

**AMENDMENT S0001, Questions and Answers (Q & As)**

**59310523S0005 BPA Research & Analysis Services for the NEA (HBCU.LAA)**

**(please reference the entire title)**

Q1. Will the NEA be grouping vendors together for these different research initiatives?

**A1: Generally speaking, the NEA will send out task orders to BPA-holders that provide the Areas of Service needed for a particular project. The NEA will not send a task order to a BPA-holder that does not have the area of expertise needed for the project (i.e. if a BPA-holder specializes in qualitative research, they will not receive a task order for a data analytics contract).**

Q2.

1. Could you please clarify what projects the contractors will be expected to complete under this BPA? We understand that one already defined project will be focused on HBCUs and one on LAAs. Are there additional projects beyond these two that are not yet defined that contractors selected may be asked to work on after receiving the BPA award?
2. Do you have any guidance regarding how to make sure we are up to date with SAM / DUNS / Grants.gov?

**A2:**

1. **HBCU and LAA projects are the initial, day-one task orders the NEA currently has available. Over the course of the 5 years for which the BPA is active, the NEA will release additional task orders. Only BPA-holders will have the opportunity to compete for these future task orders.**
2. **Go to <https://sam.gov/content/home> <https://sam.gov/content/status-tracker> <https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/SAMQuickStartGuide.pdf> <https://www.dnb.com/duns/duns-lookup.html#:~:text=You%20can%20look%20up%20a,the%20tool%20should%20return%20it.>**

Q3.

1. On page 2, under section “E. Transmittal/Cover Page,” line H. calls for “a statement specifying the extent of agreement in working with subcontractors that will meet all terms, conditions, and provisions within the established BPA.” I’m not sure what’s meant by the extent of agreement, could you elaborate on what this statement should include?
2. On page 45, under Management Approach, a detailed “Quality Control Plan (QCP)” is mentioned. Is this a standard format, and is there more information available anywhere about what elements a QCP for this type of federal contract must include?
3. The rubric and section requirements separate Organizational Qualifications/Technical Competencies from Past Performance, and page 42 indicates that “prior experience performing recent and relevant work similar in scope, size, and complexity” should be included under Organizational Qualifications. Based on that, I’m not certain how that differs from Past Performance. Could you provide more detail about the type of supporting evidence that should be included under Past Performance?
4. Is the intention for proposals for this BPA to specifically address the two SOWs for First Day Task Orders (HBCU and LAA) that were included, or will there be a separate proposal process for those task orders after BPAs have been awarded? Section II, Paragraph 1 (page 16) seems to suggest that only one BPA will be awarded, together with both Day One Orders, but paragraph 9 (page 17) mentions a competitive proposal process among multiple BPA holders.

A3:

- 1. A sentence specifying working with a particular subcontractor that will meet the terms within the BPA. List the company, individual, subcontractor that is working with you or you plan to hire; adding to your proposal.**
- 2. We do not require a standard format for a QCP. General items to include would be management structure, management approach, process of technical reviews (how they would be completed and validated), and process of how problems, if found, would be remedied.**
- 3. Organizational Qualifications/Technical Competencies should list prior experiences that directly related to the technical tasks that would be carried out either in an Area of Service. Past Performance speaks more to the organization as a whole that demonstrate an ability to manage contracts and produce quality products.**
- 4. The NEA will first establish BPAs with selected firms. The NEA will then award the two day-one task orders to selected BPA holders based on a separate evaluation of proposals for those task orders. It is a still competitive process to receive one of the task orders (HBCU or LAA), but only competitive across the pool of BPA holders. This will be the case for future task orders—they will be sent out to BPA holders and only BPA holders will be allowed to compete for the contracts.**

Q4.

1) Please confirm if offerors should identify a focus theme (from the four on NEA's current Research Agenda) to respond to as part of blanket agreement tender submission?

2) Should proposals for Research Agenda and Learning Agenda areas form one submission or separate ones?

3) Management Approach Scoring requires submission of a detailed workplan, staffing plan, communication plan, and quality control plan. It might be difficult to arrive at a specific level of detail at this stage when the exact scope of research services is not yet defined. Could you please clarify the level of detail required and how you would recommend it should be presented in a submission?

4) Price Proposal: Similarly, it may not be possible to yet define a price per project without the context of a specific research scope. Do you accept daily rates as part of the price proposal or would you require offerors to submit an average price for each area of service?

A4:

- 1. Offerors do not need to identify a theme from the Research Agenda. Offerors need to identify the Areas of Service in which they have expertise.**
- 2. Proposals do not need to either address the Research Agenda or Learning Agenda. Information on these two agendas was provided for background information, since future task orders under the BPA will be for projects that are guided by the agendas. Offerors must speak to the Areas of Service they will be able to provide.**
- 3. The level of detail should be more broadly related to how an offeror conducts business, including the approach to attracting and retaining talented staff, approach to communications with a client, and how an offeror manages/oversees quality control of products.**
- 4. This should be the general types of staff that will be needed in a given Area of Service with their hourly rates. For example, a project director, senior analyst and research associate might be needed to provide a given set of tasks under an Area of Service.**

Q5.

