



# Request for Proposal (RFP):

## **NewSTEPs (Newborn Screening Technical assistance and Evaluation Program) Data Repository and Website**

**Issued: April 19, 2019**

**Letter of Intent Due: Date: May 3, 2019**

**Application Due Date: June 14, 2019**

Submit to: Careema Yusuf, Manager, NewSTEPs ([newsteps@aphl.org](mailto:newsteps@aphl.org))

**ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORIES  
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## SUMMARY

The Newborn Screening Technical assistance and Evaluation Program (NewSTEPs), a program of the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), is looking to identify a vendor to maintain and support the NewSTEPs data repository and website. APHL anticipates that the vendor will receive \$350,000 for the services it renders over one year, with an option to extend for an additional three years.

## BACKGROUND

**What is Newborn Screening?** Newborn screening (NBS) is a baby's first exposure to public health and is a public health program that entails many components, including testing, diagnosis, follow-up, treatment, education and evaluation. In the United States, over 4 million newborns receive newborn screening annually. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Advisory Committee on Heritable Disorders in Newborns and Children (ACHDNC) evaluates and recommends disorders to be included on the Recommended Uniform Screening Panel, (RUSP), however, each state mandates the specific disorders to be tested, implements a screening process, including follow-up of out-of-range results, and is responsible for quality improvement of the entire newborn screening system.

**What is NewSTEPs?** APHL has received funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Genetic Services Branch to continue the implementation NewSTEPs. This program provides 1) a newborn screening (NBS) data repository and 2) an interactive website for sharing resources and educational materials. NewSTEPs provides tools to state newborn screening programs to ensure that states can adequately evaluate, analyze, and benchmark the performance of their tests and the quality of their newborn screening programs. The purpose of NewSTEPs is to implement quality improvement efforts and to strengthen existing newborn and genetics screening programs by gathering and providing data as well as offering technical and educational resources to various NBS stakeholders. The project entails facilitating the harmonization of newborn screening activities through innovation and technology, with the goal of being able to analyze, compare and continuously improve newborn screening systems.

**What is the NewSTEPs website?** The NewSTEPs website is a one-stop-shop for NBS programs. The website provides case definitions, disorder specific information, data visualizations, quality improvement practices, news, webinars and events. It also provides a dynamic resource library that provides resources on NBS laboratory practice, policy, quality improvement, timeliness, and health information technology. The website currently utilizes a Drupal platform and is currently hosted by Pantheon.

**What is the NewSTEPs Data Repository?** NewSTEPs addresses the challenges faced by state NBS programs by providing training, technical assistance, and a data repository for evaluation and assessment of NBS performance. The NewSTEPs data repository is a centralized and secure application that can be accessed by authorized users from anywhere (via the Internet and a web browser) and allows each NBS program to enter and explore public health surveillance case data for infants with a confirmed diagnosis of a disorder on the NBS panel, NBS program surveillance quality indicator data, and descriptive programmatic state profile data to meet local program needs. The repository is a PostgreSQL relational database that is deployed into an Amazon Web Services (AWS) hosted virtual server. The NewSTEPs repository does not currently interface with the NewSTEPs website, and is hosted and deployed separate from the website. This creates limitations in functionality across the two platforms.

**About APHL:** APHL is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that works to safeguard the public's health by strengthening public health laboratories in the United States and globally. The Association's members include

state and local laboratories, state environmental and agricultural laboratories, and other government laboratories that conduct testing of public health significance. To obtain more information about APHL, please visit <http://www.aphl.org>.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

***APHL is looking for a vendor with the ability to fully perform the scope of the project with regard to updating, maintaining and supporting the NewSTEPS Data Repository and website.***

The following are functional requirements and preferences that are important for applicants to consider as they develop their proposals:

