Overview

1) What are the NIHCATS II contracts?

The National Institutes of Health Conference, Administrative, and Travel Services (NIHCATS) II contracts are multiple award indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (ID/IQ) contracts covering a wide range of administrative, meeting, conference, and travel support services. The NIHCATS II support services contracts are available to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other Federal agencies for services performed both in the United States and abroad.

The focus of the NIHCATS II is to provide all the necessary services, qualified personnel, and facilities, not otherwise provided by the Government. All requirements will be fulfilled under task orders (TOs). The NIHCATS II contracts consist of one (1) base year plus four (4) option years.

2) Who can use the NIHCATS II contracts?

The NIHCATS II is available to be used by the entire NIH community, but may also be used by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and other Federal agencies.

3) Is there a cost to use the NIHCATS II contracts?

The NIHCATS II contracts may be used by the entire NIH community, but may also be used by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and other Federal agencies.

For Federal Agencies (other than NIH): Yes. Effective October 1, 2014, agencies outside of the NIH will need to pay a 1% assessment to use the NIHCATS II Contract Vehicle and an additional 2% for an assisted order, in which OLAO serves as the contracting shop. Assessments will be transferred between NIH and the requesting...
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

agency via an Interagency Agreement (IAA). Please see FAQs under the Assessments section.

4) **What is the geographic scope of the NIHCATS II?**
The geographic scope of the NIHCATS II includes the Continental United States and abroad.

5) **Can we get a list of contractors from you?**
Yes, they are posted on our Website on the Vendors page.

6) **Is the use of the NIHCATS II contracts mandatory?**
The NIHCATS II contract is the Department of Health and Human Services’ strategic source contract for conference and travel related support services. In addition, the NIHCATS II contracts are aligned with NIH's corporate goal to consolidate contracts. Since the NIHCATS II contracts are a Partial Small Business set-aside, use of the NIHCATS II contracts may help NIH and other Federal agencies meet small business contracting goals.

7) **What are the benefits of using the NIHCATS II?**
The NIHCATS II contracting program is a flexible means for NIH and other Federal agencies to obtain conference, administrative, and travel associated support.

Benefits of using NIHCATS II include:

- Is available to the NIH and other Federal agencies for service performed in the Continental United States and abroad.
- Relieves the customer of the burden of executing a full contract.
- Eliminates need for a full acquisition plan.
- Relieves the customer from completing a Small Business Review Form (ex. HHS 653).
- Offers competition among a pre-screened group of qualified vendors.
- Promotes small business goals.
- Lessens the burden on the customer by making debriefings optional.
- Reduces the risk of protest.
Task Order Process

1) What is the NIHCATS II electronic Government Ordering System (eGOS)?

The NIHCATS II electronic Government Ordering System (eGOS) was developed to streamline the Task Order Procedures outlined in Section 3 of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). eGOS is a web-based system accessible via the Internet and is the starting point for any NIHCATS II task order. Please note that eGOS is a standalone system and is not linked with other NIH acquisition systems, such as NBS, at this time.

Please review the Customer eGOS Manual on the NIHCATS II Resources tab for further details on registering and using eGOS.

2) How do I place an order on the NIHCATS II contract?

Detailed instructions on how to place a task order against the NIHCATS II contracts are provided in Section 3 of the SOP. A brief overview of the acquisition process is described below.

**Steps**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Task Order COR develops TORP in eGOS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Task Order CO reviews the TORP in eGOS and submits it to the NIHCATS II CO and COR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>NIHCATS II CO and COR catalog the TORP</td>
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<td>Step 4</td>
<td>NIHCATS II CO and COR review and release the TORP using eGOS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Contractors review TORP and submit questions, if necessary, using eGOS</td>
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<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Task Order CO works with the Task Order COR to answer questions</td>
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<td>Step 7</td>
<td>Task Order CO notifies NIHCATS II CO and COR via e-mail that questions and answers are ready for review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 8</td>
<td>NIHCATS II CO and COR review questions and answers and release to the contractors via eGOS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 9</td>
<td>Contractors respond to the TORP using eGOS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 10</td>
<td>Task Order CO and COR evaluate proposals, complete an SRD, and submit SRD to NIHCATS II CO and COR using eGOS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 11</td>
<td>NIHCATS II CO and COR review SRD and return concurrence via eGOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 12</td>
<td>Task Order CO processes and uploads the task order award and DCIS Report submitting it to the NIHCATS II CO and COR using eGOS</td>
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</table>
NIHCATS II CO and COR announce the task order award by emailing an award letter to the winning contractor. A notice will also be sent to all contractors via eGOS.

