



Questions & responses to the NDWS RFPs

FINAL VERSION: January 22, 2024

NOTE: Questions marked "NEW" were added to this document after January 12, 2024

General questions (relevant to all RFPs)

QUESTION 1

Section 3.3 mentions "systems to import, capture, monitor, and update case-level information." Does this need to be a formal sample management software or can it be a collection of detailed and comprehensive Excel spreadsheets?

NDWS response

We are interested in seeing solutions that satisfy the management and reporting requirements of the RFP. A formal sample management software is not a requirement.

QUESTION 2

Under section 7. SUBMISSION DIRECTIONS, section 7.1 defines the parameters around asking questions. The RFP, "We will prepare a memo that will anonymously list questions received and our responses, and we will update the memo cumulatively and share it with prospective bidders no later than January 26, 2024..." Is it feasible for the University to provide responses to questions on a rolling basis to allow vendors adequate time to adjust their proposals accordingly.

NDWS response

Yes!

QUESTION 3

Under section 5. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, section 5.2. states, “A comprehensive cost estimate that includes your total costs (including indirects and/or fees), and outlines costs of all proposed design, data collection, and support services including all salary and non-salary costs incurred, as well as all assumptions.” To our bid approach, can the University confirm that offerors can propose a firm fixed price, inclusive of all direct costs, indirect costs and/or fees? To our bid approach, please confirm that offerors can include profit/fee in their price proposal?

NDWS response

A firm *fixed* price is not allowable. Your proposal should include an *estimate* of the direct and indirect costs (broken out separately), based on the parameters described in the RFP. Your Federally negotiated Indirect Cost rate (IDC) must be used if you have one. If you do not have a Federally negotiated IDC rate established, a specialist from the University of Michigan’s Office of Contract Administration (OCA) will work with your team to negotiate a reasonable rate. A 10% de minimis rate can also be used.

QUESTION 4

All four related RFPs state “The cooperative agreement, funded by the National Institute on Aging (NIA) required that the funded team conduct a competitive process to select organizations to carry out data collection for NDWS (comprising four related surveys) over a total of five years. In the current request for proposal (RFP), we invite you [hereafter described as the data collection partner] to submit a proposal to conduct Year 1 and Year 2 data collection on one of those surveys...” In addition, all four RFPs state “The NDWS team will establish subaward agreements with up to four data collection organizations willing to work in partnership to launch the four surveys.” Do the terms of UofM’s cooperative agreement with NIA require UofM to establish subawards for these data collection efforts with an organization(s) external to UofM? In other words, is an entity within UofM such as SRO ineligible to submit a bid?

NDWS response

SRO and other University of Michigan entities will *not* submit a bid for data collection on any of the NDWS RFPs.

QUESTION 5

Please confirm the due date. Page 13 of the RFP says Friday February 19, but February 19 is a Monday.

NDWS response

Our apologies. RFP’s are due on *Monday*, February 19th.

QUESTION 6

Section 5.2. requests “A comprehensive cost estimate that includes your total costs (including indirect costs and/or fees.” Please confirm that our cost estimate can include profit/fee in addition to our direct and federally-negotiated indirect costs.

NDWS response

No. Only direct and indirect costs can be included in your estimate.

QUESTION 7

If an organization other than a non-profit or academic institution is bidding as a contractor (not as a subrecipient), will a time and materials-type budget be acceptable in which the bidder includes all direct labor and indirect costs and profit in the hourly rate for each proposed labor category/position?

NDWS response

As stated in each of the RFPs, "This RFP is an invitation for proposals to enter into a *subaward* agreement with U-M to conduct data collection for..." There is no option for potential data collection partners to join the team as a *contractor*. Direct and indirect costs need to be presented separately.

QUESTION 8

Table 1 on page 6, only lists incentives for year two, but the text states: "The data collection partner should budget \$100 per participating respondent as a token of appreciation for both the baseline and follow-up surveys". Are the incentives for years 1 and 2 or only year 2?

NDWS response

The incentives listed for each of the studies are for both years 1 and 2.

QUESTION 9

Is the Evaluation methodology best value or (LPTA) Lowest price technically acceptable?

NDWS response

The NDWS team will be considering proposals that demonstrate the best value overall based on the criteria outlined. Price is only one component.

QUESTION 10

Q&A Response #6 states "only indirect costs can be included in your estimate." RFP page 10 states total cost can be inclusive of "indirects and/or fees". Please confirm that fee is allowed in our cost proposal, and the type of fee (i.e. fixed, incentive, target, etc...)