1. The interactive NewSTEPS data repository and website must meet web standards and be browser independent; it must not require any plug-ins so that it can function on any platform including mobile devices and tablets; and it must be 508 compliant.
2. The selected applicant must work in conjunction with original developers - 5AM Solutions and Teal Media - on facilitating data repository and website transitions. APHL will facilitate this collaboration.
3. The NewSTEPS data repository and website are currently hosted on two separate platforms and must be migrated and centralized onto one platform to enable the integration of information from both sites.
4. The NewSTEPS team must have access to add and edit content on the Drupal website platform.
5. The NewSTEPS team must have back end access to the PostgreSQL database for purposes of querying data.
6. The applicant selected must have expertise in hosting, integrating and managing secure electronic databases and websites.
7. The NewSTEPS data repository and website must be user friendly and easy to navigate. It must utilize contemporary features described, but not limited to the requirements provided below.
8. The selected applicant must allow for the NewSTEPS team to provide incremental adjustments and feedback. Training must be provided for staff regarding how to routinely update and manage the NewSTEPS data repository and website.

## ANTICIPATED REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) SCHEDULE

Applications are due by June 14, 2019. APHL may request meetings or a teleconference with the respondents prior to announcement of the selected applicant. Please review the following dates:

- i. April 19, 2019: RFP Issued
- ii. May 3, 2019: Brief statement indicating intent to apply due by 5:00 pm ET to APHL
- iii. June 14, 2019: **RFP responses due** by 5:00pm ET to APHL
- iv. June 26, 2019: Full evaluation of proposals completed and vendor notified of acceptance
- v. July 1, 2019: Work initiated on Data Repository and Website

## RFP PROCESS OVERVIEW

The proposal must contain the full legal name and signature of the authorized representative of the contractor. The applicant must include the telephone number, email and business address of the point of contact.

## Letter of Intent

APHL requests that prospective applicants submit a brief email statement indicating the intent to submit a proposal no later than May 3, 2019. Although a letter of intent is not binding and does not enter into the review of the RFP, the information that it contains allows APHL's evaluation team to estimate the potential workload of the review process and plan the contract development. Potential applicants must include the name of the organization or individual that will submit the proposal in their email.

The prospective bidders must email this statement to Careema Yusuf, MPH, Manager of NewSTEPS at [careema.yusuf@aphl.org](mailto:careema.yusuf@aphl.org) with a copy to [newsteps@aphl.org](mailto:newsteps@aphl.org) using the subject line: LETTER OF INTENT: NEWSTEPS DATA REPOSITORY AND WEBSITE RFP. APHL must receive this information by **5:00 pm ET on May 3, 2019**.

## Submission of RFP

Complete responses must be submitted by **5:00 pm ET, on June 14, 2019**. Responses can be sent by the following methods: via email to [newsteps@aphl.org](mailto:newsteps@aphl.org) or by US MAIL, Commercial delivery service or hand delivery to Careema Yusuf, MPH, APHL, 8515 Georgia Avenue Suite 700, Silver Spring, MD, 20910.

Email attachment is the preferred means of receipt. Regardless of delivery method used, all responses must be **received** at the APHL office by 5:00 pm ET on June 14, 2019. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the response is received at APHL by this deadline.

**Responses should be limited to 20 pages of text and should include information requested in the response requirements sections of this RFP. References, charts and graphics are not included as part of the page limit.**

Submitters will receive a confirmation of receipt of their response by APHL. APHL may terminate or modify the RFP process at any time during the response period. All changes to the RFP will be posted to the [APHL Website](#). No changes will be made to the RFP within one week of the due date. Responses that are not received by the stated deadline will be determined non-responsive and may not be considered in the review of the applicant at APHL's discretion.

## RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must provide a point-by-point response to each of the *General Requirements* and *Data Repository and Website Requirements* specified in this RFP below. For each requirement, respondents should provide documentation as requested.

### General Requirements

#### **Executive Summary**

Provide a narrative summary of the proposal being submitted. The summary should identify the design, development and services that are being offered in the proposal.

#### **Organization/Management Capabilities and Financial Stability**

Applicants should describe their company's organizational structure and provide a brief history of their business.

#### **Applicant Organizational Infrastructure**

The applicant must provide an overview of how his/her organization would be able to respond to the requirements of the RFP.