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<tr>
<th>Step</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Contractor implements task order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Task Order COR completes a task order performance survey and works with the Task Order CO to close out the task order</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Task Order Guidelines are subject to change; please refer to the latest version of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

3) **What must the Task Order Request Package (TORP) include?**

The TORP will include (1) a completed TORP form (this is the pdf document generated by eGOS), (2) a Statement of Work (SOW), (3) the Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE) (not released to contractors), (4) all required conference/meeting approval request forms and waivers (if applicable) with approvals, (5) the funding document and (6) a Determination & Findings (D&F) (only applicable for Time & Materials (T&M) task orders).

For external customers, your TORP submission should also include the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the assessment. For more details on the MOU, please see FAQs under the Assessments section.

**NOTE: For Task Orders Involving Conferences/Meetings:**

**For NIH ICs:** All required conference/meeting forms and waivers based upon NIH’s most recent policy guidance must be approved and submitted prior to TORP award. If the customer does not have the required conference/meeting form to submit initially with the TORP, it must be submitted with the Selection Recommendation Document.

**For Federal Agencies (other than NIH):** All required conference/meeting forms and waivers based upon the Agency/OPDIV’s most recent policy guidance must be approved and submitted to the NIHCATS II Office. The forms must be submitted prior to solicitation or award, per the Agency/OPDIV’s most recent policy guidance. If an HHS OPDIV does not have a specific policy, then the HHS Policy will be followed, which requires conference/meeting approval forms prior to TORP award. If the customer does not have the required conference/meeting form to submit initially with the TORP, it will be submitted with the Selection Recommendation Document.

Additional information can be found in Section 3 of the SOP.

4) **If my conference will only take place for two days, what is the period of performance?**

The period of performance is from date of task order award to completion of all conference-related services (e.g., the last date that all deliverables will be
completed under the task order).

5) **What is a "No Response" statement?**
   A "No Response" statement must be submitted if a contractor is unable or otherwise cannot perform a requirement. This shall be submitted via eGOS prior to the proposal deadline.

   For more information refer to Section 3.9.2 of the SOP.

6) **Will every contractor receive all Task Order Request Packages (TORPs)?**
   Yes, all contractors will receive each TORP request in accordance with FAR 16.505(b)(1), Fair Opportunity, unless an exception to fair opportunity has been approved.

7) **Are customers allowed to sole source to a particular contractor?**
   All task orders are competitive. All contractors will receive all requirements unless an exception to the Fair Opportunity applies and has been approved by the NIHCATS II CO.

8) **How long does it take to process and award a task order for the NIHCATS II contract?**
   Task order timelines are largely dependent on the specific requirement. The timeline for the NIHCATS II Program Support Team to review and release the TORP to contractors is targeted to be approximately five (5) business days. Task orders with special or complex requirements may take longer. This processing time begins once a complete, acceptable TORP is received by the NIHCATS II CO. Incomplete or unacceptable TORPs will require additional time for the NIHCATS II CO to advise the Task Order CO on minimum acceptable requirements.

   The Task Order CO will establish a TORP response time that will afford contractors a reasonable opportunity to respond to the requirement. When establishing the TORP response time, the Task Order CO shall consider the circumstances of the individual acquisition and account for factors such as the complexity, availability, and value of the requirement.

   Overall, it should take no longer than 45 days, which is rare, from the time a complete TORP package is submitted for review until award.

9) **Is it possible to see the status of the task order?**
   To see the status of a task order, please log in to eGOS. If you have any questions regarding the status of the task order, please contact your Task Order CO.

10) **How and where will awards be made and announced?**
    After the task order award is signed, uploaded, and submitted by the Task Order CO in eGOS, the NIHCATS II CO and COR will announce the task order award by releasing
an award letter to the winning contractor. A notice will also be sent to contractors via eGOS. An award tracker is available on the NIHCATS II website and will be updated regularly.

11) **Once our Task Order CO makes an award, can we contact the contractor right away?**

Contractors are instructed not to begin work until they have officially received the task order award and award letter from the NIHCATS II Contracting Officer (CO). You may contact the contractor once the NIHCATS II CO sends out the award.

### Services and Task Order Types

1) **What types of task orders can be used under NIHCATS II?**

The NIHCATS II are indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (ID/IQ) type contracts utilizing Fixed Price (FP) and/or Time & Materials (T&M) type task orders. The task order will provide detail of the specific services that will be required. T&M task orders should be used only if FP type task orders are not suitable. Use of a T&M task order requires a Determination and Findings (D&F) approval from the Task Order CO for the IC or agency. T&M task orders beyond three years will require the approval of the Head of Contracting Activity (HCA).

