order to achieve an equitable resolution.

6. *Key Personnel Clause*. Contract *may* contain a clause requiring personnel changes be approved by the Awarding agency.

Appendix

Web Audience

Specifically, JAHDE will provide resources and supports geared towards:

1. *Jurisdictions at nascent stages of developing data sharing initiatives*, to illustrate tangible benefits and risks of cross-system information exchange and provide support to define cross-agency data sharing priorities. These users may benefit from statistics demonstrating the benefits of data sharing, blogs and podcasts from officials that have recently developed initiative and practical resources such as tools for convening stakeholder meetings.
2. *Jurisdictions that are seeking to overcome data sharing barriers*, by offering strategies to overcome legal, ethical, and cultural challenges, including practical tools to inform local efforts (i.e. boilerplate language for data sharing agreements) and case studies of successful initiatives.
3. *Jurisdictions that have laid the groundwork for data sharing initiatives and would benefit from advice on technical solutions*, to promote the adoption of standardized models of information exchange by providing summaries of the models most relevant to this field and links to additional technical materials and websites. This level of user might benefit from materials such as: model legislation, executive orders, and policy mandates making a commitment to information sharing. It could also include a compilation of information related to common technological services, including software used for achieving interoperability.

The actors within target jurisdictions represent diverse and multi-disciplinary backgrounds in public health and criminal justice. Therefore, designing a site that effectively reaches both fields is imperative to the knowledge bank's success. The site should appeal and communicate effectively with the following groups:

- Government policymakers and practitioners at multiple levels of authority
- Criminal justice agencies (e.g. jail and prison administrators, commissioners of correctional departments, re-entry coordinators)
- Public health agencies (local and state health departments)
- Professional organizations
- Information Technology practitioners
- Community behavioral health center treatment providers and administrators (substance use treatment facilities, mental health care establishments)
- Academia
- Non-profits and government think tanks
- Judicial system operator