#### **References**

Respondents should include a list of clients, organizations or institutions that can be used as references. At least one reference should be from an organization where a similar project was developed. Selected references may be contacted to determine the quality of work performed, competency of personnel assigned to the project, etc. The results of the reference checks will be provided to the evaluation team and may be used in scoring the written proposal.

These references should be capable of verifying information supplied by the respondent in their proposal. The data required for each reference should include:

- Company Name
- Address
- Point of contact name, email, phone number and address

#### **Examples of Successful Implementation**

Respondents should include a description of their relevant experience designing and updating web based resources. Please provide information about specific platforms used, dates implemented and customer satisfaction. APHL encourages testimonials as well.

#### **Staff Qualifications**

The applicant must provide a project team organizational chart, followed by resumes of key personnel assigned to the system update and redesign. Each key personnel must be an employee of the respondent or be identified as a subcontractor. The applicant must include roles, responsibilities and estimated time allocated for each key personnel.

#### **Timeline**

The applicant must provide details regarding a timeline and methodology, including deliverables and milestones to support the project. This is a one year funded opportunity with option to extend into three years.

## **Budget**

The applicant must include a budget for this project that includes requirements specified. The applicant must provide a cost estimation to accomplish the scope of work. The budget must encompass all production and software acquisitions necessary for the support and maintenance of the Data Repository and Website. Please include any costs associated with additional maintenance, support, upgrades and long-term annual maintenance. Applicants must budget for one in-person kick-off meeting in Silver Spring, MD at APHL Headquarters to initiate activities.

This budget is not binding, but is a measurement for NewSTEPs project development.

## **Training Capabilities and Plan**

The applicant must include a training plan to include administrator/configuration training as well as user training, and should address training at initial implementation and any training necessary as a result of new development or APHL staffing changes. The applicant must discuss their plan for making a test environment available for user testing and validation.

## **Data Repository and Website Requirements**

The applicant for the NewSTEPs Data Repository and Website should describe how their organization would meet the required specifications below. Specifications below will be prioritized by NewSTEPs staff. Please note that proposed creative solutions beyond desired specifications is encouraged.

### **Required Specifications:**

#### **Migration of Data Repository and Website onto one platform**

- The NewSTEPs data repository and website, should be centralized onto one platform and interface with one another so that the website can pull data directly from the data repository and vice versa.
- Create single sign on for repository and website
- Existing website pages and design must be retained; all pages must retain their current common look and feel
- The NewSTEPs data repository design must match the current design of the website.

#### **NewSTEPs Website:**

- Website must retain its current Drupal platform and will not be redesigned.
- Create enhanced web page for quality improvement projects. For example, have a “one stop shop” web page to track progress and activities, and share resources of all programs who are quality improvement project subawardees (milestones, qualitative data, webinar and meeting announcements, etc.)
- Website file library provides accurate data on which files are unused on the site allowing for deletion of duplicate/ unnecessary material
- Website file library has notification “warning” if files are submitted that do not adhere to proper NewSTEPs naming convention
- Website incorporates a microsite on the “News” page, which allows for real-time NBS Google alerts to generate directly on the page
- Website incorporates a microsite of the [newborn screening page on the APHL website](#)
- Website resource library groups similar resources together on one page (i.e. North Dakota posters grouped as one resource)
- Website data visualization pages will have space for summation of collated listserv responses

in excel and link to NewSTEPS designated CoLLABorate listserv messages (i.e. under Newborn Screening fees, link to CoLLABorate messages relative to fee increases for supplemental information). CoLLABorate is a forum for APHL members to participate in discussions with colleagues, find and contact other community members, share documents/ presentations and explore archived messages.

