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## Overview

### 1) What are the NIHCATS IV contracts?

The National Institutes of Health Conference, Administrative, and Travel Services (NIHCATS) IV contracts are multiple award Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (ID/IQ) contracts covering a wide range of administrative, meeting, conference, and travel support services. The NIHCATS IV support services contracts are available to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Operating Divisions (OPDIVS) for services performed both in the United States and abroad.

The focus of the NIHCATS IV is to provide all the necessary services, qualified personnel, and facilities, not otherwise provided by the Government. All requirements will be fulfilled under task orders. The NIHCATS IV contracts consist of a five (5)-year base.

### 2) Who can use the NIHCATS IV contracts?

The NIHCATS IV is available to be used by the entire NIH community but may also be used by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

### 3) What is the geographic scope of the NIHCATS IV?

The geographic scope of the NIHCATS IV includes the Continental United States and abroad.

### 4) Can we get a list of contractors from you?

Yes, they are posted on our website on the [Vendors](#) page.

### 5) Is the use of the NIHCATS IV contracts mandatory?

The NIH Conference Administrative and Travel Services Contracts are considered to be part of the Department’s strategic sourcing efforts to leverage HHS-wide spend, reduce contract duplication, increase purchasing efficiencies, and reduce the total cost of conferences hosted

by HHS. Since the NIHCATS IV contracts are a Small Business set-aside, use of the NIHCATS IV contracts may help NIH and HHS meet small business contracting goals.

**6) What are the benefits of using the NIHCATS IV?**

The NIHCATS IV contracting program is a flexible means for NIH and other Federal agencies to obtain conference, administrative, and travel associated support.

Benefits of using NIHCATS IV include:

- Is available to the NIH and HHS for service performed in the continental United States and abroad.
- Relieves the customer of the burden of executing a full contract.
- Offers competition among a pre-screened group of qualified vendors.
- Promotes small business goals.
- Lessens the burden on the customer by making debriefings optional.
- Reduces the risk of protest.

## Task Order Process

**7) How do I place an order on the NIHCATS IV contract?**

Detailed instructions on how to place a task order against the NIHCATS IV contracts are provided in Section 3 of the SOP. A brief overview of the task order process is described below.

Steps

Step 1	Task Order COR develops TORP and sends it to the Task Order CO for review
Step 2	Task Order CO reviews the TORP and sends it to the NIHCATS IV support team
Step 3	NIHCATS IV support team receives and catalogues the TORP.
Step 4	NIHCATS IV support team reviews and releases the TORP
Step 5	Contractors review TORP and submit questions, if necessary, to the Task Order CO
Step 6	Task Order CO works with the Task Order COR to draft responses to Contractor questions
Step 7	Task Order CO sends questions and answers to NIHCATS IV support team
Step 8	NIHCATS IV support team reviews and releases questions and answers to the contractors
Step 9	Contractors submit proposals in response to the TORP to the Task Order CO

Step 10	Task Order CO and COR evaluate the proposals and select an Awardee by completing the Selection Recommendation Document (SRD)
Step 11	NIHCATS IV support team reviews and concurs on the SRD
Step 12	Task Order CO processes the task order award and forwards a signed copy of the award document to the NIHCATS IV support team
Step 13	NIHCATS IV support team releases award letter to the awardee and Task Order CO/COR announcing the task order award
Step 14	Contractor starts work under the task order
Step 15	Upon task order expiration, the Task Order COR completes a performance survey and works with the Task Order CO to close out the order

Task Order Guidelines are subject to change; please refer to the latest version of the [Standard Operating Procedures \(SOP\)](#).

**8) What must the Task Order Request Package (TORP) include?**

The TORP will include (1) a completed TORP form, (2) a Statement of Work (SOW), (3) the Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE) (not released to contractors), (4) all required conference/meeting approval request forms and waivers (if applicable) with approvals\*, (5) a Determination & Findings (D&F) (if applicable), and either a (6) funding memo if the total task order value (base value plus option years) is less than \$250,000 or an (7) Acquisition Plan if the total task order value is greater than \$250,000.

For external customers, your TORP submission should also include the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the assessment. For more details on the MOU, please see FAQs under the Assessments section.

**For NIH Institutes and Centers (ICs):** All required conference/meeting forms and waivers based upon NIH’s most recent policy guidance must be approved and submitted prior to TORP award. If the customer does not have the required conference/meeting form to submit initially with the TORP, it must be submitted with the Selection Recommendation Document.