1. Are the RFPs for the HBCU and LAA projects due at the same time as the BPA proposal on March 3? Or would those be some of the first RFPs issued to awardees of the blanket proposal?
2. Depending on the research goals and questions, we frequently work with partner organizations and vendors. If we're approved as a service provider under the BPA would we still be able to distribute some funds to other organizations with whom we might partner? We can't provide clear cost estimates for those partners yet– not knowing who they'd need to be until we see the specific project RFPs.

A5.

1. **Yes, if you choose to submit a proposal for one of the day-one task orders, that is also due on March 10, 2023 at 6:00pm EST.**
2. **Yes, you would still be able to work with partner organizations if they provide subject matter expertise needed for a contract. There is no need to provide cost estimates as this time for partners you may work with for a future BPA project. If you are responding to one of the HBCU or LAA projects, however, you should be able to provide a cost estimate that includes any work with partner organizations/subcontractors.**

Q6.

1. What type of information would it make sense to submit to establish past performance if we have not done a project with NEA in the past?
2. For the price proposal, would it suffice to give you our hourly rates, or do you need us to attempt to estimate a range of pricing for types of work products listed in the Areas of Service?

A6.

1. **Past performance with other organizations or agencies as applicable will be accepted.**
2. **Just include hourly rates for positions that would likely be used in a given Area of Service.**

Q7:

1. Would the NEA accept our proposal if we are able to provide detailed information related to our status of registration review (e.g., UEID, screenshots of submitted application, etc.) by March 3rd ? Could you extend the proposal due date?

2. Would we still be eligible to apply for this BPA if our SAM registration is still under review?

3. BPA Awards Clarification: Please clarify whether there are multiple BPAs available for multiple businesses OR a singular BPA with Day One Orders available to additional businesses?

• p.4 (Section I – Descriptions and Specifications) The NEA intends to establish a number of Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) with contractors for research, data science, evaluation, and communication services to support its Research and Learning Agendas and Data Governance Board.

• p.16 (Section II – BPA terms and conditions) The Government intends to award one (1) Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) and Two (2) Day One Orders (Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Study and (Local Arts Agency (LAA) Study under this combined synopsis/solicitation for commercial services solicitation using the acquisition procedures in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 12.

A7:

1. **Every business (private sector wanting to do business with the federal government)/individual that does work for the federal government and needs to get paid with federal funding has to be registered in SAM.gov which is required for any entity prior to award. Yes Extended: Proposal due date is extended to March 10, 2023.**
2. **The contractor is required to have an active SAM account prior to award.**

- 3. The NEA will establish a BPA with each firm it selects. Once the NEA has selected BPA-holders, the agency will then award day one task orders to firms within this pool of BPA-holders. Each day one task order will be awarded to one contractor. For future projects, the NEA will send tasks orders only to BPA-holders, who will then compete for the contract.**

Q8.

- 1 Should a contractor respond to the BPA only? Are they required to respond to both Day 1 and Day 2 studies?
- 2 Are there RFP instructions for the Day 1 HBCU study? We only saw the scope of work for the HBCU study.
- 3 Is it possible to extend the proposal due date for the HBCU study (after March 3, 2023)?
- 4 Are there RFP instructions for the Day 1 LAA study? We only saw the scope of work for the LAA study.
- 5 Is it possible to extend the proposal due date for the LAA study (after March 3, 2023)?
- 6 Do the hours listed in the price table correspond to the expected Level of effort for each study? If not, can NEA provide the expected LOE for each study?
- 7 Does the contractor need to name key personnel in the BPA proposal?
- 8 Are resumes for key personnel needed for the BPA proposal? If yes, how many resumes can be included? What is the page limit for each resume? Will the resumes be counted toward the page limit?
- 9 Would you extend the proposal due date for another week?

A8.

