



Request for Bid:
Vendor to Support Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Champion Challenge
Applications due: April 14, 2023 at 11:59 pm ET

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this request for bid is to identify a vendor who can support data validation and conduct background checks for the Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge.

The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC), Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention seeks applications from contractors that have expertise in data validation and in conducting background checks on providers. NACDD will award up to \$130,000 to one contractor to implement this project. Contractors interested in this project and that can meet the timeframes outlined below are invited to submit bids to NACDD by April 14, 2023, by 11:59 pm ET. Funding award will be via a contract process to begin on or around April 21, 2023 (all dates are approximate until funding is awarded).

The purpose of this task is to acquire expertise and services in validating the hypertension control rates submitted by potential champions through the Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge and conducting a background check as described in Section VII. Project Deliverables and timeframes listed below.

II. Background on Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge:

Million Hearts® is a national initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2027 and is led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Achieving this goal means that 10 million more Americans must have their blood pressure under control. Million Hearts® is working to reach this goal through clinical approaches, such as using health information technology to its fullest potential and integrating team-based approaches to care, as well as community approaches, such as strengthening tobacco control, reducing smoking, and improving nutrition through decreased sodium consumption. Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and community health workers play a key role in helping Americans control their blood pressure.

In an effort to reduce the percentage of the population with uncontrolled high blood pressure, CDC has supported a Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge for the past 10 years. Through this challenge, the CDC expects to identify clinicians, practices and health systems that can demonstrate exceptional levels of hypertension control within their patient population. The challenge will:

- 1) Identify large and small clinical practices and health systems with hypertension control rates greater than 80%.

- 2) Identify federal or governmental health care systems that document hypertension control rates greater than 80%.
- 3) Document standard and innovative system-level processes or approaches used by high performers to achieve exemplary hypertension control rates.

The challenge will be open to any private health care clinician, medical practice or health system providing primary care and specialty care for hypertensive patients. Nominees will submit two aggregate hypertension control rate data points approximately 12 months apart and practice or system demographics that describe the practice patient population as a whole. Nominees will also submit system-specific data such as the use of health information technology, incentives, team-based care, efforts to improve appropriate medication use and persistence, and community linkages.

A score will be generated for each nominee based on information provided by two independent scorers using established criteria. Independent scores will be averaged for the final score. The finalists (highest scorers) in each category will be reviewed by an expert panel of judges and a list of proposed Champions will be compiled.

Up to 40 Champions will be recognized in 2023. CDC reserves the right to disqualify proposed Champions if questionable data or background information is obtained, and to propose a replacement Champion.

CDC anticipates announcing Champions in October 2023. This year's Challenge launched in February and applications will be accepted through April 14. We anticipate roughly a 2-week application review, and 6 months to validate the data and conduct background checks. Timeline to be finalized with chosen contractor, NACDD and CDC.

III. Eligible Applicants:

Contractors that have the following qualification are eligible to apply:

- Understanding of and/or previous experience working with Million Hearts® Initiatives.
- Expertise in conducting data validation and have a workforce or can subcontract with entity(s) that can accomplish this project in the robust timeline indicated below.
- Expert knowledge and experience with clinical measurement and indicators as they apply to data validation processes.
- Experience working with large organizations in the development and implementation of validation protocols.
- Ability to provide background checks on clinicians, practices and health systems applying for this Challenge, or subcontract with an entity capable of this.
- Ability to conduct a record review for finalists whose data points are verified using an 8 and 30 File Sampling Procedure used by NCQA.

IV. Available Funding:

NACDD has up to \$130,000 available in total funding for one vendor this project. This is the entire amount available to meet the project deliverables set forth below. The total amount reimbursed will be dependent on the number of applications received and reviewed by the awardee. Payment will be provided via a disbursement schedule set forth upon the following schedule:

- Payment #1: Provided upon receipt of signed contract.
- Payment #2: Provided upon receipt of documentation of successful completion of all deliverables.

V. Project Period:

The anticipated start date for this data validation project is April 15. Initial contract for the full amount will be executed through July 31, 2023, with an extension after that to complete data validation and reporting to CDC by end of 2023, pending CDC approval of the extension.

VI. Use of Funds:

Funds must be used in accordance with the project deliverables listed below. Funds may not be used for lobbying or other non-governmental-approved activities or items.

The selected contractor may use funds as needed to provide all data validation and background check services and documentation including staffing or consultation support, telecommunications, data validation or background check fees, and other fees as approved by NACDD based on the budget template provided by the selected vendor.

VII. Project Deliverables, Task List, Outputs, and Outcomes:

The selected contractor shall collaborate with NACDD and CDC to consult and provide expert advice on activities to carry out the validation and background check. The contractor shall both advise development and carry out implementation of all aspects of the processes described below.