**For Federal Agencies (other than NIH):** All required conference/meeting forms and waivers based upon the Agency/OPDIV’s most recent policy guidance must be approved and submitted to the NIHCATS IV support team. The forms must be submitted prior to solicitation or award, per the Agency/OPDIV’s most recent policy guidance. If an HHS OPDIV does not have a specific policy, then the HHS Policy will be followed, which requires conference/meeting approval forms prior to TORP award. If the customer does not have the required conference/meeting form to submit initially with the TORP, it will be submitted with the Selection Recommendation Document.

Additional information can be found in Section 3 of the [SOP](#).

**9) If my conference will only take place for two days, what is the period of performance?**

The period of performance is from date of task order award to completion of all conference-related services (e.g., the last date that all deliverables will be completed under the task order).

**10) What is a "No Response" statement?**

A "No Response" statement must be submitted if a contractor is unable or otherwise cannot perform a requirement. This shall be submitted to the NIHCATS IV support team via email.

For more information refer to Section 3.9.2 of the [SOP](#).

**11) Will every contractor receive all Task Order Request Packages (TORPs)?**

Yes, all contractors will receive each TORP in accordance with FAR 16.505(b)(1), Fair Opportunity, unless an exception to Fair Opportunity has been approved.

**12) Are customers allowed to sole source to a particular contractor?**

All task orders are competitive. All contractors will receive all requirements unless an exception to the Fair Opportunity applies and has been approved by the NIHCATS IV CO.

**13) How long does it take to process and award a task order for the NIHCATS IV contract?**

Task order timelines are largely dependent on the specific requirement. The timeline for the NIHCATS IV support team to review and release the TORP to contractors is targeted to be approximately five (5) business days. Task orders with special or complex requirements may take longer. This processing time begins once a complete, acceptable TORP is received by the NIHCATS IV support team. Incomplete or unacceptable TORPs will require additional time for the NIHCATS IV support team to advise the Task Order CO on minimum acceptable requirements.

The Task Order CO will establish a TORP response time that will afford contractors a reasonable opportunity to respond to the requirement. When establishing the TORP response time, the Task Order CO shall consider the circumstances of the individual acquisition and account for factors such as the complexity, availability, and value of the requirement.

Overall, it should take no longer than 45 days from the time a complete TORP package is submitted for review until award.

**14) Is it possible to see the status of the task order?**

If you have any questions regarding the status of the task order, please contact your Task Order CO.

**15) How and where will awards be made and announced?**

After the task order award is signed and submitted by the Task Order CO, the NIHCATS IV support team will announce the task order award by releasing an award letter to the winning contractor. A notice will also be sent to contractors via email.

**16) Once our Task Order CO makes an award, can we contact the contractor right away?**

Contractors are instructed not to begin work until they have officially received the task order award and award letter from the NIHCATS IV support team. You may contact the contractor once the NIHCATS IV support team sends out the award.

## Services and Task Order Types

**17) What types of task orders can be used under NIHCATS IV?**

The NIHCATS IV are Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (ID/IQ) type contracts utilizing Fixed Price (FP) or Time & Materials (T&M) type task orders. The task order will provide detail of the specific services that will be required. T&M task orders should be used only if FP type task orders are not suitable. Use of a T&M task order requires a Determination and Findings (D&F) approval from the Task Order CO for the IC or office. T&M task orders beyond three years will require the approval of the Head of Contracting Activity (HCA).

**18) What task areas are covered through the NIHCATS IV contracts?**

Support under the NIHCATS IV contracts includes the following task areas. See the [SOW](#) or the [SOP](#) for more details.

1. Travel Support
2. Meeting and Conference Support
3. Documentation Support
4. Administrative Support
5. Website Design, Development, and Maintenance Support

All areas must be affiliated with a conference or a meeting.

**19) Is it possible to have multiple meetings or different types of meetings on one task order?**

Yes, but you must have a signed conference approval form and approved funds for each conference requested. As long as the meetings are within the master contract period of

performance you can procure additional meetings ahead of time through the use of options. It is important that you identify in your SOW your intentions for options.

## Roles, Responsibilities, and Support

### 20) What are the responsibilities of the Task Order Contracting Officer's Representative (COR)?

When a customer determines a need exists for a conference, meeting, or travel services, a Task Order COR must be identified. The Task Order COR must be FAC-COR certified and is responsible for all technical aspects of the task order.

The Task Order COR will typically be the individual requiring the services offered under the NIHCATS IV contracts or may be a designee within the IC or office requiring the service. The Task Order COR will develop the requirement and will represent the Government as the main interface between their IC or office and the contractor during the task order period of performance. The Task Order COR will draft the TORP Form, prepare the Selection Recommendation Document (SRD), provide technical direction to the contractor's management staff to facilitate task order performance, and monitor performance over the period of performance of the task order.