2) **What task areas are covered through the NIHCATS II contracts?**

Support under the NIHCATS II contracts includes the following task areas. See the SOW or the SOP for more details.

1. Travel Support
2. Meeting and Conference Support
3. Documentation Support
4. Administrative Support
5. Website Design, Development, and Maintenance Support

All areas must be affiliated with a conference or a meeting.

3) **Is it possible to have multiple meetings or different types of meetings on one task order?**

Yes, but you must have a signed conference approval form and approved funds for each conference requested. As long as the meetings are within the base contract period of performance you can procure additional meetings ahead of time through the use of options. It is important that you identify in your SOW your intentions for options.
Roles, Responsibilities, and Support

1) What are the responsibilities of the Task Order Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR)?

When NIH or a Federal agency determines a need exists for a conference, meeting, or travel services, a Task Order COR must be identified. The Task Order COR must be FAC-COR certified and is responsible for all technical aspects of the task order.

The Task Order COR will typically be the individual requiring the services offered under the NIHCATS II contracts or may be a designee within the IC or Federal agency requiring the service. The Task Order COR will develop the requirement and will represent the Government as the main interface between his/her Institute and Center (IC)/Federal agency and the contractor during the task order period of performance. The Task Order COR will draft the TORP in eGOS, prepare the Selection Recommendation Document (SRD), provide technical direction to the contractor's management staff to facilitate task order performance, and monitor performance over the period of performance of the task order.

Additional information can be found in Section 2.2.2 of the SOP.

2) What are the responsibilities of the Task Order Contracting Officer (CO)?

The Task Order CO has the authority to act as an agent of the Government under a particular task order. For NIH customers, the Task Order CO is a warranted CO from their respective Consolidated Operations and Acquisitions Center (COAC). For customers at Federal agencies outside of NIH, the Task Order CO is a warranted CO from their respective procurement office.

Responsibilities of the Task Order CO include approving and submitting the TORP in eGOS, overseeing the evaluation of proposals, approving the Selection Recommendation Document (SRD), and creating and awarding a task order. The Task Order CO is responsible for all task order post-award administration and closeout activities.

Additional information can be found in Section 2.2.1 of the SOP.
3) **Who processes invoices?**
   
   NIHCATS II is a 3-way match with receiving coordinated by the Task Order COR. Global receivers can do receiving as well.

4) **What support is available regarding the NIHCATS II contract?**
   
   The NIHCATS II Program Support Team (NIHCATSII@mail.nih.gov) is available to assist users in understanding and using the NIHCATS II contract. Customers may request training by completing the Training Request Form located on the Resources tab of the NIHCATS II Website. In addition, materials such as the Standard Operating Procedures document and a fact sheet are available [here](#).

5) **Who is responsible for the task order administration?**
   
   The Task Order CO and Task Order COR are responsible for all task order activities including initiating, awarding, administering, modifying and closing-out task orders. The NIHCATS II CO and COR will provide support, as needed.

6) **Can an AO perform a task order COR’s role?**
   
   Not unless they have completed the FAC-COR training and are certified.

7) **Early TORPs were sent directly from the Task Order COR to the NIHCATS II team without approval from the Task Order CO. Has that been corrected?**
   
   Yes. The task order process has been updated and now requires approval from the Task Order CO throughout the process.

8) **Are the Task Order COs allowed to define the evaluation criteria?**
   
   The customer shall use at least one or any combination of the original evaluation criteria. In addition, the customer may create additional evaluation factors at their discretion.

**Funding**

1) **Is the task order process the same for any dollar limit?**
   
   Yes.

2) **Can pricing data be made available to customers to help them develop IGCEs and to complete the Conference Approval Form?**
   
   Yes. We can provide a redacted IGCE from another task order upon request. However, keep in mind that the IGCE needs to be processed by your IC.

**Assessments**

1) **I am an external customer, what is the cost to use the NIHCATS II Contracts?**

   For external customers to use the NIHCATS II Contracts there will be a 1% assessment. For assisted orders, there will be an additional 2% assessed. This is a percentage of the estimated dollar amount of award.
2) **What is the difference between an assisted order and an unassisted order?**

An assisted order would be a task order administrated by this office, meaning NIH/OLAO would serve as the contracting shop/contracting officer.

An unassisted order is one where the requesting agency uses its own contracting shop/contracting officer (this includes HHS/PSC).

The assessment for an unassisted order is 1%. The assessment for an assisted order is 3% (1% to use the vehicle + 2% for NIH/OLAO serving as the contracting shop/contracting officer).