- 1. Vendors are not required to respond to the day-one task orders.**
- 2. Responses to the HBCU task order should include a technical proposal that demonstrates understanding of the tasks and provides a detailed technical plan for accomplishing each task. This should include identifying potential challenges to the project's success and presenting strategies for addressing them. The proposal should also identify staff members who would be included in the project team. The proposal should also provide a project budget, which should provide costs by task and assigned personnel, and present a cost-effective plan for conducting the tasks. Page number should be capped at 8-10 pages. For all task orders under this BPA, the technical plan, price, key personnel qualifications, and organizational qualifications will be evaluated.**
- 3. Yes Extended: Proposal due date is extended to March 10, 2023.**
- 4. Responses to the LAA study task order should include a technical proposal that demonstrates understanding of the tasks and provides a detailed technical plan for accomplishing each task. This should include identifying potential challenges to the project's success and presenting strategies for addressing them. The proposal should also identify staff members who would be included in the project team. The proposal should also provide a project budget, which should provide costs by task and assigned personnel, and present a cost-effective plan for conducting the tasks. Page number should be capped at 8-10 pages. For all task orders under this BPA, the technical plan, price, key personnel qualifications, and organizational qualifications will be evaluated.**
- 5. Yes Extended: Proposal due date is extended to March 10, 2023.**
- 6. Yes, the hours listed in the pricing schedule correspond to the expected LOE.**
- 7. Yes, key personnel should be named in the proposal.**
- 8. Resumes should be included in an appendix, which does not count towards the page limit. There is no set number of resumes to include, please only include resumes of staff that are key personnel contributing expertise to one or more Areas of Service.**
- 9. Yes Extended: Proposal due date is extended to March 10, 2023.**

Q9.

1. Will all questions submitted with responses be made available to all who intend to apply? If so, where will those Q&A responses be found (e.g., on a website)?
2. To clarify, the BAU proposal is to demonstrate the capabilities of the small business to complete the work detailed on pp. 5-12? The LAA and HBCU contracts are the 2 contracts that the BAU recipient will assist in supporting?
3. Regarding Data Security - I use Dedoose, an encrypted data analysis tool that is paid for by the business and houses raw qual data (de-identified) for analysis. Is there an issue with the continued use of this for the purposes of any research or evaluation with NEA? Does NEA have a different system that is required for use?
4. In Point 1 BPA Pricing, p. 18, it states the recognition of the increased cost of living, does this mean that year to year the agreed upon award amount may result in an increase to accommodate? It appears that this might be the case on p. 34 with the price increase section, but wanted to confirm.
5. In Point 2, Data Ownership/Permission/Etc. Understanding that NEA owns the data, will the procedure for data storage along with the contractor guidelines for providing data to the NEA be available for all consent forms? Further, what is the policy around de-identified vs. identified data with regard to data storage with the NEA?
6. Training and Support - will NEA have training and/or support available for small businesses for any federal regulations that may impact the implementation of the BAU for contractors?
7. All employees and subcontractors (who conduct research) are CITI-certified, when we submit our proposal, should we include copies of these certificates or only reference them?
8. As we complete the proposal and have clarifying questions, is it okay to reach out with those?

A9:

1. **Yes, all Answers to Questions (Q&A's) are emailed to all prospective offerors and posted on the NEAs Website at <https://www.arts.gov/contracting-opportunities/research-and-analysis-services-for-the-nea>**
2. **Yes, offerors should first respond to the BPA Areas of Service, that will be used to determine whether the NEA will establish a BPA with an offeror. The offeror then has the opportunity to respond to one or two of the first contracts that will be awarded under the BPA. For future projects, the NEA will send tasks orders only to BPA holders, who will then compete for the contract.**
3. **The NEA does not have a particular system requirement, but will work with each vendor to ensure systems are compatible for both the Agency and vendor.**
4. **Yes, BPA pricing shall have a cost of living adjustment for all 5 years the BPA is active.**
5. **Data storage and deidentification will be vary by task order/project.**
6. **No.**
7. **Human ethics certifications are not needed for the BPA proposal. If a BPA-holder (or perspective BPA-holder) is responding task order that is for a project requiring human ethics certifications, then they should be attached in an appendix.**
8. **No.**

Q10.

1. In our experience with working with HBCUs, cultivating relationships is important and requires time to build rapport with universities. Some of the information requested may be proprietary or could be considered more sensitive information by private universities, and conversations would be needed to ensure transparency in how their data would be used. Would it be possible to build in time (and adjust the timeline) to engage in rapport building with the universities?
2. What is the estimated budget for the HBCU evaluation? Could you provide an estimate of labor projections for each key task?

3. Is there an expected number for the sample of total HBCUs to be surveyed?
4. The term “cultural organization” and “cultural and education researchers” is utilized with the RFP. Would it be possible to provide definitions related to the meaning of these terms within the context of the HBCU? For instance, in HBCUs any fields outside of STEM are typically considered the arts. Operationalizing these terms would help to scope the work.
5. Within the Data Collection and Analysis section, the Survey of HBCU Arts Leaders requires “1-2 individuals per identified HBCU” to respond to the survey. Is the identified HBCU the same HBCU as the case studies? Or are there other specified HBCUs that are intended to engage within the survey?
6. The data section also includes an analysis of regional workforce data. Since HBCUs are located in several regions throughout the country, how will regional areas be identified?
7. HBCUs are drastically different with regard to resource allocation and access. For the case study component of the proposal, is there an interest or preference in which types of HBCU institutions are included within the study based on demographic characteristics (e.g., size, resources, location, etc.)?
8. When is the expected start date for the beginning of the project?

