I. Summary Information

**Purpose:** To identify a contractor to facilitate at least four (4) convenings with a scientific panel on developing a syndromic surveillance definition to identify people living with disabilities.

**Proposal Due Date and Time:** Mar. 21, 2022, 5:00 p.m. ET

**Selection Announcement Date:** Mar. 28, 2022, 5:00 p.m. ET

**Maximum Funding Amount:** $25,000

**Estimated Period of Performance and Final Report Date:** Apr. 1 – July 31, 2022

**Eligibility:** All contractors in good standing with ASTHO are eligible to apply.

**ASTHO Point of Contact:** Disability and Preparedness Team, specialists@astho.org with the subject line “Scientific Panel Facilitator”

II. Description of Bid

**Purpose:**

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is seeking the services of a highly qualified contractor to facilitate at least four in-person or virtual convenings of a scientific panel to develop, test, and disseminate a syndromic surveillance definition that can be used to identify people with disabilities during emergencies. The facilitator will be responsible for leading the scientific panel through a discussion on disability definitions and ICD and SNOMED codes that will be used to define disability within the National Syndromic Surveillance Program’s Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics (NSSP-ESSENCE). The scientific panel will convene for several discussions, to provide final input on the disability definition and review results of later pilot tests for the definition. The selected facilitator should have a working knowledge of syndromic surveillance and other data systems and be able to lead participants through a conversation on disability, preparedness, and syndromic surveillance.

**Background:**

COVID-19 has both created and spotlighted many barriers to health equity for people with disabilities. Research supports that people with disabilities are more likely to have conditions that are associated with COVID-19 severity and mortality and a higher rate of case fatality. ASTHO and CDC are committed to addressing the needs of people living with disabilities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. ASTHO’s current disability and preparedness work has shed light on the lack of disability data during public health emergencies. Through a cooperative agreement with CDC’s National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD), ASTHO will work to fill this gap in the public health response by developing, testing, and disseminating a syndromic surveillance definition that can be used to identify people with disabilities during emergencies. This project will have a sustainable impact on national, state, and local capacity to respond, detect, understand, and monitor health events among people living with disabilities during COVID-19 and other public health emergencies.
ASTHO will facilitate the development, testing, and dissemination of the disability syndromic surveillance within the NSSP-ESSENCE throughout the project period. As part of this project, ASTHO will host several discussions with a scientific panel to create a disability syndrome definition that will accurately identify this population during an emergency. ASTHO requires the expertise of an experienced facilitator to support this activity. The contractor shall possess basic knowledge on syndromic surveillance, preparedness, disability, meeting facilitation, engagement techniques, and subject matter expertise on evidence-based strategies for successful facilitation.

Project activities
The selected applicant(s) will be responsible for completing the following project activities:

A. Participate in bi-weekly or monthly check-in calls with ASTHO program staff depending on project timing. The selected contractor will participate in an introductory meeting and one preparation meeting with ASTHO staff before each convening of the scientific panel. These meetings will provide a regular opportunity for the contractor and ASTHO staff to have general discussions about the overall project and session agenda and content, and to address any new issues, questions, or requirements that might arise.

B. Develop an agenda or facilitation guide for in-person/virtual/hybrid scientific panel convenings in collaboration with project team. The selected contractor will develop or modify an existing facilitation guide for the scientific panel. This facilitation guide will be comprehensive and will follow evidence-based strategies for successful facilitation.

C. Facilitate at least four (4) in-person/virtual/hybrid scientific panel convenings. During the scientific panel convenings, the contractor will serve as the lead facilitator/presenter and will be responsible for keeping discussions on track and ensuring that all objectives are being met.

Technical Support/Technical Assistance: Any technology requirements and support will be provided by ASTHO.

Inclusion of Health Equity:
ASTHO is committed to the promotion of health equity and the elimination of health inequities. Health inequities are reflected by disproportionately high rates of disease, premature death, and a lower quality of life. Health inequities are avoidable and state, federal, and locally funded activities play a key role in helping to solve this problem. Applicants are encouraged to address health inequities within the context of proposed activities.

Funding
The maximum award amount is $25,000. Only one award will be given to the selected consultant. Awards will be made through a fixed-priced agreement based on satisfactory completion of required deliverables.

Evaluators
Each proposal will be reviewed by ASTHO Disability and Preparedness Team, specialists@astho.org.

III. Requirements for Financial Award

Allowable Expenses
Funds may not be used for equipment purchases. Per HHS requirements, funds awarded under this Competitive Bid are prohibited from being used to pay the direct salary of an individual at a rate above the federal Executive Schedule Level II (currently $203,700).

