# REQUEST FOR SERVICES –TRAINING FOR BRAILLE TEXTBOOK TRANSCRIBERS WORKING WITH NIMAS FILES

## 1.1 Invitation to Submit

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

## 1.2 The Services

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

## 1.3 Type of Contract

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

## 1.4 Definitions

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

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

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

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

## 1.5 Interpretation

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

## 2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

### 2.1.1 Timetable

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

* **Issue Date of RFS: 5/17/2021**
* **Submission Deadline: 6/11/2021**
* **Anticipated Start Date: 7/15/2021**

### 2.1.2 Parties Shall Bear Their Own Costs

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

### 2.1.3 Inquiries

**All inquiries regarding this RFS should be directed by email (no phone calls) to APH Representative by 5/24/2021. APH will provide one response to all questions by 6/1/2021.** The response will be sent via email to all invited Vendors and also posted on the NIMAC website (<https://nimac.us>).

## 2.2 VENDOR SUBMISSIONS

### 2.2.1 Submissions Made Only in Prescribed Manner

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

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

You must also complete and submit the Pricing Schedule set out as Schedule A with the Submission Form.

**Important note: You must complete the Pricing Schedule as a separate electronic file in your proposal submission.**

The Pricing Schedule must set out the full legal name of the Vendor; the full legal name of each consultant/trainer proposed; the number of days proposed for each consultant/trainer to achieve completion of the proposed services within the timeframe specified by APH; the proposed Per Diem Rate for each consultant/trainer; a sub-total for each consultant/trainer, if applicable (number of days x Per Diem Rate); and a Ceiling Price that is not more than the sum of those sub-totals.

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

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

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

### 2.2.2 Amending or Withdrawing Submissions

You may withdraw or amend your submission at any time prior to the execution of a Statement of Work. However, such withdrawals or amendments may adversely impact your selection as a Vendor or eligibility to participate in future RFS processes.

### 2.2.3 Evaluation of Submissions

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

## 2.3 EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT

### 2.3.1 Selection of Vendor

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

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

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

## 2.4 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

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

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

## 2.5 TERMS OF REFERENCE

These provisions apply to this RFS:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# SUPPLEMENT A - APH’S INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

## 1.1 CONTACT INFORMATION

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

APH Representative: Nicole Gaines

Title: NIMAC Project Director/Director, Resource Services

Email address: ngaines@aph.org

## 1.2 PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name: National Instructional Materials Access Center

Service Category: Instruction/Training

Project Start Date: July 15, 2021

Project End Date: September 30, 2021

## 1.3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) created the NIMAC repository as the national source file repository for K-12 instructional materials. To date, the NIMAC has received over 65,000 files from 160 publishers, which are made available to states via a secure online system. NIMAC Authorized Users and Accessible Media Producers (AMPs) download files from the repository for use in the production of accessible formats for use by eligible students in K-12.

AMPs, including braille transcribers, are an essential part of state systems for serving students with disabilities. To support these users of the NIMAC, the NIMAC seeks to contract with one or more skilled transcriber-trainers to provide modular instruction in how to use NIMAS files in the production of braille textbooks. (See Section 1.4 for further details.)

The need for training opportunities, both for new textbook transcribers and for more experienced transcribers who are new to using NIMAS files, has been shared with the NIMAC over the course of several years. The goal of this current RFS is to identify one or more trainers who will contract with APH to provide modular training in the use of NIMAS to prepare braille textbooks. The course(s) would be provided virtually to participants and also archived and made available, free of charge, for use as a stand-alone resource by braille transcribers going forward.