**A10.**

1. **Yes, you may present an adjusted timeline to accommodate rapport building.**
2. **Hours are estimated in the HBCU pricing schedule.**
3. **The HBCU survey could be sent to the universe, or the contractor could propose a randomized, stratified sample of HBCUs. The contractor could also propose an entirely different approach if a survey of HBCUs would be too burdensome or costly, as long as the methods are employed to answer the same research questions.**
4. **The NEA is specifically interested in organizations and institutions that produce artistic acts (arts creation) and that aid in the consumption of those outputs (arts participation). By “cultural organizations” we mean the entities that contribute to arts infrastructure, which refers to the institutions, places, spaces, and formal and informal social support systems that facilitate the creation and consumption of art. Another more specific approach that might be more relevant to the regional workforce analysis is to look at the taxonomy for the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account, which would provide more clarity on the industries and commodities included in arts and cultural production. Here is a white paper on the subject: [https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/nea\\_guide\\_white\\_paper.pdf](https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/nea_guide_white_paper.pdf).**
5. **The survey will reach more HBCUs than those selected for case studies, per question 3. Identified HBCU in this case means HBCUs included in the survey sample.**
6. **All regions containing HBCUs would be covered by the regional workforce analysis.**
7. **Demographic and institutional characteristics should certainly be considered when selecting case study examples. Additionally, the level and/or type of cultural assets and partnerships with arts and cultural institutions uncovered during earlier activities in the study should be considered.**
8. **The start date is contingent on review and establishment of a BPA with a selected firm, the HBCU project is likely to begin in late spring.**

**Q11.**

The solicitation introduction notes that this BPA is for a range of “research, data science, evaluation and communication services” while section 1.3 states, “Offerors shall specify one or more Areas of Service in which they have demonstrated expertise” and the evaluation criteria note “at least one” area of service (p. 43). The solicitation further explains that the NEA intends to establish a number of BPAs (p. 4), with one BPA plus two day one orders awarded as a result of this solicitation (p.16). Questions related to balancing this breadth and specificity of services are as follows:

1. To what degree is the agency expecting a single firm to offer all (or a majority of) areas of service

listed?

2. Will a firm need to be able to offer at least half of the listings (including a mix of qualitative and quantitative) or a particular base number of capabilities in order to be competitive?
3. Given that the page limit for this section is 10 pages, should firms with capabilities in seven or more areas select just a handful to focus on?
4. Section II.1 states that the NEA intends to issue one BPA and two Day One Orders under this solicitation. Will the NEA consider proposals from qualified contractors for a BPA and only one of the two specified scopes of work (attachment one OR attachment two)?
5. To what degree does the proposed timeline for the LAA project incorporate (or allow flexibility for) the typical timeline required for adhering to the Paperwork Reduction Act?

**A11.**

1. **A firm may apply under one Area of Service, or multiple, depending on the expertise of the firm.**
2. **A firm does not need to have both qualitative and quantitative expertise in order to be competitive.**
3. **Page limit-Limit the responses to each section to 1 or 2 pages.**
4. **The NEA will establish BPAs with each firm it selects from this process. Once the NEA has selected BPA-holders, the agency will then award day one task orders to firms within this pool of BPA-holders. It is possible for one vendor to receive both task orders,**
5. **The Paperwork Reduction Act clearance process will take place towards the end of the contract’s period of performance. The contract may end while the PRA clearance process is still awaiting final approval.**

**Q12.**

Page	Section	Question
1	D. Submission Section Requirements	1. The table showing sections and page limitations seems to indicate that the Price Proposal (6 pages) is part of the items listed there and all should be submitted as one volume containing transmittal/cover letter, SAM info, org qualifications, management approach, past performance, and price proposal. Is this correct?
1-2	D. Submission Section Requirements  E. Transmittal / Cover Page	The table on page 1 lists section title as “Transmittal/Cover Letter” and item E on page 2 refers to it as “Transmittal/Cover Page” with a list of required information.  2.QUESTION: Please clarify if this information required by item E should be in our transmittal/cover letter or on the cover page?
3-4	1.1 Background	3. Under the Learning Agenda descriptions, there are 4 projects listed, 2 of which are included as attachments to the solicitations and noted to be ‘first day task order’. Are these 2 meant to be sample tasks that will not be funded until after the BPA award is made or are responses required for both now (with the BPA proposal)?  4. Please indicate who the incumbents are for the 2 projects listed as ‘in progress’.
4 and 16	1.1 and II	5. On page 4, it is stated that ‘a number of BPAs’ will be awarded while on page 16, there is mention of only 1. Please clarify if there will be multiple awards of the BPA.