#### **NewSTEPS Data Repository:**

- Must meet data security standards for on online database and have different access levels based on user roles.
  - Data repository will have the ability to record and audit all data changes, including the user that made the change, the date and time the change occurred (both on the user interface and on the backend. User will be able to see “last updated” on the user interface), and the previous value of the data point that was changed.
  - Data repository will have offsite backup and recovery plans, including a descriptive continuity of operations plan.
- Retain current database structure including all variables currently recorded, variable names, table names, and the relationship between data tables.
- Maintain a mirror database that is updated routinely and accessible to NewSTEPS staff for data extractions and analysis. Other software, including Tableau, needs to be able to access database.
- NewSTEPS staff must have access to the backend of the database to query data.
- Provide an up-to-date online data dictionary at all times.
- Allow NBS programs to extract partial or complete datasets of public facing data and sensitive data specific to their own program.
- Maintain the ability for NBS programs to track their own activity over time (by month and year) and to compare data from their program to aggregate data from states across the country. State NBS programs will continue to be able to view their data and also be able to quickly view means, ranges, etc. for specific variables. Users will continue to be able to access their own data as well as access to other aggregated data.
- Allow the NewSTEPS team access to a ticketing system to modify or add functions and/or data fields to the repository.
- Be able to generate auto-generated reports that are real time snapshots of various publically available data collected. Reports/ queries will be visually appealing and utilize contemporary features with standardized graphing capabilities. The NewSTEPS Data repository must have ad-hoc reporting capabilities, which allows querying of data by interest of participating NBS programs.
- Develop module to track quality improvement shared measures in the data repository
- Develop any related quality improvement auto generated reports relative to shared measures
- Send automated reminders to programs to enter missing data fields dependent on NewSTEPS data entry timelines
- Update data repository user interface to utilize contemporary features (i.e. autopopulate fields if data has been entered elsewhere in the repository, maintain CSV files for automatic data upload) that ease data entry.
- Add sections deemed appropriate by NewSTEPS in which NBS programs can enter additional qualitative data, such as notes and comments

Please refer to the accompanying Appendix A: NewSTEPs Website RFP Requirements and ensure you respond to how you will achieve these requirements in your response.

## EVALUATION OF RESPONSES

The evaluation team will evaluate applications based on budget, demonstration of technical understanding of the application and creativity in the response. APHL will evaluate each application based on the description of the [General Requirements](#) and *Data Repository and Website Requirements* listed in the RFP. Please see Appendix A: NewSTEPs Data Repository and Website RFP Requirements for specific evaluation criteria.

### Initial Review

APHL's NewSTEPs program staff will conduct an initial review of all proposals for completeness. Any application that is incomplete on the RFP due date (see RFP Schedule above) will not be considered and will not receive a formal evaluation.

### Evaluation Team

An evaluation team will be assembled to evaluate competitive proposals and then assess their relative qualities based on the [Evaluation Criteria](#) outlined below, as well as any other factors and sub-factors noted in this RFP. This evaluation team will consist of APHL employees, NewSTEPs employees and select members of APHL.

APHL will ask the evaluation team members to disclose any potential conflict of interest, and APHL will not place any individual with a conflict of interest on the evaluation team. In the event that a reviewer identifies a conflict of interest after the evaluation team has been assembled, APHL will exclude that reviewer from further participation in the review process and will eliminate the reviewer's completed reviews from the evaluation process. Reviewers will complete a Conflict of Interest Form administered before the evaluation process.

### Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated individually against the specific criteria listed below.

- **General Requirements of the Proposal**
  - Does the executive summary provided identify the design, development and services that are being offered in the proposal?
  - Does the applicant's project description demonstrate an understanding of how their project relates to meeting the scope of the project as outlined in the RFP? Are all components of the RFP addressed? Did the submitter stay in the page limit?
  - Do references contacted support proposal claims?
  - Does the organization have examples of successful implementation that support NewSTEPs needs?
  - Are personnel roles and responsibilities reasonable and realistic? If collaborating with others, are roles clearly defined?
  - Is there inclusion of training information for NewSTEPs staff regarding how to routinely update and manage the NewSTEPs data repository and website?

- **Budget and Timeline Requirements**
  - Is the budget realistic and reasonable?
  - Is there clear justification given for all budget line items?
  - Does the budget encompass all phases of this project, including development and maintenance? Does the budget encompass costs associated with additional support relative to long-term annual maintenance?
  - Is the timeline for completion of the project reasonable? Are the described deliverables and milestones appropriate?
- **Data Repository and Website Requirements**
  - Are additional, realistic suggestions included for Data Repository and Website maintenance and support?
  - Are required specifications addressed in RFP response?