NDWS response

Q&A response #6 states that "only direct *and* indirect costs can be included in your estimate." That is an accurate statement. Unfortunately, we cannot entertain proposals with estimates that include both government negotiated indirect cost rates AND fees. We believe some organizations think of fees and IDC rates as synonymous, but we mistakenly included the "and/or" conjunction.

QUESTION 11

We'd like to confirm that these studies will be unblinded (i.e., participants will be aware of the sponsors)? Will they carry the name of the NIH in addition to the universities overseeing the project?

NDWS response

Survey participants will be made aware of the NIH (and NIA) sponsorship as well as the Universities carrying out the study.

QUESTION 12

Are the data collection partners required to be HIPAA compliant?

NDWS response

We will not be collecting any Protected Health Information (PHI) from survey participants. HIPAA compliance is not relevant in this context.

QUESTION 13

Do you have a specific requirement for the Co-investigator role? What else is expected from this role aside from the overall operation lead?

NDWS response

In addition to being the operational lead for their organizations data collection work, co-investigators are responsible for making sure the work of their team is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Co-investigators will work closely with the NDWS Survey Director to ensure that their work is also in compliance with the U-M Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies and *may* be asked to help write new IRB amendments or respond to IRB questions.

QUESTION 14

I'm writing to find out whether the funding will be through the University of Michigan in general, or the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.

NDWS response

This work is supported by the National Institute on Aging of the National Institutes of Health. Chosen data collection partners will work with the University of Michigan's Office of Contract Administration to finalize an agreement to work on the project.

QUESTION 15

What is the budget for this project?

NDWS response

The overall budget for this project includes many non-data collection components. We have done our own *estimate* of the cost of data collection specifically, but we are looking for your independent estimate of the cost of delivering on the requirements outlined in these RFPs.

QUESTION 16

Given that data collection could include as many as ten waves of mailing (five letters and five postcards), meeting the target sample size in the fielding period may be challenging. Is there any flexibility in the timeline for fielding?

NDWS response

There will likely be some flexibility, but because of the importance of this data, the funder has set a very aggressive timeline, especially for year 1 of data collection. This is one reason why goal completion rates are significantly lower in year 1 for the three surveys that require two stages of sampling.

NEW QUESTION 17

Can you please clarify the content of the survey data in Deliverable 4.7 (Comprehensive data file)? Should the responder expect to weight or impute survey data?

NDWS response

Weighting and/or imputation will not be part of the data deliverable. These tasks will be handled by U-M's sampling statisticians.

NEW QUESTION 18

Section 2.4, "Selection of an organization," on page 5 of the solicitations states "Funds will come from the U-M and will be in the form of a subaward subject to the terms and conditions of the prime award from the NIH." Will U-M share the terms and conditions of the prime award?

NDWS response

The key terms and conditions relevant to our data collection partners are those of any subaward recipient of an NIH Grant. They are codified in this recent updated policy guidance document from the NIH: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-23-133.html>

NEW QUESTION 19

Section 2.4, "Selection of an organization," on page 5 of the solicitations states, "The purpose of this RFP is to allow U-M and UCSF to select a data collection partner for the [surveys]." Will the data collection partner be able to use other vendors for obtaining some services or are there restrictions on the use of vendors?

NDWS response

There are no explicit restrictions against the use of vendors, although we would like them named in your proposal and of course included in your proposed budget. If you are proposing a role for a vendor that includes executing the primary data collection work described in this RFP, we will review their qualifications using the same criteria described in section 6 of our RFP.

NEW QUESTION 20

Section 2.2, “Project & Team Description,” on pages 3-4 of the solicitations states, “The goal of the NDWS data infrastructure, which will include surveys plus other linked data sources, is to support research to improve the understanding of the healthcare workforce that cares for people living with dementia...” Would U-M share any more information about these linked resources (for example, will they require any separate data use agreements the contractor should be aware of)? Does U-M wish to have these linked resources as part of the data deliveries?

NDWS response

Linkage will occur, post data collection, and will NOT be the responsibility of data collection partners. Furthermore, linked data will not be part of any data collection partner data deliverables.

NEW QUESTION 21

Section 3.3, “Instrument Development” on page 7 of these RFPs states, “The data collection partner will program and test the following web-based instruments:

- A 15-minute facility questionnaire in English only
- A 25-minute respondent baseline questionnaire in English and Spanish
- A 20-minute respondent follow-up questionnaire in English and Spanish

Is U-M open to experimenting with the data collection instruments or should these be administered as they are delivered to the data collection contractor?

NDWS response

The NDWS team is completely open to proposed experiments for the technical implementation of these instruments. Suggestions on survey instrument wording will be welcomed but experimentation/modification will be less likely, as it would potentially require parallel changes across all four surveys.

