IT Professional Technical Services
Master Contract Program
902TS

Statement of Work (SOW)
For Technology Services
Issued By

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

UI Online Self Service System, Usability Evaluation

Service Category: Web Design & Development

Business Need

In 2007 DEED Unemployment Insurance (UI) implemented a new online self service system (www.uimn.org). Online self service is the preferred method for applicants and employers to conduct business with the UI program. Applicants apply for benefits, request benefit payments, report their work search and manage their accounts. Employers report earnings, process tax payments, manage charges and maintain their accounts. The system is a robust and complex web application that handles a large volume of users and processes thousands of transactions daily.

The UI online system is a model of excellence for e-government. While most e-government initiatives struggle to gain public acceptance, the Minnesota UI online system has achieved an estimated penetration rate of eighty percent. The system has demonstrated its potential by successfully meeting the challenge of the recent economic crisis.

Since the implementation of the online system usability issues have been noted. While the majority of users do not have difficulty with the system there are those who struggle. This is evidenced by calls to the UI Customer Service Center and visits to Minnesota Workforce Centers by applicants seeking assistance. Literacy and disability limit the use of the system. Applicants who are otherwise capable of using the system also struggle. Three common questions asked by applicants are, “What does this mean?” “What happens next?” and “How do I …?” When these questions are asked about common UI processes they are evidence of possible usability issues.

It seems that the system’s language, layout and navigation create confusion for some users. Online help tools are underutilized; users frequently call with questions that are already answered online. Conversely, there are users who should seek assistance but don’t. This results in unnecessary errors and incorrect payments that require correction. Other users simply resist online self service for conducting government business.

There are myriad reasons why applicants might struggle with an online system that have nothing to do with usability. Users face a variety of barriers to self-self service. The stress of job loss, fear, attitudes about government, emotional intelligence and personal preference all impact a person's willingness to self serve online. The system must serve a diverse public. It is unlikely that an online application will ever be developed that will overcome all barriers. However, improving the system will enhance its usability and allow access to a greater number of citizens.

Through user centered design (USD) methodologies improvements to the online system will be identified. User-centered design is a structured development methodology that involves users in system improvement with the goal of creating a site that meets the users' needs. This approach considers an organization's business objectives along with the user's needs, limitations, and preferences. User centered design is an internationally accepted (ISO) design methodology used throughout business and industry.

This project will employ a consultant to conduct two independent rounds of usability testing. Each round will evaluate a different high volume function of the applicant system. The two areas being considered for testing are the initial application and request for benefit payment. These are the highest use features of the system and offer significant potential for improvement. The final decision regarding the subject and scope of the study will be made with the guidance of the consultant.

Generally accepted standards for usability testing suggest that 5 to 8 participants are sufficient to identify the majority of web site issues. Given that this study is for a web application the recommended number of participants may vary. It is also generally accepted that a usability lab is not required for testing. A private office or conference room is sufficient. The number of participants and test sites will be determined with the consultant after the project is initiated. However recommendations on the number of test subjects and logistics need to be included in the proposal.

Videotaping is a common practice in usability testing. The recorded test is useful for analysis and to allow opportunity for others to observe the test without interference. Additionally some testers will use screen capture and key logging to record tests. This project is open to the possibility of using these and other methods of recording (see Agency Project Requirements for information on Data Privacy). Since there is several staff that could benefit from observing the tests recording is desired. Proposals should include information on how the vendor plans to record the test sessions.

Project Deliverables

Usability Reports

Upon completion of each round of usability testing the consultant will provide a detailed report of their findings. The report will include methodology, observations and recommendations. Recommendations for improvements are to be qualified with an estimate of potential value from a user's perspective.

Project Milestones and Schedule

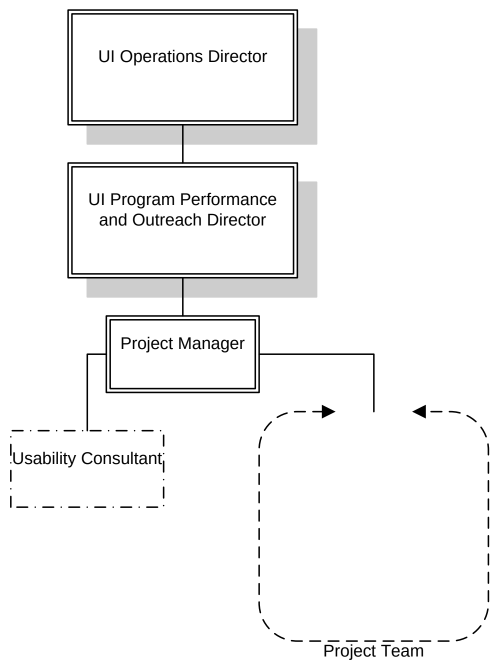
- Project Start Date: 01/15/2010
- Test Planning and Scheduling Round 1: 1/15 to 1/29/2010
- Usability Testing: 2/1 to 2/5/2010

