

STATEMENT OF WORK

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Title of Project: Professional Services to Achieve the Objectives of Health Services Research & Development (HSR&D) and the VA Quality Enhancement research Initiative (QUERI)

2. Background: Health Services Research & Development (HSR&D) including VA Quality Enhancement research Initiative (QUERI), within the Office of Research and Development, VHA, seeks a prime contractor to advance and support the mission of HSR&D/QUERI in pursuing research and translational activities that underscores all aspects of VA healthcare: patient care, care delivery, health outcomes, cost, and quality. Within VA HSR&D/QUERI, VA researchers focus on identifying and evaluating innovative strategies that lead to accessible, high quality, high value care for Veterans and the nation. The VA HSR&D and QUERI offices located in Washington DC, are responsible for: setting the strategic direction of the research and implementation program; identifying new research priorities and developing new initiatives; making decisions about funding priorities; communicating research progress and contributions to a broad array of stakeholders; developing new partnerships with internal and external partners, including VA clinical offices and external research funders; and monitoring and improving our internal processes to make our research more efficient, effective and impactful.

3. Scope of Work: The general scope of this solicitation is to provide administrative, research and organizational contract services to assist HSR&D and QUERI in carrying out tasks related to 4 major categories of work: 1) Program and Policy Analyses, 2) HSR&D Strategic and Implementation Plan, 3) Administrative Project Management, and 4) Meeting Planning Support. Additional details of each task are described below under Section C. SPECIFIC MANDATORY TASKS AND ASSOCIATED DELIVERABLES.

4. Period of Performance: The Period of Performance is 12 months from the date of the award for a base period plus 4 option years.

Base period (anticipated award date)	9/01/2018 – 08/31/2019
Option period 1	9/01/2019 – 08/31/2020
Option period 2	9/01/2020– 08/31/2021
Option period 3	9/01/2021– 08/31/2022
Option period 4	9/01/2022– 08/31/2023

5. Type of Contract: Firm Fixed Price

6. Place of Performance: The contractor shall support this effort at the Department of Veterans Affairs, 1100 1st Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002, or at approved contractor facilities as directed by the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) and mutually agreed to by the Contractor. If the work is performed at the Department of Veterans Affairs, the COR will provide adequate on-site workspace and automated data processing (ADP) equipment for Contractor personnel. Work at the government site shall not take place on Federal holidays or weekends unless directed by the Contracting Officer (CO).

B. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. The contractor shall have expertise with health services research and/or experience working with HSR&D, and shall be familiar with VHA Office of Research and Development (<https://www.research.va.gov/>) strategic plan, priorities and initiatives. This experience shall be clearly documented in the technical and management proposal submitted by the contractor.
2. The contractor shall possess the capabilities and staffing required to analyze and examine high visibility and/or service level projects, programs and initiatives in terms of their impact on the quality of care for Veterans across the nation.
3. In order to effectively implement the four tasks required of this solicitation, the identified contractor shall work closely and collaboratively with the HSR&D/QUERI leadership and staff. It is especially critical that the vendor is knowledgeable of HSR&D/QUERI, ORD and VHA priority areas, emerging programs and vulnerable Veteran populations in conducting program and project analyses, and the development of the strategic plan related to health care and funding policies and processes..

C. SPECIFIC MANDATORY TASKS AND ASSOCIATED DELIVERABLES

Task 1—Program and Policy Analyses

- Provide administrative and technical support to HSR&D/QUERI staff on various research project analyses by:

- Conducting expedited mini literature reviews (up to 6 reviews/year), focused on summarizing existing systematic reviews in high priority areas (for example, the effectiveness of peer support programs to promote control of risk factors including elevated blood pressure, diabetes control, and elevated blood lipids) to identify research questions where evidence base is strong (and thus low priority for new research), those where evidence is weak, conflicting, or limited in a VA population; and new, emerging areas of clinical and research interests, and immediate HSR&D/QUERI program needs and gaps.
- Support and analyze impact of specific research portfolios, pilot studies, and special initiatives focused on national priority areas such as suicide prevention, innovation initiatives, improving access to care, care coordination/community care, and implementation of research findings into practice; HSR&D anticipates up to 6 analyses assignments per year. Examples of impact analyses include: analyses of the overall impact of HSR&D and QUERI projects on improving the quality of care for veterans through impact metrics (e.g. diffusion/implementation/adoption and maintenance of evidence based interventions; changes in clinical guidelines/practices, dissemination and utilization of tools); number of providers trained in evidence-based practices; number of Veterans receiving evidence-based practices derived from VA research, improvements in clinical outcomes (e.g. infection rates, suicide rates) or national metrics/benchmarks (such as the VA's Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) measurements. Anticipated size of portfolio reviews would be to summarize 20-25 VA projects funded over a period of 5-6 years.
- These analyses would examine VA databases to determine whether funded projects successfully completed their stated aims; whether primary results were published and the timing and impact factor of publications; whether projects produced actionable results that could have been incorporated into guidelines, VA policy, or clinical delivery. Reviews may involve selected telephone surveys of principle investigators to determine whether clinical interventions that were proven to be effective were maintained at the study sites or spread to any new VA sites as a result of the research, and if not, the reasons why (for example, lack of resources, other barriers to implementation, etc.) .
- Research and assist in drafting white papers (up to 2 per year) on a range of topics including a summary of the impact of HSR&D research in translating research into practice; next steps and recommendations from care coordination SOTA; white paper development for practice diffusion efforts and larger business development.
- **Deliverables:**
With inputs from HSR&D, the contractor will deliver the following products:
 - Up to 6 mini literature reviews based on the needs of HSR&D/QUERI leadership
 - Up to 6 project and/or portfolio reviews and analyses per year
 - Up to 2 White Papers on priority topics identified by HSR&D/QUERI leadership
- HSR&D anticipates that a maximum of 2 FTEs with the appropriate background and experience are required for analyses described under Task 1.