5	1.3.1	<p>At bottom of page 5, it is noted that ‘offerors shall specify one or more Areas of Service in which they have demonstrated expertise’.</p> <p>Please clarify what the requirements are for Areas of Service:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Will the BPA award(s) be made to the offerors who can provide services across all the listed areas?</li> <li>7. What is the minimum number of Areas of Services does an offeror need to be able to demonstrate capabilities ?</li> <li>8. Can more pages be allocated to the ‘technical competencies’ section if the offeror is capable of providing all of the areas of service?</li> </ol>
18	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. On page 18, there is an item numbered as ‘10’ and the items thereafter are ‘1, 2, etc’. Is there any missing information in this section?</li> </ol>
41	Section IV – Proposal Preparation/ Submission Instructions	<p>This is no guidance in this section on preparation and submission of the proposal. Only evaluation criteria are provided.</p> <p>10. QUESTION: Please provide instructions on how and what to submit on March 3 by 6pm EST?</p>
42	Section IV Proposal Preparation / Submission Instructions – Evaluation Criteria	<p>For Section I of the technical proposal (Organizational Qualifications as Related to Technical Competencies), one of the required items for this section is “Submitted information shall include three (3) references. The proposal addresses past performance in the specific area(s) of service for which the Offeror is applying.”</p> <p>QUESTIONS: We understand that Section 1 includes evaluating our prior experience, which would include showing successful performance of similar projects; however, there is a separate past performance section with a separate page count.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. We request that the requirement for three references be moved to Section 3 Past Performance to provide adequate page count in Section 1 for our organizational capacity and prior experience.</li> <li>12. Please confirm that our responses in Section 1 to the Prior Experience requirement can reference our past performance cited in Section 3.</li> </ol>
42	1. Organizational Qualifications as Related to Technical Competencies	<p>This section is limited to 10 pages.</p> <p>13. QUESTION: We request revising the page count for this section to link it to the number of Areas of Service (1.3 Scope) being proposed. There are 13 Areas of Service listed on page 5. We request at least 1 page per Area of Service if an offeror is able to respond to all of the areas listed.</p>
		<p>14. There is no mention of resumes or CVs. Are they required? If yes, in which section should they be presented? What are the page limits?</p>
1	D. Submission Section Requirements	<p>The table shows Past Performance with an 8-page limitation.</p>
45	3. Past Performance	<p>There is no guidance or requirements provided within the solicitation for the past performance submission, other than a reference on page 42 to “submitted information shall include three (3) references. The proposal addresses past performance in the specific area(s) of service for which the Offeror is applying.”</p>



		15. QUESTION: Please provide guidance on what information will be required to be submitted for the three references (assuming this is referring to three past performance references).
45	2. Management Approach	<p>The bullet list of evaluation items for Management Approach includes the following in bullet #2:  “A detailed staffing plan that details the methods and processes used for the recruitment, retention, and management of qualified staff, <b>which included detailed staff assignments for each task order;</b>”</p> <p>16. QUESTION: Please clarify if task order staffing assignments are to be included in our proposal response. If so, please revise instructions to include page count and response requirements for the task orders.</p>
45	2. Management Approach	<p>The bullet list of evaluation items for Management Approach requires “effective workplan,” “detailed staffing plan,” “detailed QCP,” detailed and effective communications plan,” and “demonstrated successful management of Contractor Personnel, including prime and sub roles/responsibilities.”</p> <p>17. QUESTION 1: The response requirements for this section limit us to 10 pages, with one-inch margins on all sides. We request an additional 5-page count to provide an adequately detailed response to the required evaluation factors in this section.</p> <p>18. QUESTION 2: As this is a BPA, there are no identified staffing requirements other than the labor categories for the Pricing section, unless we are to respond to the Task Orders. Please advise what should be included in the “detailed staffing plan” response.</p>
45	<p>2.5.1 Recruiting, Retaining, and Managing Staff</p> <p>2.6 Personnel/ Subcontractor Management</p>	<p>2.3.1 states “A detailed staffing plan that details the methods and processes used for the recruitment, retention, and <b>management of qualified staff...</b>”</p> <p>2.6 states “... demonstrated successful management of Contractor personnel, including prime Contractor and subcontractor roles and responsibilities...”</p> <p>19. QUESTION: There seems to be an overlap of the required response for management of personnel in sections 2.3 and 2.6. We request removing “management” from the evaluation factors for 2.3.1.</p>
		20. Please clarify that for the price proposal, NEA requires a list of labor rates by labor categories with no staff members specified.
	Attachment 1	21. If it is the NEA’s intent to receive proposals for this study along with BPA responses, please provide submission instructions and evaluation criteria.
	Attachment 2	22. If it is the NEA’s intent to receive proposals for this study along with BPA responses, please provide submission instructions and evaluation criteria.
		23 We respectfully request additional time for proposal submissions particularly if answers to questions will require additional preparation.