3) **How is the assessment transferred from my agency to the NIH?**

The assessment is collected via an Interagency Agreement (IAA) between your agency and the NIH.

4) **How is the Interagency Agreement (IAA) processed?**

Our office requests the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Interagency Agreement (IAA) forms 7600 A and B to be provided to the NIHCATS II office with the submission of the Task Order Request for Proposal (TORP) Package in eGOS. We will forward these documents to the NIH Budget Office for processing.

5) **Does the Interagency Agreement (IAA) need to be finalized before I can submit my TORP?**

Our office requests the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Interagency Agreement (IAA) forms 7600 A and B in order to begin the task order process. This is to be provided to the NIHCATS II office with the submission of the Task Order Request for Proposal (TORP) Package in eGOS. Your TORP will be released to the contractors once a complete package (including the MOU and 7600 A and B forms) is received. This will not delay the start of the TORP process. The Interagency Agreement (IAA) will need to be completed, with all documents signed and CAN numbers received, prior to the award of the task order.

### Small Business Aspects

1) **Is the NIHCATS II contract set up as a total or partial small business set-aside?**

The NIHCATS II contracts have been reserved as a Partial Small Business set-aside. Task order proposals for domestic services with an estimated value of $500,000 and below will receive priority consideration for award to small businesses. If the Task Order CO receives two or more task order offers for domestic services valued at $500,000 or less, the Task Order CO would first review offers submitted from small business concerns. If the Task Order CO receives no acceptable offers from small business concerns, the set-aside shall be withdrawn and offers from the large business will then be considered.
Furthermore, the Government may solicit task order proposals with an estimated value above $500,000 for small businesses. The small business reservation does not exclude large business from submitting proposals on any task order (reference FAR 19.502-3).

2) **Who gets credit for using small businesses?**

The customer will get the credit.

**Approvals and Required Documentation**

1) **If a meeting or conference does not require a Conference Approval Form, what does the NIHCATS II CO need from the customer?**

The customer should submit a memo through the Task Order CO that explains why the approval form is not needed.

2) **Can we submit a TORP as we wait for Conference approval?**

Yes.

**For NIH ICs:** All required conference/meeting forms and waivers based upon NIH’s most recent policy guidance must be approved and submitted prior to TORP award. If the customer does not have the required conference/meeting form to submit initially with the TORP, it must be submitted with the Selection Recommendation Document.

**For Federal Agencies (other than NIH):** All required conference/meeting forms and waivers based upon the Agency/OPDIV’s most recent policy guidance must be approved and submitted to the NIHCATS II Office. The forms must be submitted prior to solicitation or award, per the Agency/OPDIV’s most recent policy guidance. If an HHS OPDIV does not have a specific policy, then the HHS Policy will be followed, which requires conference/meeting approval forms prior to TORP award. If the customer does not have the required conference/meeting form to submit initially with the TORP, it will be submitted with the Selection Recommendation Document.

3) **What is the funding document?**

It is a memo stating that funds are available. It is generally signed by the EO or budget officer or any authorized personnel from your IC or agency.

**eGOS Help**

1) **How do I register to use eGOS?**

If you are an NIH Employee, please use your NIH username@nih.gov (e.g. jappleseed@nih.gov) and not your email address. Your profile information will be auto
populated via Active Directory. Please contact NIH OIT for any questions regarding your Active Directory profile.

If you are a Federal Government Employee outside of the NIH, please register using your government email address and complete your profile. Please take note of your password, secret question, and secret answer. If you forget your password, you will use your secret question and secret answer to reset your password.

2) I forgot my eGOS password. Can you reset it?

If you are an NIH Employee, your eGOS password is the same as your NIH password. If you change your NIH password, eGOS will update your password automatically. We cannot reset your NIH password. Please contact NIH OIT for any issues with your NIH password.

If you are a Federal Government Employee outside of the NIH, please use the “Forgot your password? Click here.” link on the eGOS homepage and insert your username and secret answer to reset your password. If you do not know your secret answer, please email us at NIHCATSII@mail.nih.gov.

3) Why can’t I see my Task Order CO or COR in the drop down menu?

Your Task Order CO and/or COR must be assigned to the CO or COR groups in eGOS in order to show up in the drop down menu. Please have the Task Order CO and/or COR register in eGOS. Once he/she has registered, he/she must email us at NIHCATSII@mail.nih.gov to be added to the CO and COR groups in eGOS and we will update his/her profile. As a reminder, the Task Order CO and COR must be FAC-C or FAC-COR certified. This will be verified.