Data verification will be conducted for the proposed Champions. This will include documentation ensuring that the logic used to pull data is correct, and meets the Million Hearts goal of 80% hypertension control. Data verification may be implemented using a tiered approach based on the “reasonableness” of hypertension control data. Data verification may include one or more of the following activities: a site visit or remote review to verify electronic data, a random hard copy or electronic de-identified record review, and/or verification through other reporting. Other proposed options will be considered based on the expertise of offeror.

In addition, a background check on proposed Champions will be conducted that includes, at a minimum, license verification and search of the Office of the Inspector General List of Excluded Individuals and Entities. Champions must be free from convictions or pending investigations of criminal and health care fraud offenses such as felony health care fraud, patient abuse or neglect; felony convictions for other health care-related fraud, theft, or other financial misconduct; and felony convictions relating to unlawful manufacture, distribution, prescription, or dispensing of controlled substances as verified through the Office of the Inspector General List of Excluded Individuals and Entities. Other proposed options will be considered based on the expertise of offeror.

Task List:

Task 1: Meet with NACDD and CDC via phone (anticipated to be weekly or biweekly). No in-person meetings are anticipated.

Task 2: Conduct background check equivalent to or more in-depth than described in the Background section. CDC anticipates that all proposed Champions that participate in data validation will also undergo a background check, but will consider one review contingent upon successful completion of the other.

Task 3: Validate data for proposed Champions. In 2023, CDC anticipates 25 Champions will be selected. This task includes, but is not limited to:

- Developing a protocol for validating hypertension control data submitted by nominees in the Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge. This includes:
 - o A tiered approach, based on “reasonableness” of data, or multiple approaches depending on the source of provider data (e.g., electronic health record, registry, paper records).
 - o A timeline for project execution.
 - o Definition of non-responsive participant.
- Conducting validation.

Task 4: Submit a brief summary report that identifies proposed Champions who receive an acceptable rating on the data validation and background check. For any proposed Champions that are disqualified, the report will briefly summarize the reason(s). This report will be confidential and will only be shared with the NACDD and the CDC.

Outputs:

- a. Timeline for completing the project.
- b. Background check protocol.
- c. Protocol for validating clinical hypertension control rate reported.
- d. Report that identifies potential Champions excluded from consideration and a brief reason why. The report should also include any potential candidates that were non-responsive.
- e. A list of up to 25 proposed Champions that have been screened and whose data submission has been validated such that CDC can confidently recognize the provider or health system as a “Hypertension Control Champion.”
- f. A list of lessons learned regarding the process that will inform subsequent Challenges.

VIII. Bid Requirements

1. Bids should be 10 pages or less (budget not included in page limit).
2. Late bids (electronically stamped by the sender after April 14, 2023, 11:59 pm ET) will not be accepted or reviewed by NACDD.
3. Font size no smaller than 10-point Times New Roman, single-spaced.
4. Include page numbers and section headings in application.
5. Hard copy and fax applications will not be accepted. Applications and budget attachments must be emailed to NACDD at ssvencer_ic@chronicdisease.org and jschneider_ic@chronicdisease.org with the subject line: Data Validation Bid Application (contractor name)

IX. Application Content/Requirements

1. Cover Letter on Letterhead that includes (one page):

- a. Official Name of the contractor
 - b. Name and contact information including email address for the contractor's lead contact
 - c. Pertinent information for fiscal agent including name, email, address, and phone number
 - d. Pertinent information for contract signatory including name, email, address, and phone number (if the same as above, all fields still need to be listed)
2. Narrative description describing:
- a. Pertinent prior experience providing data validation and background check services including a sample listing of prior clients (no more than one page)
 - b. Capacity of lead contact and workforce capabilities needed to meet the timeline (no more than one page)
 - c. Technology capacity and needs or experience with different technologies to gather qualitative information (no more than one page)
 - d. Process description for providing these services and meeting the deliverables (no more than one page)
3. Proposed activities:
- a. Provide a timeline demonstrating the weekly progress to meet the deliverables listed above and the noted timeframes (no more than one page)
 - b. Provide a budget detailing expenses (no page limit)

X. Submission Process

Submit bids as one combined PDF document (including budget) to: jschneider_ic@chronicdisease.org and ssvencer_ic@chronicdisease.org.

X. Selection Process/Timeline

NACDD will make a determination and notify selected organization by April 19, 2023.

XI. For more info contact

Julia Schneider at jschneider_ic@chronicdisease.org and Susan Svencer at ssvencer_ic@chronicdisease.org. Please use the title: Question on Data Validation Bid (contractor name).