**A12.**

**1. Submission Section Requirements:**

Section		Page Limit
Section 1	Transmittal/Cover Page	2
	SAM Registration Information	1
Section 2	Organizational Qualifications as Related to Technical Competencies	10
	Management Approach	10
	Past Performance	8
Section 3	Price Proposal	6
Total Page Limit		37

2. **Yes please, provide item E in your transmittal/cover page (2 pages), Section 1 transmittal (changed to cover page)**
3. **Correct, the other two projects listed under the Learning Agenda are offered as examples of the types of projects the NEA has completed in recent history or are currently being conducted.**
4. **James Bell Associates has been contracted to work on a formative evaluation of an NEA-funded pilot initiative to support arts organizations that have demonstrated a commitment to equity. 2M Research has been contracted to provide analytical and visualization support to ORA for reporting agency performance data.**
5. **Each firm selected by the NEA will establish a BPA with the NEA, meaning the NEA will hold separate BPAs with each firm it selects. That is what is meant by “a number of BPAs.” One firm will have one BPA.**
6. **No, offerors do not have to select all Areas of Service to be competitive.**
7. **Offerors may select one or more Areas of Service.**
8. **1 page per Area of Service if an offeror is able to respond to all of the areas listed.**
9. **On page 18, #10; it is no clear what is missing. 10. Location of the Work to be Performed. It is anticipated that all work is performed at the contractor’s location/facility. Telework agreements are at the discretion of the Contractor. All work shall be performed within the Continental United States (CONUS)?**
10. **Proposal packages should be submitted via email to HARRISL@ARTS.GOV no later than 6:00 PM (EST) on March 10, 2023. Yes, extended to March 10, 2023.**
11. **Submitted information regarding three (3) references can be addressed under past performance.**
12. **Yes, your three (3) references can be a part of your Past Performance-8 pages**
13. **Yes, Prior Experiences can be addressed in #3 past performance.**
14. **Resumes/CVs of key staff should be included in appendix when responding to the BPA solicitation and are not included in the page limit.**
15. **Information required for the three references should include: Title of contract, name of organization/agency, name and title of the point of contact, and a paragraph description of project.**
16. **The staffing plan should detail the methods and processes used for the recruitment, retention, and management of qualified staff. A more detailed staffing plan is only required if responding to one of the task orders (HBCU or LAA studies).**
17. **Yes, a little different. NEA wants to access management/see how you manage personnel: \*The former is referring to a staffing plan, \*the latter refers to demonstrated success at managing staff and subcontractors. Explain management of your staff and explain the history of your success in having adequate and good staff.**
18. **Correct, NEA requires a list of labor rates by labor categories with no staff members specified.**
19. **Responses to the HBCU study task order should include a technical proposal that demonstrates understanding of the tasks and provides a detailed technical plan for**

**accomplishing each task. This should include identifying potential challenges to the project's success and presenting strategies for addressing them. The proposal should also identify staff members who would be included in the project team. The proposal should also provide a project budget, which should provide costs by task and assigned personnel, and present a cost-effective plan for conducting the tasks. Page number should be capped at 8-10 pages. For all task orders under this BPA, the technical plan, price, key personnel qualifications, and organizational qualifications will be evaluated.**

- 20. Responses to the LAA study task order should include a technical proposal that demonstrates understanding of the tasks and provides a detailed technical plan for accomplishing each task. This should include identifying potential challenges to the project's success and presenting strategies for addressing them. The proposal should also identify staff members who would be included in the project team. The proposal should also provide a project budget, which should provide costs by task and assigned personnel, and present a cost-effective plan for conducting the tasks. Page number should be capped at 8-10 pages. For all task orders under this BPA, the technical plan, price, key personnel qualifications, and organizational qualifications will be evaluated.**
- 21. Yes Extended: Proposal due date is extended to March 10, 2023.**

Q13.

1. Page 7 – Section 1.3.1 Research, Analysis, Evaluation, and Communication Services. What datasets or repositories will be made accessible to the vendor for citation searches and bibliometric analyses?
2. Page 7 – Section 1.3.1 Research, Analysis, Evaluation, and Communication Services. Is there a preferred or existing survey platform used by the NEA, or may the vendor make platform recommendations? Including collection of SPPA, GSS?
3. Page 10 – Section 1.3.1 Research, Analysis, Evaluation, and Communication Services. What are some of the agency plans, programs and initiatives projected for needs assessments, evaluability assessments, developmental/formative evaluations, implementation evaluations, outcome and impact evaluations, and cost-benefit analyses?
4. Is it possible to provide a typical project or case example for us to craft a work plan example for each of the major service initiatives (qualitative and quantitative data collection, survey methodology and research design, analysis, literature reviews and scans, data science and analytics, data oversight support, program evaluation, strategic planning and performance measurement, technical assistance for NEA Research stakeholders, communications and storytelling, data-driven design)?

A13.