NEW QUESTION 22

Under section 5. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, section 5.3 states, “Marginal cost per completed survey: if we adjust the complete survey counts moderately upward (or downward) from those proposed, what are the marginal costs (or savings) per baseline web sample case?” For budgeting purposes, could the University provide more details about when this change would be communicated - would it be before or after preparations for fielding begin? Additionally, would the sample size remain the same in this situation?

NDWS response

Modest changes to survey completion goals could happen at any time, subject to new information or new learning, but are most likely to happen after fielding begins. Sample sizes would indeed be adjusted as necessary to account for our experience, driven primarily by higher or lower than expected response rates.

NEW QUESTION 23

Can you please clarify Table 2 to include the end dates for data collection in Year 1 and Year 2? In particular, how long should we assume each field period can be?

NDWS response

Year 1 data collection is very abbreviated. What is most critical for year 1 is that we begin data collection in July or early August (i.e. at least a month before the end of the first budget year) and that we complete it in as timely a manner as possible, keeping in mind our response rate goals and the timing of final data delivery outlined in table 2. We would be interested in seeing your estimate of what is feasible. We anticipate that Year 2 data collection will begin in January of 2025 and be completed by July of 2025.

NEW QUESTION 24

What is the expected time elapsed between the baseline and follow-up surveys for respondents who will be surveyed twice?

NDWS response

Year 2 followup surveys will be conducted approximately in parallel with new year 2 baseline surveys. The minimum elapsed time would be ~ 4 months, but more likely between 6 and 9 months after the initial baseline survey was completed.

Nursing Home/Assisted Living/Home Care/ Staff Survey questions

QUESTION A

Under section 5. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, section 5.3 states, “Marginal cost per successfully recruited [nursing home/assisted living facility/home care agency] and marginal cost per completed survey: if we adjust the complete survey counts moderately upward (or downward) from those proposed, what are the marginal costs (or savings) per facility and per baseline web sample case?” For budgeting purposes, can the University provide a range for what is considered “moderate” increase or decrease?

NDWS response

For estimating purposes, you may assume “moderately upward (or downward)” to be no more than a 20% increase or decrease in survey counts.

QUESTION 1

Will the employers providing the contact information for their staff be able to provide us with 3rd party opt-in permissions?

NDWS response

While the employing organizations may provide contact information, each individual respondent will need to provide consent.

QUESTION 2

The study design assumes 50% participation from the organizations sampled. This seems quite high to us. We'd like to understand what this assumption is based on to ensure we're aligned in approach / utilizing all the tools at our disposal.

NDWS response

We think organizations can be convinced of the importance of participation based on the topic, sponsors, incentives, and professionalism of the partners we plan to work with. It is generally in line with our experience, although we are aware of recent studies where agreement to participate at this first stage of organizational sampling was significantly lower than 50%.

As indicated in the RFP, we are very interested in proposals that are informed by your specific experience in carrying out similar surveys, so please feel free to suggest alternate, data-driven assumptions, following the guidelines outlined in the RFP.

QUESTION 3

Have you verified that the incentives for all medical staff meet the fair compensation standards, or is this something you are expecting the partner to do and adjust as needed?

NDWS response

The proposed incentive structure will be reviewed by the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board. This may require some adjustments over time for methodological or regulatory reasons.

QUESTION 4

Will the facility recruited in Year 1 be excluded from Year 2 samples?

NDWS response

Each of these surveys (Nursing Home/Assisted Living/Home Care) will include both new *and* follow up surveys in year 2 as outlined in the RFP.

NEW QUESTION 5

What contact information will be provided with the list of sampled facilities?

Will contact information include email address, email address, and telephone number?

NDWS response

Contact information for sample facilities will include details available in publicly available data from CMS, including facility name, mailing address, and telephone number. (Email contact information is not available in this data.)

NEW QUESTION 6

Section 3.2, “Data collection,” on page 6 of these RFPs states that data collection procedures, “are expected to include up to 5 mailed invitation/information letters and 5 postcard reminders.” Is this for the recruitment of first stage sampling units (i.e., nursing home facilities) or will the same number of invitations and reminders be necessary for recruiting staff members after the selection of first stage sampling unit?

NDWS response

The specification of '5 mailed invitation/information letters and 5 postcard reminders' is for the second stage of sampling. We expect that a different recruitment protocol will be specified for the recruitment of first-stage units. Of course, this protocol might include mailed invitations and/or postcards. We are interested in working closely with partners to design and implement the most effective protocols.