**Please note your application may be disqualified if you do not follow all instructions. Suggestions for a Successful Application:**

- Do not submit a single spaced application.
- Stay within the page limitations and submit on time.
- Develop a realistic budget and timeline.
- Define any partners or collaborators and their scope of work.
- Be specific when describing technical requirements.

## AWARD

APHL has allocated \$350,000 for all phases of this project. Monies will be delivered over one year, with invoices expected on a monthly basis and all activities consistent with the statement of work and completed by the selected applicant monthly. Applicants must budget for one in-person kick-off meeting in Silver Spring, MD at APHL Headquarters to initiate activities.

## TERM OF PROJECT

The project term will be from the date of contract signing (July 1, 2019) through June 30, 2020. Renewal of funding, as needed, will occur on an annual basis thereafter. Any modifications to the funding amount or statement of work will be addressed on an as-needed basis.

## POST-EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The selected applicants will be notified by APHL program staff by June 26, 2019 of the completion of the evaluation discussed above and the name of the selected contractor will be posted to APHL's procurement website, [www.aphl.org/rfp](http://www.aphl.org/rfp) on the same day. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of these results by e-mail or by U.S. mail within 30 days of the date the name of the winning vendor is posted.

All applicants will be entitled to utilize APHL's RFP Appeals Process to formulate a protest regarding alleged irregularities or improprieties during the procurement process. Specific details of this policy are located on the procurement website.

## CONDITIONS OF AWARD ACCEPTANCE

The eligible applicants must be able to contract directly with APHL.

## RFP-RELATED QUESTIONS

Applicants must direct all questions to Careema Yusuf at [careema.yusuf@aphl.org](mailto:careema.yusuf@aphl.org) with a copy to [newsteps@aphl.org](mailto:newsteps@aphl.org). Questions received from interested parties, together with the answers provided, will be posted to APHL's procurement website ([www.aphl.org/rfp](http://www.aphl.org/rfp)).

## DISCLAIMER AND OTHER GENERAL MATTERS

This RFP is neither an agreement nor an offer to enter into an agreement with any respondent. Once the evaluation is complete, APHL may choose to enter into a definitive contract with the selected RFP applicant(s).

APHL must ensure that the selected applicant(s) are neither suspended nor debarred from receiving federal funds and that the applicant(s) meet any other funding eligibility requirement imposed by the Cooperative Agreement. APHL's determination of whether the applicant is eligible to receive Cooperative Agreement funding will be definitive and may not be appealed. In the event that APHL determines that the selected applicant(s) is ineligible to receive Cooperative Agreement funding, APHL will nullify the contract or will cease negotiation of contract terms.

Each applicant will bear its own costs associated with or relating to the preparation and submission of its application. These costs and expenses will remain with the applicant, and APHL will not be liable for these or for any other costs or other expenses incurred by the applicant in preparation or submission of its application, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the response period or the selection process.

## APPENDIX A: NEWSTEPS DATA REPOSITORY AND WEBSITE RFP REQUIREMENTS

Requirement #	Requirements Description	General Assumptions	Score (1-3)*
<b>Overall</b>			
1.1	The interactive NewSTEPS data repository and website must meet web standards and be browser independent; it must not require any plug-ins so that it can function on any platform including mobile devices and tablets; and it must be 508		
1.2	The selected applicant must work in conjunction with original developers--5AM Solutions and Teal Media-- on facilitating data repository and website transitions.	APHL will facilitate this collaboration.	
1.3	The NewSTEPS data repository and website are currently hosted on two separate platforms and must be migrated and centralized onto one platform to enable the integration of information from both sites.	Existing pages and design must be maintained; all pages must maintain a common look and feel.	
1.4	The NewSTEPS team must have access to add and edit content on the Drupal website platform.		
1.5	The NewSTEPS team must have backend access to the PostgreSQL database for purposes of querying data.		
1.6	The applicant selected must have expertise in hosting, integrating and managing secure electronic databases and websites.		
1.7	The NewSTEPS data repository and website must be user friendly and easy to navigate.	It must utilize contemporary features described, but not limited to the requirements provided below.	
1.8	The selected applicant must allow for the NewSTEPS team to provide incremental adjustments and feedback.	Training must be provided for staff regarding how to routinely update and manage the NewSTEPS data repository and website.	
<b>Migration of Data Repository and Website onto one platform</b>			
1.9	The NewSTEPS data repository and website should be centralized onto one platform and interface with one another so that the website can pull data directly from the data repository and vice versa.		