- Compile and Analyze Results: 2/8 to 2/19/2010
- Report Due: 2/19/2010
- Test Planning and Scheduling Round 2: 2/16 – 3/5/2010
- Usability Testing: 3/8 – 3/12/2010
- Compile and Analyze Results: 3/15 – 3/26/2010
- Report due: 3/26/2010

Project Environment (State Resources)

- Staff descriptions:

  a) Number of people on the project: 8 - 10
  b) Project Manager Name: Kevin McDowell
  c) Basic organizational structure (organizational chart) of the project



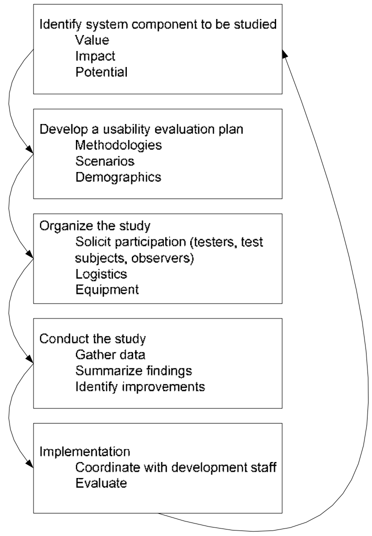
  d) Staff proficiency levels and experience (with methodology, tools, etc.)

  Knowledge of user centered design methodologies
  Knowledge and experience with UI measures and metrics
  Knowledge and experience with project management

- Current support structures in place (e.g. hardware/ software applications, training group, tools, etc.), especially those with which the vendor might have to interface or integrate:

  Unemployment Insurance online self service system (www1.uimn.org/ui_applicant/applicant/login.do)

- Relevant models such as an organizational chart, event model, process model, etc.



Agency Project Requirements

Testing will be conducted with actual users of the system conducting UI business. Data the user will be inputting or viewing is classified by Minnesota statue as private (Minn. Stat. § 13, and Minn. Rules § 1205). Informed consent will be obtained from the test subject. The vendor working on this project is required to comply will all state data practice laws.

If private data is recorded as part of the testing process it is to remain in the possession of the Department of Employment and Economic Development. This could occur if the test session is recorded (video, screen capture, key logging, etc.). If the recording is required for analysis the vendor will be authorized to review it at a DEED location. Once testing, analysis and reporting are complete any material that contains private data will be destroyed.

Testing will incorporate State of Minnesota accessibility standards as outlined in MN Statute 16E.03 Paragraph 9 and section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, United States Code, title 29, section 794d, as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Public Law 105-220, August 7, 1998, and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, 2.0. Accessibility will be considered in setting up and conducting the tests. Accessibility will be integrated into the test results and recommendation to improve system usability.

Responsibilities Expected of the Selected Vendor

Test Planning & Scheduling; together with UI staff determine the following:

Task scenarios and scope

Testing methodologies

Test subject demographics

Site logistics

Usability Testing

Conduct usability tests according to generally accepted industry practice and agreed upon methodology

UI Staff will observe the test (maximum of 2 staff)

Record test results for analysis

Debrief with UI staff observing the test after each session

Analysis and Reporting

Analysis must be completed and final reports provided within 10 business days after each round of usability testing has been completed.

Analyze test results according to generally accepted metrics and methodology.

Generate detailed usability report based on findings.

Analysis and reporting should consider effectiveness, efficiency and user satisfaction. These metrics include but are not limited to:

- Whether users could complete the assigned task; at what point they abandoned and sought assistance
- How long it took to complete
- Major obstacles to task completion
- Level of user satisfaction
- Site navigation
- Site design
- Plain language issues
- Ways to improve usability ranked by estimated value to the user

Other Responsibilities

Responders are encouraged to propose additional tasks or activities they believe would improve the test process or reliability of the results; however, these should be listed separately from the required items on the cost proposal.

This Statement of Work does not obligate the state to award a contract or complete the project, and the state reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest.