Task 2—HSR&D and QUERI Strategic and Implementation Plans

- Assist HSR&D and QUERI in the development of a Strategic Plans that shall guide the funding of research that shall have real time impact on the quality of care for Veterans. For QUERI the strategic plan should include ORD-wide implementation of recommendations of the Research-to-Real World (R2R) Workgroup on enhancing substantial real-world impact of research
- Conduct portfolio analyses including gap analyses and summarize findings for strategic planning
- Conduct interviews with HSR&D/QUERI leadership and staff (approximately 15 interviews) in identifying key areas of focus and strategies to address gaps;
- With inputs and guidance from HSR&D leadership, draft the HSR&D 5 year Strategic Plan as well as an actionable implementation plan that will achieve the goals of the Strategic Plan
 - **Deliverables:**
 - A HSR&D strategic plan and implementation roadmap, and an updated QUERI strategic plan for 2020-2024 and implementation roadmap
 - A handbook of recommendations for ORD to more rapidly translate research into practice to make a substantial real-world impact
- HSR&D anticipates that many of the products developed by the vendor for Task 1 provides the background and the groundwork for the development of the strategic plans for HSR&D/QUERI.

Task 3 --Administrative Project Management

- Provide administrative support on projects related to high priority areas within HSR&D/QUERI including:
 - Assisting SPMs in collecting, organizing and monitoring monthly and/or quarterly metrics and annual reports related to recruitment goals.
 - Developing SharePoint sites (up to 5 per year) related to recruitment metrics for HSR&D IIRs, and for awards that require a special system of documenting reviews and post award information (e.g. intent to submit for

screening CDA application; ad hoc supplemental RFAs; QUERI programs/centers/partnered evaluations, maintaining information related to COIN activities (e.g. reviewer list, renewal scores, review documents, site visits,) etc.

- Assist in developing professional power point presentations for HSR&D/QUERI leadership and staff for external and internal presentations (up to 10 power points/year) based on content provided by HSRD or QUERI staff. Develop additional graphics, insert appropriate statistics, and ensure appropriate formatting.
- Develop spreadsheets/data bases for summarizing information and progress for various projects and initiatives, as needed.

Deliverables: With inputs from HSR&D/QUERI leadership, the contractor shall deliver the following products

- Monthly and quarterly metrics and annual reports to assess recruitment progress and goals
- Development of up to 5 share point sites related to HSR&D/QUERI priority areas (e.g. recruitment metrics, reviewer list, site visits, renewal scores etc.
- Develop up to 10 power point presentations
- Organize electronic project related files currently stored on shared HSR&D drive (>300 files)

Task 4 –Meeting Planning Support

- Provide administrative, organizational and technical support for expert meetings to inform research areas, build research partnerships, and inform strategic planning; HSR&D/QUERI anticipates up to 5 small to moderate meetings (up to 25 participates per meeting) per year, including an Office of Research and Development (ORD)-wide meeting focused on the third priority research goal of enhancing substantial real-world impact
 - Locate and develop contracts for meeting space, audio visual and sleeping rooms
 - Serve as primary point-of-contact for meeting preparations.
 - Work with ORD staff to develop meeting agenda, prepare and distribute meeting materials and (as needed) facilitate meeting discussion.
 - Assist in travel planning and reimbursement for non-VA travelers.
 - Take meeting minutes and prepare draft meeting summary.
 - Prepare materials for dissemination or Web posting and ensure 508 compliance
- Deliverables:
 - Provide administrative, organizational and technical support for up to 5 small to moderate sized meetings (up to 25 participants per meeting)/year
 - Implementation of a strategic planning meeting and related meetings focused on implementation of research in real-world settings as part of the ORD-wide Substantial Real-world Impact workgroup; QUERI anticipates monthly meetings and one annual meeting.

D. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Government intends to utilize a Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) to monitor the quality of the contractor’s performance. The oversight provided for in the task order and in the QASP will help to ensure that service levels reach and maintain the required levels throughout the contract term. Further, the QASP provides the COR with a proactive way to avoid unacceptable or deficient performance, and provides verifiable input for the required Past Performance Information Assessments. The QASP will be developed by the Government in conjunction with the performance work statement. It will be finalized upon award and a copy provided to the contractor after award. The QASP is a living document and may be updated by the Government as necessary.

Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan

Required Services/Tasks	Performance Standards	Method of Surveillance (Quality Assurance)	Standard to be Met/ Allowable Deviation
Customer Satisfaction	Contractor complies with SOW specifications. Contractor adheres to guidance provided by COR.	COR feedback	Fewer than 2 written complaints from COR during the period of performance.
Overall Contract Management, Including Timeliness	Contractor maintains high level of quality assurance. Contractor informs COR timely of issues or	COR and Contracting Officer monitoring and review of activities and deliverables.	COR makes no more than 2 valid written complaints during the period of

	problems. Contractor meets time frames agreed upon.		performance. No more than a two business-day delay in agreed upon schedule.
Written Products	Contractor provides high-quality written materials.	COR and other federal staff reviews of draft and final products.	Minimal rewriting or editing required; product utilized (e.g., disseminated) as planned.

E. INSPECTION AND ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

Final inspection and acceptance of all work performed, reports and deliverables will occur at the place of delivery designated by the COR. Final approval and acceptance of documentation required herein shall be by letter of approval and acceptance by COR. The contractor shall not construe any letter of acknowledgment of receipt of material as a waiver of review, or as an acknowledgment that the material is in conformance with this SOW.

F. CHANGES TO STATEMENT OF WORK

Any changes to this SOW shall be authorized and approved only through written correspondence from the CO. A copy of each change will be kept in a project folder along with all other products of the project. Costs incurred by the contractor through the actions of parties other than the CO shall be borne by the contractor.

G. GOVERNMENT-FURNISHED EQUIPMENT (GFE)/GOVERNMENT-FURNISHED INFORMATION (GFI)

HSR&D will provide the contractor with the following information:

- Updated agency priorities and strategic plan, and any changes implemented during the contract Period of Performance
- Contact information for all HSR&D/QUERI personnel essential to contract-related tasks
- Budget information as needed for performing contract-related tasks

H. KEY PERSONNEL

The Contractor shall be responsible for managing and overseeing the activities of all contractor personnel, as well as subcontractor efforts used in performance of this effort. The Contractor's management responsibilities shall include all activities necessary to ensure the accomplishment of timely and effective support, performed in accordance with the requirements contained in the statement of work.

The Contracting Officer may notify the Contractor and request immediate removal of any personnel assigned to the task order by the Contractor that are deemed to have a conflict of interest with the government or if the performance is deemed to be unsatisfactory. The reason for removal will be documented and replacement personnel shall be identified within three business days of the notification. Employment and staffing difficulties shall not be justification for failure to meet established schedules.

1. Key Personnel: Certain skilled experienced professional and/or technical personnel are essential for accomplishing the work to be performed. These individuals are defined as "Key Personnel" and are those persons whose resumes are submitted and marked by the vendor as "Key Personnel". Substitutions shall only be accepted if in compliance with "Substitution of Key Personnel" provision identified below.

The successful Contractor shall have key personnel with a proven track record of:

- Extensive knowledge of HSR&D, QUERI, and implementation science including familiarity with the VA, VHA, and VHA Office of Research and Development;
- Knowledge of agency and Office strategic plan and priorities;
- Specific knowledge of and previous history working with HSR&D (including QUERI and COINs);
- Experience with developing strategic action plans, performing literature reviews, analyzing project portfolios, and organizing and planning professional meetings;
- Mastery of Microsoft Office products (including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook) and other software related to tasks outlined in this SOW; and

- Expertise as needed for all tasks outlined in this SOW.

Key personnel should include at least one program analyst, and someone knowledgeable regarding stakeholder program evaluation research. Personnel working on this contract should have experience in areas including research involving survey sampling design; data collection and management; techniques for maximizing response rates; programming; statistical analysis; thematic data analysis; and report writing.

2. Substitution of Key Personnel: All Contractor requests for approval of substitutions hereunder shall be submitted in writing to the COR and the CO at least thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the effective date, whenever possible, and shall provide a detailed explanation of the circumstances necessitating the proposed substitution, a complete resume for the proposed substitute, and any other information requested by the CO necessary to approve or disapprove the proposed substitution. New personnel shall not commence work until all necessary security requirements, as defined in Section J, have been fulfilled and resumes provided and accepted. The COR and the CO will evaluate such requests and promptly notify the contractor of approval or disapproval in writing.

I. PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS:

- a. The Contractor shall document that the qualifications of the professional, technical and administrative staff proposed are adequate for full performance of tasks. Curriculum Vitae (CVs) or resumes are provided for each proposed staff member.
- b. The Contractor shall identify the key roles and specific responsibilities for each key role of the professional, technical and administrative staff proposed.
- c. The Contractor shall demonstrate the appropriate mix and balance of education, academic excellence, training and experience of all proposed team members.