National Recreational Boating Safety Survey Pre-Solicitation Notice & Call for Papers

Introduction

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) Boating Safety Division is inviting non-profit organizations, universities and colleges to submit a pre-solicitation submission related to methods for conducting the National Recreational Boating Safety Survey (NRBSS). The USCG intends to employ a two-step submission process to solicit interested parties to conduct the NRBSS. The NRBSS is intended to produce valid and reliable estimates of recreational boating participation and recreational boating exposure measures for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico on a regular and continuing basis.[1] The USCG has up to $1,500,000 per year available to conduct the NRBSS. The authorizing authority for this project is H.R. 3684. The NRBSS is subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act's Information Collection Request process.

Subcontracts to profit-making businesses are allowed. However, the funded applicant is required to maintain all project records, provide the point of contact, and maintain funding accountability.

Requirements

The USCG is seeking the following:

1. Subject matter expertise in survey methodology and experience in drafting an Information Collection Request (Part A and B) for the Office of Management and Budget's, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to comply with the Paperwork Reduction Act
2. Subject matter expertise to advise the USCG in proper survey methodology, producing a survey instrument and proper survey administration
3. A survey administration company or organization that will develop, prepare, implement and produce results from the survey, including written reports
4. Subject matter expertise on applying appropriate weighting and estimation to produce nationwide measurements of specific boating safety measures
5. Subject matter expertise on producing reports that outline the result of these surveys
6. Subject matter expertise on documenting the methodology through a methodology report, making public-use data files available for the public and providing reproducible code (GitHub or otherwise) so other interested parties can reproduce the measurements in item (4).

Solicitation Process

The USCG intends to employ a two-step submission process to solicit interested parties to conduct the NRBSS. Interested applicants will first submit recommendations using the Content section below. If an applicant's submission is deemed to have the capacity, capability and technical expertise to conduct the NRBSS, they will be invited to submit a formal grant proposal that builds on the concepts and methods presented in recommendations submission. An applicant will be selected to receive a grant to conduct the NRBSS based on the USCG's competitive review of the proposals.

[1] For reference, Puerto Rico was not surveyed in 2018 due to post-hurricane recovery efforts.

Background

The USCG has conducted the NRBSS periodically since 1974.The most recent surveys that comprise the NRBSS, Participation and Exposure, were conducted in 2018. The reports are available here for review. For the next NRBSS, the USCG seeks to use an approach similar to the approach used for the 2018 survey with key content below:

1. The number of different types and sizes of state registered, USCG documented and (legally) unregistered boats owned and kept/stored (during the boating season) in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico ("states" in this document includes all U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico);
2. The number and characteristics (e.g., age, gender, family status, boat ownership) of persons comprising the general population in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and for different U.S. Census Regions, that go recreational boating (i.e., go out on the water in a recreational boat), the average number of days they go boating, whether they operate the boats they go out on, and the different activities they engage in (e.g., fishing, skiing) while out on boats;
3. The number of boats that are used as rentals, including through boat clubs, online applications, and rental companies. This should also include the number of owners, recorded as either a private party or a rental company.
4. The number of different types of and sizes of registered, documented and unregistered boats used on the water, and the states where they are used; the number of days and hours and the states in which they are used; the number of persons aboard when the boats are on the water; and the number of times they are trailered and launched. Boat use includes operation of, or presence on, a recreational boat on the water, meaning while it is being prepared (e.g., supplied, fueled, launched) for immediate departure or while it is on the water away from the dock or designated mooring buoy/position;
5. The types of storage (e.g., marinas, on land at permanent and second homes, in the water at waterfront homes, storage facilities) where different types and sizes of boats are stored during the boating season;
6. National and state-level recreational boating exposure estimates including: (A) the number of boat days (i.e., any day a boat is used on the water regardless of the amount of time that day it is used) and boat hours of different types and sizes of registered, documented and unregistered boats for all states, and (B) the total annual number of person days (i.e., any day a person is aboard a recreational boat while it is used on the water regardless of the amount of time that day it is used) and person hours (i.e., the number of persons aboard multiplied by the number of hours a boat is used on the water) of boating in different types and sizes of registered, documented and unregistered boats for all states; and
7. The number and characteristics (e.g., age, gender, experience, boating safety training) of persons that regularly operate boats of different types and sizes, meaning persons that are in charge or in control (e.g., steering, maneuvering) of a boat when the boat is on the water.

Content of the Pre-Solicitation Submission

Applicants shall submit a paper describing the proposed solution. All paper submissions must include: applicant name, Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, and point of contact (including name, telephone number, and e-mail address). The paper shall be no longer than 25 pages (excluding cover page, references and resumes/curriculum vitae/bios). The preferred format is a PDF with paper size 8.5" x 11"; margins of 1" and 11 or 12 point font; and single spaced. The paper should:

1. Address the requirements described on page 1 of this solicitation.
2. Give a general overview of how the applicant will conduct a nationwide survey of boater participation and estimate their exposure as per the NRBSS Introduction and the Background
3. Explain how the applicant will address non-response bias and boosting responses when response rates are low
4. Give an overview of applicant's capabilities in the following:
    a. Address Based Sampling
    b. Computer-Assisted Self Interviewing (CASI)
    c. Call Center capabilities for those respondents that want to talk to a person
    d. Incentives for respondents
5. Provide examples of similar work that applicant has done in surveying and estimation of population

Evaluation of the Pre-Solicitation Submission

Survey research experts and USCG staff will evaluate the applicant's paper based on the following criteria: (1) understanding recreational boating and the complexities associated with collecting the types of data necessary to produce valid and reliable estimates of boating participation and exposure, (2) description and grasp of the "state of the art" of survey research methods as it applies to the national surveys of similar scope and complexity, (3) the scientific and technical merit of the discussion and proposed methods, (4) the adequacy and feasibility of the technical approach given the USCG requirements and available budget, (5) the risks associated with the proposed approach as it relates to producing valid and reliable estimates of boating participation rates and measures of boating exposure, and (6) qualifications of team members and their experience with the recommended methods, guidelines for Federal statistical surveys, and the OMB approval process.

Proposal

The USCG Boating Safety Division will provide written notification to the applicant if a proposal is requested. If the USCG invites the applicant to submit a proposal, instructions will be provided regarding how to submit a grant application in grants.gov. The grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) will provide more detailed information regarding what will be required the grant proposal requirements.

Questions & Deadline

The deadline for all submissions will be April 15, 2022 at 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time. All questions and submissions related to the announcement shall be directed to Jonathan C. Hsieh, Grant Technical Manager at jonathan.c.hsieh2@uscg.mil.