Request for Proposal

EVOTERFP-12172010ver1

Key RFP Dates:

RFP Issued:	**December 21, 2010**
Written Questions Due:	**December 21to January 17**
Submit Proposal By:	**February 7, 2011**

REQUEST FOR QUOTE (RFP)
Notice To Offerors Calling For Proposals
Online Election System

The Society for Neuroscience requests proposals from firms interested in providing SfN a secure, reliable and accurate online voting process. This system must be able to manage the entire election process and provide the controls necessary to guarantee that the process is secure and accurate.

The Society for Neuroscience intends to award a contract for a period of up to Five years, with an initial three-year term and an option to renew the contract at the Society for Neuroscience's request.

Please Note: Proposals received after February 7, 2011 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 RFP.

Sincerely,

Paul T. Troxell
Procurement Manager

Society for Neuroscience
1121 14th Street, NW
Suite 1010
Washington, DC 20005
202-962-4000
(f) 202-962-4947

No. EVOTERFP-121720100

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL ("RFP") 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 RFP'S OR CONTRACT INFORMATION TO RESPONDING FIRMS.

BY ACKNOWLEDGMENT OR RESPONSE TO THIS RFP, 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 1969. 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 RFP. 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 RFP.

- The issuance of this RFP 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 RFP 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 of 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 RFP: In the event it becomes necessary to clarify or revise this RFP, such clarification or revision will be by addendum. Any RFP 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 RFP. No special consideration shall be given after bids are opened because bidder's failure to be knowledgeable of all the requirements of the RFP. By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the bidder represents that it has satisfied itself, from its own investigation, of all the requirements of this RFP.

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

1. Schedule:

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

Release RFP	December 21, 2010
Registration	January 7, 2011
Question and Answer Period	December 21 to January 17
Proposals Due	February 7, 2011

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.

2. Registration:

All Firms that will submit an offer in response to this RFP 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 January 7, 2011.

3. Supplier Questions:

Questions may be e-mailed to rfp@sfn.org until 12:00 PM EST by January 17, 2011. 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 RFP by the writer. Questions should be asked in constructive order, from beginning to end, following the organization of the RFP. Each question should begin by referencing the RFP page and section number to which it relates.

Short procedural inquires 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 RFP process.

4. Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions:

4.1 General

The bidder must follow instructions in this RFP 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 RFP 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.

4.2 Management Overview

The bidder shall set forth its overall technical approach and plans to meet the requirements of the RFP 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 RFP 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.

4.3 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, etc.

4.4 Contract Schedule

The bidder should include a contract schedule. If key dates are a part of the RFP, 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.

4.5 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 RFP.
- 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 RFP 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, etc., that will be required to fully implement the contract required start date.
- The bidder should submit a plan for the use of subcontractor(s), if any, in this contract.

4.6 Budget

The bidder should submit the budget it has developed for providing the services required by the RFP. 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 RFP.

4.7 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.

4.8 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 RFP.

4.9 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.

4.10 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. Cost Proposal

Bidder must submit their cost proposal for the work as outlined in this RFP. 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 RFP. 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 RFP.

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

6. Proposal Evaluation and Contract Award

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

6.3 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 RFP. The evaluation criteria categories may be used to develop more detailed evaluation criteria to be used in the evaluation process.

6.3.1 The bidder's detailed approach and plans to perform the services required by the Scope of Services section of the RFP.

6.3.2 The bidder's documented experience in successfully completing contracts of similar size and scope of those required by this RFP.

6.3.3 The qualifications and experience of the bidder's management, supervisory or other key personnel assigned to the contract, with emphasis on federal grants experience as required by this RFP.

6.3.4 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.

6.3.5 The bidder's cost proposal.

6.3.6 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 RFP.

6.3.7 The Evaluation Committee may consider such other factors that, in the opinion of the team, are important in evaluating the bidder's proposal.

6.3.8 The Evaluation Committee reserves the right to request all bidders to explain the methods used to arrive at any costs or pricing figures.

6.3.9 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.

6.3.10 SfN reserves the right to check bidders financial capacity and ability to successfully undertake and complete the services required by this RFP by any means deemed appropriate.

6.3.11 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 RFP. This applies to all facilities services by the bidder or any sub-contractor to the bidder.

6.3.12 **SfN has the right to consider additional information not listed here.**

7. 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.

After receiving the RFP responses, SfN reserves the right to issue multiple awards. If this occurs, SfN will structure the agreements so that task orders will be issued to the most appropriate firm, or person, using the firm's fixed price quote(s) outlined within their RFP response.

8. Questions

8.1. Give a brief description of your company, including the number of years you have been in the election business. In addition, briefly explain what sector or industries make up the bulk of your online clients.

8.2. Provide a brief description of the technology you have in place, both hardware and software, that make up the system you are proposing. Include information on the level of security we can expect during the election process.

8.3. What is your annual web uptime rate and how redundant is your broadband pipeline to the web?

8.4. What operating system browsers will function best using your online voting system?

8.5. Describe your facility and the security measures and what acceptable Business Contingency/Emergency Disaster Plan(s) you have in place.

8.6. What are your quality control procedures? Include the process in place you use to authenticate the vote and prevent duplication or duplicate votes. Also, how soon after the polls close will the results be tabulated and results provided to us and our specified recipients?

8.7. Please provide background information on the associates you plan to assign as our account and project manager. In addition, provide an approximate number of elections the project manager will run in 2nd quarter of 2011.

8.8. Is your online balloting system ADA (Section 508) compliant so that visually impaired voters can cast their ballot?

8.9. Do you monitor online voter comments during the voting process and provide them to us at the end of the election?

8.10. Will your system and/or procedures enable us to update membership records during the process?

8.11. After the membership database dump, you will be expected to perform a scan of the database to see which members do not have e-mail addresses. You will then be required to send out, using our letterhead, the election and log in information to those with no e-mail address or for those members where a bounce back occurs. To do this, what is your timeline to receive the records and text from us?

8.12. What is your average response time to technical assistance issues and or questions from us and/or members?

8.13. Can you provide print friendly screens?

8.14. During the development phase, we will expect you to work closely with our project manager to ensure the site has SfN's internal approval. With that said, what is your project plan to ensure we have a timely review and approval process?

8.15. Does your system allow for a user-friendly format that provides space to include head shots, biographical information and voting options that allow members to abstain?

8.16. In what format do you need to receive materials and photos in order to post them on the voting site? How much time is required from the receipt of the materials for the site to be ready for testing by SfN staff?