Additional information can be found in Section 2.2.2 of the [SOP](#).

### 21) What are the responsibilities of the Task Order Contracting Officer (CO)?

The Task Order CO has the authority to act as an agent of the Government under a particular task order. For NIH customers, the Task Order CO is a warranted CO from their respective acquisition office. For customers at Federal agencies outside of NIH, the Task Order CO is a warranted CO from the Office of Logistics and Acquisition Operations (OLAO) Office of Acquisition (OA).

Responsibilities of the Task Order CO include approving and submitting the TORP, overseeing the evaluation of proposals, approving the Selection Recommendation Document (SRD), and creating and awarding a task order. The Task Order CO is responsible for all task order post-award administration and closeout activities.

Additional information can be found in Section 2.2.1 of the [SOP](#).

### 22) Who processes invoices?

NIHCATS IV is a 3-way match with receiving coordinated by the Task Order COR. Global receivers can do receiving as well.

### 23) What support is available regarding the NIHCATS IV contract?

The NIHCATS IV support team (NIHCATSIV@mail.nih.gov) is available to assist users in understanding and using the NIHCATS IV contract. Customers may request training by completing the [Training Request Form](#) located on the Resources tab of the NIHCATS IV website. In addition, materials such as the Standard Operating Procedures document and a fact sheet are available [here](#).

**24) Who is responsible for the task order administration?**

The Task Order CO and Task Order COR are responsible for all task order activities including initiating, awarding, administering, modifying and closing-out task orders. The NIHCATS IV CO and COR will provide support, as needed.

**25) Can an AO perform a task order COR's role?**

Not unless they have completed the FAC-COR training and are certified.

**26) Are the Task Order COs allowed to define the evaluation criteria?**

Yes, the Task Order CO and COR may develop their own task order evaluation criteria.

## Funding

**27) Is the task order process the same for any dollar limit?**

No. If the task order total value (base year plus option years) is greater than \$250,000 an Acquisition Plan will be required. Otherwise, only a funding memo confirming that funds are available is required. However, the process steps remain the same.

**28) Can pricing data be made available to customers to help them develop IGCEs and to complete the Conference Approval Form?**

No. There is no pricing data available. However, we are able to provide average loaded rates for all the NIHCATS IV labor categories upon request.

## Assessments

**29) I am an external customer, what is the cost to use the NIHCATS IV Contracts?**

For external customers to use the NIHCATS IV Contracts there will be a 3% assessment. This is a percentage of the estimated dollar amount of award.

**30) How is the assessment transferred from my agency to the NIH?**

The assessment is collected via an Interagency Agreement (IAA) between your agency and the NIH.

**31) How is the Interagency Agreement (IAA) processed?**

Please email the NIHCATS IV email and we will provide the NIH IAA point of contact who will help coordinate the IAA process.

**32) Does the Interagency Agreement (IAA) need to be finalized before I can submit my TORP?**

The Interagency Agreement (IAA) will need to be completed, with all documents signed and CAN numbers received, prior to the award of the task order.

## Small Business Aspects

**33) Is the NIHCATS IV contract set up as a total or partial small business set-aside?**

The NIHCATS IV contracts have been reserved as a total Small Business set-aside.

**34) Who gets credit for using small businesses?**

The customer will get the credit.

## Approvals and Required Documentation

**35) If a meeting or conference does not require a Conference Approval Form, what does the NIHCATS IV support team need from the customer?**

The customer should submit a memo through the Task Order CO that explains why the approval form is not needed.

**36) Can we submit a TORP as we wait for Conference approval?**

Yes.

**For NIH ICs:** All required conference/meeting forms and waivers based upon NIH's most recent policy guidance must be approved and submitted prior to TORP award. If the customer does not have the required conference/meeting form to submit initially with the TORP, it must be submitted with the Selection Recommendation Document.

**For Federal Agencies (other than NIH):** All required conference/meeting forms and waivers based upon the Agency/OPDIV's most recent policy guidance must be approved and submitted to the NIHCATS IV Office. The forms must be submitted prior to solicitation or award, per the Agency/OPDIV's most recent policy guidance. If an HHS OPDIV does not have a specific policy, then the HHS Policy will be followed, which requires conference/meeting approval forms prior to TORP award. If the customer does not have the required conference/meeting form to submit initially with the TORP, it will be submitted with the Selection Recommendation Document.



**37) What is the funding document?**

It is a memo stating that funds are available. It is generally signed by the EO or budget officer or any authorized personnel from your IC or agency.