NEW QUESTION 7

Section 3.1, “Sampling, Facility Recruitment, and Rostering,” on page 5 of these RFPs states, “The NDWS team will provide the data collection partner with the list of sampled facilities for each phase of the survey.” Does this mean that U-M will sample the facilities and the data collection contractor will be responsible for sampling the staff?

NDWS response

U-M will sample facilities and then provide the list of selected facilities to our partner. We will work collaboratively with the data collection partner to develop a rostering tool and a protocol for sampling staff from the roster. The partner will be responsible for administering the rostering and selection protocol.

NEW QUESTION 8

Section 3.1, “Sampling, Facility Recruitment, and Rostering,” on page 5 of these RFPs states, “propose that data collection partners engage potential participating facilities through multiple contact and follow-up modalities, which may include mail, email, text, telephone, and video conference call (e.g., Zoom).” Is the data collection contractor responsible for producing the contact materials?

NDWS response

Data collection partners will be responsible for producing contact materials, in partnership with the NDWS team. These materials will also need to be approved by the U-M IRB.

NEW QUESTION 9

Under section 3, Project Scope and Requirements, section 3.1 states “The data collection partner should budget \$500 per agency as a token of appreciation for participating in the study and responding to the organizational questionnaire.” Please clarify if the \$500 per agency should be provided in both Year 1 and Year 2.

NDWS response

The \$500 per facility or agency is a one time token of appreciation. In year 2, data collection partners will contact staff directly to complete follow up surveys. Partners will also recruit *new* facilities or agencies which would of course be eligible for the \$500 token of appreciation.

NEW QUESTION 10

For the Nursing Home Staff, Assisted Living Staff, and Home Care Staff Surveys, does the data collection launch date (July 31, 2024) correspond to the start of Task 3.1 or Task 3.2?

NDWS response

Data collection launch marks the beginning of all partner data collection work including the recruitment work outlined in Task 3.1

NEW QUESTION 11

In the Phase 1 and Phase 2 [nursing home agencies/assisted living facilities/home care agencies] lists provided by NDWS, what percentage of records will include facility phone number, postal address, and email address?

NDWS response

We have addresses and telephone numbers for a large proportion of assisted living communities and nursing homes. There are email addresses for a small proportion of these establishments. The home care sampling frame is under construction. We expect similar availability of contact information for these agencies. We will work with the vendor in assembling the most complete contact information possible.

NEW QUESTION 12

In Phase 1 and Phase 2 [nursing home agencies/assisted living facilities/home care agencies] lists provided by NDWS, will the name of a contact person and their position in the facility be provided on the lists of facilities; and if so, what positions in the facility are being included? What percent of the list will have a person named?

NDWS response

The information collected by state regulatory agencies varies across the 50 states and the District of Columbia. There is often a name included but it may be an owner, manager, or other role within the organization. These names and titles will be included with the sampling frame. We

will work closely with the selected vendors to identify the appropriate contact at each establishment.

NEW QUESTION 13

In Phase 1 and Phase 2 [nursing home agencies/assisted living facilities/home care agencies] lists provided by NDWS, will there be any additional administrative information such as number of employees at the facility, type of facility, etc.?

NDWS response

The available information varies across the sampling frames used for the different surveys and, in the case of the assisted living survey, across states. The NDWS team will work to harmonize these data and make them as complete as possible. The number of beds, the number of employees, and facility type are all key elements likely to be used in stratification. We will be working to make these data as complete as possible.

NEW QUESTION 14

In Phase 1 and Phase 2 [nursing home agencies/assisted living facilities/home care agencies] lists provided by NDWS, how current will the facility list be in Phase 1, and how current will the facility list be in Phase 2?

NDWS response

The NDWS team will use the most current, publicly available data in constructing our sample frames. Frames will be updated as new data becomes available.

NEW QUESTION 15

In the Phase 1 and Phase 2 [nursing home agencies/assisted living facilities/home care agencies] lists provided by NDWS, at what level in the facility will the contact information be provided? For example, for larger organizations (e.g., nursing homes/assisted living: Genesis Health Care, Life Care Centers, etc.; Bright Star, Visiting Angels, etc.) will the sample record be for a local unit or at a larger organizational level (e.g., state, national)?

NDWS response

The sample frame development is not final at this stage, but our goal is to provide sample at the local unit or individual establishment level and *not* at the level of the larger organization or enterprise.

NEW QUESTION 16

For the recruitment of [nursing home agencies/assisted living facilities/home care agencies] in Year 1 and in Year 2, what is the expectation for national representation within the recruited sample for geographic location, urban/rural, size of facility, or other facility characteristics?