Required Skills (These are to be scored as pass/fail requirements)

- Demonstrated skill, knowledge and ability in the principles, methods and processes of user centered design.
- Demonstrated experience in conducting usability testing for high volume online applications.
- Expertise in web site and web application design.
- Expertise in information architecture and content creation.
- Experience working with e-government initiatives.

Desired Skills

- Knowledge and experience with government plain language standards.
- Experience with test subjects that possess limited computer skills.
- Experience with test subjects that have limited English skills.

Process Schedule

• Deadline for Questions	1/4/2010, 4:00 pm Central Time
• Proposals due	1/5/2010, 2:30 pm Central Time
• Anticipated proposal evaluation begins	1/6/2010, 9:00 am Central Time
• Anticipated proposal evaluation & decision	1/12/2010, 2:00 pm Central Time

Questions

Any questions regarding this Statement of Work should be submitted via mail or e-mail by 1/4/2010, 4:00 pm Central Time:

Kevin McDowell, Project Coordinator
Dept of Employment and Economic Development
First National Bank Building, Suite E200
332 Minnesota Street
St. Paul MN 55101

Email: Kevin.McDowell@state.mn.us
Phone: (651)259-7307

SOW Evaluation Process

Responses will be evaluated on "best value":
40 percent on qualifications
30 percent on cost considerations
20 percent on references
10 percent on time to complete the study

All responses received by the due date and time will be evaluated.

Proposals will be independently reviewed and scored by 3 to 5 UI staff. The proposals with the highest scores will be reviewed by project management for final selection.

Response Requirements

Three (3) original copies of the proposal must be submitted.

Respondents must include the following in their response:

- A detailed written proposal for usability testing, including: methodology, recommended number of participants, logistics and costs.

- Sample of the written report DEED UI will receive after each round of testing.
- Narrative describing qualifications of personnel assigned to this project, including relevant past experience on projects of a similar nature.
- An estimate of how long it will take to receive a written report after each round of testing.
- A tentative timeline for completing the usability study.
- References from three different clients for whom the respondent has provided usability testing.

The Location of Service Disclosure and Certification Form included with this solicitation must also be submitted.

Proposal Submission Instructions

All responses must be in writing and delivered to:

Kevin McDowell, Project Coordinator
Dept of Employment and Economic Development
First National Bank Building, Suite E200
332 Minnesota Street
St. Paul MN 55101

All proposals must be received not later than 2:30 p.m., Central Time, January 5, 2010. DEED, Attn: Kevin McDowell, First National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, St. Paul MN 55101. **Late responses will not be considered.**

General Requirements

Proposal Contents
By submission of a proposal, Responder warrants that the information provided is true, correct and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential award of this work order. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the award as well as subject the responder to suspension or debarment proceedings as well as other remedies available by law.

Liability
Indemnification and Hold Harmless
The Contractor must indemnify, save, and hold the State, its agents, and employees harmless from any claims or causes of action, including attorney's fees incurred by the State, arising from the performance of this contract by the Contractor or the Contractor's agents or employees. This clause will not be construed to bar any legal remedies the Contractor may have for the State's failure to fulfill its obligations under this contract.

Disposition of Responses
All materials submitted in response to this SOW will become property of the State and will become public record in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 13.591, after the evaluation process is completed. Pursuant to the statute, completion of the evaluation process occurs when the government entity has completed negotiating the contract with the selected vendor. If the Responder submits information in response to this SOW that it

believes to be trade secret materials, as defined by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. § 13.37, the Responder must: clearly mark all trade secret materials in its response at the time the response is submitted, include a statement with its response justifying the trade secret designation for each item, and defend any action seeking release of the materials it believes to be trade secret, and indemnify and hold harmless the State, its agents and employees, from any judgments or damages awarded against the State in favor of the party requesting the materials, and any and all costs connected with that defense. This indemnification survives the State's award of a contract. In submitting a response to this RFP, the Responder agrees that this indemnification survives as long as the trade secret materials are in possession of the State.

The State will not consider the prices submitted by the Responder to be proprietary or trade secret materials.

Conflicts of Interest
Responder must provide a list of all entities with which it has relationships that create, or appear to create, a conflict of interest with the work that is contemplated in this request for proposals. The list should indicate the name of the entity, the relationship, and a discussion of the conflict.