- 1. The types of datasets or repositories will depend on the nature of the project within a future task order. Data repositories such as the National Archive of Data on Arts and Culture are public and available to any vendor. We anticipate vendors would maintain their own access to other journal repositories.**
- 2. The NEA does not have a preferred platform, particularly if the vendor will be responsible for conducting a survey. The NEA has used multiple platforms, including SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics, and Alchemer. The SPPA is collected by the U.S. Census and the GSS is collected by NORC. Those surveys will not be administered by a vendor under this BPA.**
- 3. We have not published a forecast of projects related to needs assessments, evaluability assessments, developmental/formative evaluations, implementation evaluations, outcome and impact evaluations, and cost-benefit analyses. There may be projects related to these types of evaluation in the next 5 years, during the BPA's period of performance.**
- 4. On page 79 of the PDF, there are hyperlinks to previous projects. Offerors do not need to craft work plans for each Area of Service they select. Offerors must demonstrate expertise for**

**each Area of Service by providing evidence of the specific qualifications and skills of offeror staff and their familiarity and experience with the topic and areas relevant to this project. Offerors must provide evidence of related assignments, but not a new example work plan.**

Q14.

1. When does the Arts Endowment anticipate making this award? Starting the LAA project?
2. A 2019 publication estimates there are 4,500 LAAs, although it is not clear if that list is based on the same LAA criteria used in the RFP. What is the estimated number of LAAs for the Conduits and Catalysts study, and is the list currently available?
3. What is the contractual relationship between Phase One and Phase Two? Will there be a second, separate competition for Phase Two? Note: this potentially impacts who obtains IRB clearance (Task 11).
4. May we use our own template for the price proposal, or is Attachment 6 BPA Day 1 Order Price Sheet (LAA) required for submission?
  - a. If it is required, are there instructions for completing the forms? For example, it appears the first table (pages 1-2) simply requires the costs and does not require descriptors in the Task boxes. In contrast, the format of the third table (pages 5-6) suggests subtasks should be listed. Can you confirm these interpretations?
5. What is the anticipated budget range for the Conduits and Catalysts study?
6. How/where do we access amendments and responses to questions?

A14.

1. **It is contingent on establishing BPAs with all selected vendors. As a result, the LAA project will likely start in late spring.**
2. **The NEA currently has a working list of LAAs taken from direct NEA applicants and certain state-level subgrantees. Part of the project would be to build on the current list and provide a working framework for defining an “LAA” for the purposes of this national study. The list will be provided to the contractor that is awarded the task order.**
3. **There is no contractual relationship between Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 2 of this award will be completed via an RFP sent to BPA-holders (the Phase 1 contractor will be able to compete for Phase 2). Yes, as a result, the IRB clearance may need to be updated or resubmitted during the second contract.**
4. **Yes, you may use your own template. However, there is a separate pricing schedule for the LAA study that can be used as a template.**
5. **There are estimated hours listed on the LAA pricing schedule to provide a level of effort.**
6. **Yes, all Answers to Questions (Q&A’s) are emailed to all prospective offerors and posted on the NEAs Website at <https://www.arts.gov/contracting-opportunities/research-and-analysis-services-for-the-nea>**

Q15.

<b>RFP (or Attachment ) Page Number</b>	<b>Relevant Section Number or Title</b>	<b>Question</b>
N/A	General question	1. How many awards are anticipated under this BPA?
1	C. Submission Requirements	2. We respectfully request extending the submission due date to March 17, 2023 to ensure there is adequate time to incorporate responses to questions and provide the Government with sufficient information and our best terms from a

		technical, past performance, and price standpoint.
1	D. Submission Section Requirements	3. Please consider increasing the page limit for the "Organizational Qualifications as Related to Technical Competencies" section to at least 20 pages since there are 13 areas of service that offerors should respond to.
1	D. Submission Section Requirements	4. Please consider increasing the page limit for the "Management Approach" section to at least 15 pages.
1	D. Submission Section Requirements	5. Please consider removing or increasing the page limit for the BPA price proposal.
1	D. Submission Section Requirements	6. Please provide proposal instructions for the HBCU and LAA task orders. For example, is the Government expecting three technical proposals, i.e., one for the BPA, one for the HBCU task order, and one for the LAA task order?
1	D. Submission Section Requirements	7. Is the cover page and table of content excluded from the page limitation?
1	D. Submission Section Requirements	8. Are staff resumes required? If so, please provide guidance on submission requirements.
1	D. Submission Section Requirements	9. Are letters of commitments from consultants or subcontractors required? If so, are they excluded from the page limitations?
5	1.3 Scope (Areas of Service)	10. Are offerors expected to respond to all 13 areas of service?
5	1.3 Scope (Areas of Service)	11. If offerors don't respond to one or more areas of service, will they be excluded from responding to future task orders in those particular areas of service?
5	1.3 Scope (Areas of Service)	12. Will task orders be released under specific areas of service?
42	Evaluation Criteria, Organizational Qualifications as Related to Technical Competencies	13. Please confirm that only three past performance references are required.
42	Evaluation Criteria, Organizational Qualifications as Related to Technical Competencies	14. Please clarify what information should be included in the past performance references.
42	Evaluation Criteria, Organizational Qualifications as Related to Technical Competencies	15. Please confirm that offerors are allowed to submit past performance references that do not have CPARS?