NDWS response

The Year 1 sample may include selected units from a subsample of states. This sample will be fully representative of urbanicity, facility size, and other characteristics. The Year 2 sampling frame will include facilities from all states. This will allow the team time to assemble a complete sampling frame.

NEW QUESTION 17

For the list of sampled [nursing home agencies/assisted living facilities/home care agencies] that will be provided by the NDWS team: Phase 1, RFP indicates [n] facilities/agencies will be on the list, are there more facilities/agencies available from which to recruit, if obtaining the expected response rate (50%) is difficult? And Phase 2, RFP indicated [n] facilities will be on the list. Are there more facilities available from which to recruit, if obtaining the expected response rate (50%) is difficult?

NDWS response

The sample size listed for each of the surveys are estimates based on our assumed responses rates. There *will* be additional sample available for each of the surveys as needed, although the NDWS team may choose to prioritize higher response rates over speed of data collection.

NEW QUESTION 18

For the completed follow-up surveys in Phase 2: Will [nursing home/assisted living/home care] staff who no longer work at the [nursing home facility/assisted living facility/home care agency] still be eligible to complete the survey? And if so, will the data collection partner be responsible for attempting to locate updated contact information for those respondents who no longer work at the [facility/agency]?

NDWS response

Staff who no longer work for the facility or agency will indeed be eligible to complete a year 2 survey, and are a population of great interest. For staff who have left the industry, this phase 2 survey will be their final one. Staff who report working at a new facility or agency in year 2 will be eligible to be interviewed in the third year.

Data collection partners will indeed be responsible for locating respondents who no longer work at the agency or facility. At the conclusion of each survey, data collection partners will seek updated as well as alternate contact information for each respondent, to aid in possible future locating work.

NEW QUESTION 19

For the \$500 and \$100 incentives, what are the expectations for the form in which those incentives are delivered to the [nursing home facility/assisted living facility/home care agency] and staff respondents (e.g., cash, check, electronic transfer, physical gift card, electronic gift card)?

[NDWS response](#)

There are no specific expectations for the form of incentive delivery. We are interested in your ideas and will likely defer to the recommendations of our partners, subject to IRB approval..

NEW QUESTION 20

For the Spanish translation, will more than one translation be needed to account for regional differences in Spanish spoken in the United States? Will NDWS review/approve the translation(s) used?

[NDWS response](#)

We are planning for a single Spanish translation. The NDWS team will review and approve all translations.

NEW QUESTION 21

Is there a budget cap for the [nursing home/assisted living/home care] Staff Survey?

[NDWS response](#)

For purposes of your proposal, you should *not* assume there is a budget cap on data collection for any of the surveys.

Community Clinician Survey Questions

Question 1

Do you have any estimates on the number or percent of cases from the CMS data that might be missing contact information (e.g., 10%, 30%)?

[NDWS response](#)

The CMS data have relatively complete mailing address and phone information information, but it may be incorrect. In a recent study, more than ½ of the addresses needed updating. Data collection partners will almost certainly need to either manually verify/update contact info or use a third-party vendor. CMS administrative data does not include email addresses.

Question 2

Please confirm that the \$100 token of appreciation is only for the year 2 baseline/follow-up surveys (and not for the 10,000 respondents in Year 1)?

[NDWS response](#)

The \$100 token of appreciation is for all respondents completing surveys in years 1 and 2.

Question 3

Since it is expected that the research partner will provide reminder phone calls, will respondents be allowed to complete the survey via phone at the time of the reminder call if they so choose?

NDWS response

We would like to see your cost estimate based on using phones for reminders only, but you are free to show an additional cost estimate based on a modified protocol and/or different assumptions.

Question 4

Item 4.4 of the RFP refers to providing a final version of the web programming code in each language but section 3.2 indicates that the survey is to be provided in English only – please confirm that the survey is only to be made available in English.

NDWS response

The Community Clinician survey will be available in English only.

Question 5

Do you have an estimate as to the total number of survey items that are on the baseline and follow-up surveys? The estimate is 25-minutes for baseline and 20-minutes for follow-up but an estimate of the number of discrete survey items can assist with estimating programming and other costs.

NDWS response

We do not have a solid estimate of the number of items at this point but we find a good rule of thumb to be 3-4 questions per minute of survey content.

Question 6

Table 2 on page 6 of the RFP indicates a preliminary data release on September 30, 2024. What are the expectations of the research partner for this release (e.g., what deliverables will be required at that time)?

NDWS response

We hope the preliminary data release can include a comprehensive set of data files as itemized in paragraph 4.7, although it may not include 100% of the targeted number of completed surveys. The schedule might require that the data be prepared before this target is achieved.