## 1.4 APH’S REQUIREMENTS

**Scope of Services and Deliverables**

While Vendors have flexibility in the design and delivery of proposed instruction, the following are minimum expectations:

1. We require that the trainer(s) selected be certified by the Library of Congress in Literary Braille Transcription and by the National Braille Association in Braille Formats. An alternative certification that is equivalent to the Library of Congress Literary Braille Transcription may also be considered.
2. Vendors should propose to provide all of the core instruction that a newly certified transcriber would need to successfully handle their first textbook transcription project using a NIMAS file and one or more braille translation software programs.
3. APH seeks to provide instruction for transcribers who use Duxbury, Braille 2000 or BrailleBlaster braille translation software. To meet this need, we may need to contract with more than one individual or organization. In your proposal, please clarify which translation software program(s) you plan to cover in the training.
4. Should multiple trainers be contracted to provide training for different software programs, trainers are not required work together to provide identically structured training. However, NIMAC may ask that some effort be made to align the approaches.
5. The content of the instruction should include all the basic steps of transcription “from NIMAS to .brf” for an embossed braille textbook, using the selected software. If additional tools/utilities are required for use of NIMAS with the software, instruction in using these should be included in the training.
6. Image accessibility should be discussed, including decision-making around whether to supply image descriptions or tactile graphics. However, detailed instruction on how to produce tactile graphics is not required for this RFS. If you have expertise in this area and would like to cover it, please include the details in the training.
7. The NIMAC includes materials for the very early grades and materials that are structurally very simple, such as supplementary readers. However, we expect that a textbook for the middle or higher grades will be selected as an exemplar in the proposed training modules, to encompass a significant level of structural complexity.
	1. More than one file/textbook example may be presented to cover different aspects of braille production, if desired.
	2. Major structures such as the TOC, glossary, and index should be included.
	3. We recommend that less common content or structures that involve particular challenges also be included in the training.
8. Unless the trainer has already reached out to the publisher(s) to obtain permission, the NIMAC will work with the selected trainer(s) and publishers to obtain any required permission to utilize the NIMAS file(s) in demonstrating the transcription process. Trainers should identify at least two possible NIMAS files from different publishers, in the event that a given publisher does not agree to the use of their content in the training.
9. For delivery, the training should be modular. This will allow the initial delivery to be provided in a live webinar setting but allow for archiving of the sessions so that the training can also be used asynchronously and independently.
10. “Office hours” or other mechanism should be provided for some Q&A in between the live sessions.
11. The total hours of training provided will be five or fewer hours. (Please provide a rationale if you believe additional time is required to cover the content.)
12. The live modules may be 50 minutes to an hour in length; however, consideration should be given to organizing longer modules so that the recorded training can be easily subdivided into shorter sections of 15-20 minutes. This will make the archived version of the course easier to use independently.
13. A syllabus should be provided that clarifies what content will be covered in each session.
14. If accompanying materials will be developed for distribution to students, these need to be fully accessible, and include materials that can be made available in a downloadable format free of charge.

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

**Travel, Meal and Accommodation Expenses –**APH is not responsible for any travel, meal or accommodation expenses incurred by the Vendor that are not pre-approved in writing by APH. The Vendor shall list travel, meal and accommodation expenses as separate line items on its invoices and shall support all such expenses with receipts. It is not anticipated that travel will be required as a part of this contract.

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

Request for Services Number: NG2113701

To: American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.

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

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

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

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

(e) Describe the qualifications and experience of the Vendor to conduct the training described in Section 1.4. Include in this description:

* the education, training, and experience of the staff to work on this project (please submit staff resume or vitae with the submission form);
* information regarding similar training conducted by the staff; and
* the contact information for three references for work performed within the last 5 years.

(f) Describe the approach the Vendor will use to provide the training described in Section 1.4. Ensure that all requirements are addressed and include information regarding:

* the number of anticipated training hours;
* list of key topics covered;
* anticipated number of training sessions and total hours of training provided;
* draft syllabus of the course;
* any background resources or training materials proposed to be supplied in an accessible digital format to participants in the training

(g) Complete and submit the Pricing Schedule set out as Schedule A with the Submission Form.

**There is not a designated form for supplying the Pricing Schedule; however, it must be completed as a separate electronic file.**