The responder warrants that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, and except as otherwise disclosed, there are no relevant facts or circumstances which could give rise to organizational conflicts of interest. An organizational conflict of interest exists when, because of existing or planned activities or because of relationships with other persons, a vendor is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the State, or the vendor's objectivity in performing the contract work is or might be otherwise impaired, or the vendor has an unfair competitive advantage. The responder agrees that, if after award, an organizational conflict of interest is discovered, an immediate and full disclosure in writing must be made to the Assistant Director of the Department of Administration's Materials Management Division ("MMD") which must include a description of the action which the contractor has taken or proposes to take to avoid or mitigate such conflicts. If an organization conflict of interest is determined to exist, the State may, at its discretion, cancel the contract. In the event the responder was aware of an organizational conflict of interest prior to the award of the contract and did not disclose the conflict to MMD, the State may terminate the contract for default. The provisions of this clause must be included in all subcontracts for work to be performed similar to the service provided by the prime contractor, and the terms "contract," "contractor," and "contracting officer" modified appropriately to preserve the State's rights.

Preference to Targeted Group and Economically Disadvantaged Business and Individuals
In accordance with Minnesota Rules, part 1230.1810, subpart B and Minnesota Rules, part 1230.1830, certified Targeted Group Businesses and individuals submitting proposals as prime contractors shall receive the equivalent of a six percent preference in the evaluation of their proposal, and certified Economically Disadvantaged Businesses and individuals submitting proposals as prime contractors shall receive the equivalent of a six percent preference in the evaluation of their proposal. Eligible TG businesses must be currently certified by the Materials Management Division prior to the solicitation opening date and time. For information regarding certification, contact the Materials Management Helpline at 651.296.2600, or you may reach the Helpline by email at

mmdhelp.line@state.mn.us. For TTY/TDD communications, contact the Helpline through the Minnesota Relay Services at 1.800.627.3529.

Veteran-owned/Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Preference
In accordance with Laws of Minnesota, 2009, Chapter 101, Article 2, Section 56, eligible certified veteran-owned and eligible certified service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses will receive a 6 percent preference in the evaluation of their proposal.

Eligible veteran-owned and eligible service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses should complete the Veteran-Owned/Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Preference Form in this solicitation, and include the required documentation. Only eligible, certified, veteran-owned/service disabled small businesses that provide the required documentation, per the form, will be given the preference.

Eligible veteran-owned and eligible service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses must be currently certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs prior to the solicitation opening date and time to receive the preference.

Information regarding certification by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs may be found at http://www.vetbiz.gov.

Foreign Outsourcing of Work Prohibited
All services under this contract shall be performed within the borders of the United States. All storage and processing of information shall be performed within the borders of the United States. This provision also applies to work performed by subcontractors at all tiers.

Statement of Work does not obligate the state to award a work order or complete the assignment, and the state reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. The Agency reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.

STATE OF MINNESOTA

IT Professional Technical Services Master Contract Program Work Order

This work order is between the State of Minnesota, acting through its _____ ("State") and _____ ("Contractor"). This work order is issued under the authority of Master Contract T-Number 502TS, CFMS Number _______, and is subject to all provisions of the master contract which is incorporated by reference.

Work Order

1 Term of Work Order

1.1 *Effective date*: _____, or the date the State obtains all required signatures under Minn. Stat. § 16C.05, subd. 2, whichever is later.

The Contractor must not begin work under this work order until it is fully executed and the Contractor has been notified by the State's Authorized Representative to begin the work.

1.2 *Expiration date***:** _____, or until all obligations have been satisfactorily fulfilled, whichever occurs first.

2 Contractor's Duties

The Contractor, who is not a state employee, will: ______ *[Thorough Description of Tasks/Duties]*

3 Consideration and Payment

3.1 *Consideration*. The State will pay for all services performed by the Contractor under this work order as follows:

A. *Compensation.* The Contractor will be paid as follows: __________ [*For example; Resource Type hourly rate]*

Travel Expenses. Reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses actually and necessarily incurred by the Contractor as a result of this work order will not exceed $_____.

Total Obligation. The total obligation of the State for all compensation and reimbursements to the Contractor under this work order will not exceed $_____.

3.2 ***Invoices.*** The State will promptly pay the Contractor after the Contractor presents an itemized invoice for the services actually performed and the State's Authorized Representative accepts the invoiced services. Invoices must be submitted timely and according to the following schedule:____

4 Authorized Representatives

The State's Authorized Representative is _____. The State's Authorized Representative will certify acceptance on each invoice submitted for payment.

The Contractor's Authorized Representative is _____. If the Contractor's Authorized Representative changes at any time during this work order, the Authorized Representative must immediately notify the State.

5 Liability *[Insert selected language]*