Required Grant Activities to be Covered by Award

- Participation in bi-weekly or monthly check-in calls, with ASTHO program staff, depending on project timing
- Developing a facilitation guide for in-person or virtual scientific panel convenings
- Participation in up to four in-person or virtual scientific panel convenings

Period of Performance
The contract is scheduled to begin Apr. 1, 2022, and end July 31, 2022.

Reporting Requirements
The selected applicant will be required to participate in bi-weekly or monthly conference calls to report on project activities, submit progress reports and produce final deliverables by July 31, 2022.

IV. Required Proposal Content and Selection Criteria
Proposals must include the following content areas and meet the following criteria. Proposals should not exceed five pages in length, excluding CVs and budget, and should be single-spaced in 11-point font.

A. Cover Letter (10 points): Include the names of the lead programmatic and fiscal/contractual contacts (name, address, e-mail, telephone number). Not to exceed one page but does not count toward the proposal page limit.

B. Proposed Approach (20 points): Provide a brief outline of the approach and strategy to accomplishing the requested project activities. Detail a work plan which includes activities, timeline, goals, and milestones to achieve the deliverables and meet the expectations noted above.

C. Prior Experience and Performance (20 points): Describe experience and quality of performance on recent work completed with similar scope. Include information about familiarity with and understanding of the topic. Describe ability to represent ASTHO well in interactions with state and territorial health agency staff and other governmental, private sector, and/or non-profit stakeholders.

D. Organization/Individual Capacity (10 points): Include information about the company and address the ability and capacity to perform the services required within the specified timeframe. Describe staff qualifications and provide a CV for key personnel/staff lead.

E. Budget & Budget Narrative (10 points): Provide a detailed fixed price per deliverable budget, including detailed projected costs for the completion of the project. The fixed price budget should include a cost breakdown per task and a proposed payment schedule. The maximum award is $10,000. Attachment A outlines the general Excel format in which the budget should be presented. Applicants may use Attachment A as a template or simply as a guide to inform the development of the project budget. A budget narrative must accompany the budget and indicate the costs associated with each proposed activity.
F. **Response to ASTHO Contract Terms and Conditions (10 points):** ASTHO and the selected applicant will enter into a fixed price agreement. A copy of ASTHO's general contract terms and conditions is available in **Attachment B. Applicants must review the terms and conditions with their legal team or contracts officer and confirm that if selected, will enter into the agreement with ASTHO.** Any proposed changes to the terms and conditions must be identified and submitted with your proposal application for negotiations. Proposed changes submitted after the application period has ended and/or submitted during the contracting stage may not be accepted. ASTHO reserves the right to accept or decline any proposed changes to the terms and conditions. Significant proposed changes, which could affect the agreement’s timely execution, may impact your selection as a successful applicant.

G. **Inclusion of Health Equity (10 points):** Throughout the proposal, incorporate the following: (1) describe the extent to which potential health disparities are evident within the health focus of the application, (2) identify the specific group(s) which could experience a potential disproportionate burden of the health condition, and (3) demonstrate how proposed activities could address health inequities (this also includes identifying social and/or environmental conditions which are the root causes of health disparities). The root causes of health inequities are sometimes referred to as social determinants of health. All information regarding health inequities must be supported with data.

H. **Status as Women-, Minority-, Disadvantaged-, Veteran-Owned, and/or Small Business (10 points):** Consideration will be given to applicants who demonstrate successful work with historically underserved and underrepresented entities (minority-, women-, disadvantaged-, and veteran-owned businesses or “MWDVBEs” and Black, indigenous, people of color or “BIPOC”) in addressing health disparities. Bidders who classify as or partner with these businesses may be strongly considered.

**V. Submission Information**

**Application Procedure**
ASTHO must receive applications by 5:00 p.m. ET, Mar. 21, 2022. Please submit an electronic copy of the application to Disability and Preparedness Team, specialists@astho.org, with the subject line “Scientific Panel Facilitator.” Incomplete applications or applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

**Applicant Questions and Guidance**
ASTHO will support interested applicants to offer guidance and address specific questions about the Competitive Bid. Interested parties may contact the ASTHO Disability and Preparedness Team at specialists@astho.org.

**Disclaimer Notice:**
This Competitive Bid is not binding on ASTHO, nor does it constitute a contractual offer. Without limiting the foregoing, ASTHO reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any or all proposals; to modify, supplement, or cancel the Competitive Bid; to waive any deviation from the Competitive Bid; to negotiate regarding any proposal, and to negotiate final terms and conditions that may differ from those stated in the Competitive Bid. Under no circumstances shall ASTHO be liable for any costs incurred by any person in connection with the preparation and submission of a response to this Competitive Bid.