42	Evaluation Criteria, Organizational Qualifications as Related to Technical Competencies	16. Are there restrictions on the period of performance for past performance references? For example, can we submit references for projects that were completed more than 5 years ago?
10	Attachment 1 - HBCU Statement of Work	17. Is the Government anticipating OMB approval being required for the two listening sessions that include more than nine State Art Agencies? Or are the State Art Agencies excluded from the OMB requirements?

**A15.**

1. **There is no set number of BPAs the NEA will establish. Generally speaking, the NEA will be looking for enough firms to cover each Area of Service and ensure adequate competition in each area.**
2. **Yes Extended: Proposal due date is extended to March 10, 2023.**
3. **4. 5. See A14. 1. Page numbers should be capped at 10 pages. For all task orders under this BPA, the technical plan, price, key personnel qualifications, and organizational qualifications will be evaluated.**
6. **Offerors should first respond to the BPA solicitation (which includes responding to the Areas of Service in which they have expertise). If an offeror chooses, they may also respond to one or both day-one task orders. Responding to the day one task orders is not a necessary step in order to be selected for a BPA. Responses to a task order should include a technical proposal that demonstrates understanding of the tasks and provides a detailed technical plan for accomplishing each task. This should include identifying potential challenges to the project's success and presenting strategies for addressing them. The proposal should also identify staff members who would be included in the project team. The proposal should also provide a project budget, which should provide costs by task and assigned personnel, and present a cost-effective plan for conducting the tasks. Page number should be capped at 8-10 pages. For all task orders under this BPA, the technical plan, price, key personnel qualifications, and organizational qualifications will be evaluated.**
7. **No. See A12**
8. **Resumes/CVs of key staff should be included in appendix when responding to the BPA solicitation and are not included in the page limit. There is no set number of resumes to include, please only include resumes of staff that are key personnel contributing expertise to one or more Areas of Service.**
9. **No letters of commitment from subcontractors or other partners are required for the BPA. However, if responding to one of the task orders, an offeror may include letters of commitment if subcontractors are needed to complete the project/provide expertise.**
10. **Offerors do not need to respond to each Area of Service, they can select one or more Areas of Service.**
11. **If the offeror does not demonstrate expertise in an Area of Service, they will not be included in a call for RFPs amongst BPA-holders. For instance, if a firm specializes only in qualitative research, they will not be sent an RFP for a data analytics project, similarly a data visualization/ design firm will not be sent an RFP for a field scan with a reliance on qualitative methods. Generally speaking, BPA-holders will be sent RFPs (i.e. task orders) if there is any potential for competition.**
12. **Task orders will not be released strictly under each Areas of Service. The Areas of Service provide a framework for the NEA to understand each firms' expertise. BPA-holders will be sent task orders if their expertise is aligned with what the project requires.**
13. **Yes, only three (3) past performance references are required.**

- 14. Information required for the three references should include: Title of contract, name of organization/agency, name and title of the point of contact, and a paragraph description of project.**
- 15. Offerors are allowed to submit past performance references that do not have CPARS.**
- 16. There is not a restrictions on the period of performance for past performance references.**
- 17. At this time, we are not anticipating that PRA clearance will be required.**

Q16. As such, my question is would I be able to apply to work as a Subject Matter Expert Subcontractor under an agreement awarded to someone else? Or should I submit a proposal independently if I am able to get the incorporation documents in place prior to the March 3rd deadline?

**A16. The NEA does not select subcontractors. BPA applicants and holders may elect to add subcontractors to their proposals.**

Q17. Can you please tell me how I can obtain a SAM Unique Entity ID?

**A17: New entities can get their Unique Entity ID at SAM.gov and, if required, complete an entity registration. SAM.gov is the official website and is FREE to use. There is no charge to get a Unique Entity ID, register your entity, and maintain your entity registration at SAM.gov. Set up a SAM.gov account to register and to get a Unique Entity ID in SAM.gov. Your username and password are managed by Login.gov. Select Sign In on SAM.gov to go Login.gov to sign in or to set up an account. Once you're signed in at Login.gov, you'll be returned to SAM.gov to complete your profile. For more information about this transition, visit SAM.gov or the Federal Service Desk, FSD.gov. You can search for help at FSD any time or request help from an FSD agent Monday–Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET. U.S. calls: 866-606-8220.**

Q18. I am interested in being a part of NEA research, but I do not have my own firm/agency. Are there any stakeholders that you are aware of that would benefit from an independent researcher joining their team? This seems like such a great opportunity, but far too much for one person. Thanking you in advance for any suggestions for partnership.

**A18. The NEA does not select subcontractors. BPA applicants and holders may elect to add subcontractors to their proposals.**