1.10	Create single sign on for repository and website.		
1.11	Existing website pages and design must be retained; all pages must retain their current common look and feel.		
1.12	The NewSTEPS data repository design must match the current design of the website.		
<b>NewSTEPS Website Required Specifications</b>			
1.13	Website must retain its current Drupal platform and will not be redesigned.	Maintain existing website resources.	
1.14	Create enhanced web page for quality improvement projects	For example, have a “one stop shop” web page to track progress and activities, and share resources of all programs who are quality improvement project subawardees (milestones, qualitative data, webinar and meeting announcements, etc.).	
1.15	Website file library provides accurate data on which files are unused on the site allowing for deletion of duplicate/ unnecessary material		
1.16	Website file library has notification “warning” if files are submitted that do not adhere to proper NewSTEPS naming convention		
1.17	Website incorporates a microsite on the “News” page, which allows for real-time NBS Google alerts to generate directly on the page		
1.18	Website incorporates a microsite of the <a href="#">newborn screening page on the APHL website</a>		
1.19	Website resource library groups similar resources together on one page (i.e. North Dakota posters grouped as one resource)		
1.20	Website data visualization pages will link to NewSTEPS designated CoLLABorate listserv messages (i.e. under Newborn Screening fees, link to CoLLABorate messages relative to fee increases for supplemental information)	CoLLABorate is a forum for APHL members to participate in discussions with colleagues, find and contact other community members, share documents/ presentations and explore archived messages.	
<b>NewSTEPS Data Repository Required Specifications</b>			

1.21	Must meet data security standards for on online database and have different access levels based on user roles.	Data repository will have the ability to record and audit all data changes, including the user that made the change, the date and time the change occurred (both on the user interface and on the backend. User will be able to see “last updated” on the user interface), and the previous value of the data point that was changed. Data repository will have offsite backup and recovery plans, including a descriptive continuity of operations plan.	
1.22	Retain current database structure including all variables currently recorded, variable names, table names, and the relationship between data tables		
1.23	Maintain a mirror database that is updated routinely and accessible to NewSTEPs staff for data extractions and analysis		
1.24	NewSTEPs staff must have access to the backend of the database to query data		
1.25	Provide an up-to-date online data dictionary at all times		
1.26	Allow NBS programs to extract partial or complete datasets of public facing data and sensitive data specific to their own program		
1.27	Maintain the ability for NBS programs to track their own activity over time (by month and year) and to compare data from their program to aggregate data from states across the country	State NBS programs will continue to be able to view their data and also be able to quickly view means, ranges, etc. for specific variables	
1.28	Allow the NewSTEPs team access to a ticketing system to modify or add functions and/or data fields to the repository		

1.29	Be able to generate auto-generated reports that are real time snapshots of various publically available data collected	Reports/ queries will be visually appealing and utilize contemporary features with standardized graphing capabilities. The NewSTEPS data repository must have ad-hoc reporting capabilities, which allows querying of data by interest of participating NBS programs.	
1.30	Develop module to track quality improvement shared measures in the data repository		
1.31	Develop any related quality improvement auto generated reports relative to shared measures		
1.32	Send automated reminders to programs to enter missing data fields dependent on NewSTEPS data entry timelines		
1.33	Update data repository user interface to utilize contemporary features that ease data entry		
1.34	Add sections deemed appropriate by NewSTEPS in which NBS programs can enter additional qualitative data, such as notes and comments		

\*Applicants will be scored on a scale of 1 – 3, which demonstrates the degree to which they met the requirements.

1= did not meet

2= met the requirement

3= exceeded expectations

The scoring and evaluation will included, but is not limited, to the requirements listed in Appendix A. See [Evaluation Criteria](#) for additional parameters.