The American National Election Studies (ANES; http://www.electionstudies.org) is accepting bids to conduct data collection for its 2006 Pilot Study. A description of the study and its requirements follows.

The text of each bid may be up to 3 single-spaced pages in length (or if double-spaced, up to 6 pages). Margins should be at least one inch on all sides, and a legible font of no smaller than 10 points should be used. Two appendices are also allowed as described below.

Final bid documents must be received by 5pm eastern time on Friday, May 26, 2006. Only electronic documents will be accepted (no hard copies).

If you provide a non-disclosure agreement to us, we will sign it prior to evaluating your bid. Please email any such non-disclosure documents to us by Friday, May 19. You may request nondisclosure on the coversheet of your bid.

The bid evaluation process will be completed and bidders notified of their individual outcomes by no later than Friday, June 16, 2006.

The remainder of this letter outlines the specifics of the bidding process.

Project Description

The American National Election Studies has collected survey data on voting, public opinion, political participation, and other related research topics since 1948. This project is a “public good,” meaning that data are collected to serve social scientists throughout the world. Scholars are invited to have input at all stages of the research, and data are made available to everyone at no charge. Thousands of persons have registered to download data from the ANES website, and the ANES Bibliography includes over 5,000 entries to date.

Funding

The maximum amount of funding available for this post-election telephone panel data collection is $152,500, including all direct and indirect costs. Bidding organizations are permitted to propose cost sharing.
Criteria for Evaluating Bids

The bid chosen will be that which provides the greatest value and data quality for the price. Some specific criteria we will use are:

1. Ability to meet, and preferably exceed, the minimum specifications for the study
2. Creativity and innovation
3. The personnel, physical, intellectual, and technological resources available at your organization
4. Performance in the past
5. Willingness to provide complete access to all data and products resulting from the study, including administrative, performance, and interviewer variables, as well as programming code

Minimum Specifications for the Study

The 2006 ANES Pilot Study must be carried out in the following manner.

All interviewing must be conducted on the telephone via computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI).

Data collection will consist of a single, post-election wave. The field period will begin on Wednesday, November 8, 2006 and conclude no later than Friday, December 22, 2006 (45 days in total).

The study will be reinterviews of the 1,212 persons who interviewed with ANES in the pre-election phase of the 2004 ANES time series study:

Please bid assuming that the interviews will last 45 minutes on average. These 45 minutes refer only to the time the respondents spend answering substantive questions and do not include time for administrative work preparing to call the sample line, introductions, respondent persuasion, updating contact information after the interview, interviewer observations outside of time spent with the respondent, or other administrative efforts.

To give you a sense of the typical content of an ANES questionnaire, you may wish to review the 2004 ANES Panel Study questionnaire at this location:
The 2006 ANES Pilot Study questionnaire will not be identical to the 2004 ANES Panel Study questionnaire, but they will be similar in structure and content.

Please indicate a minimum achievable unweighted response rate for the 1,212 respondents to be reinterviewed. Double sampling and weighted response rates are not permitted. The higher the response rate you indicate that you expect to achieve, the more favorably your proposal will be viewed. To enhance credibility of the minimum response rate you propose, each bid must include financial incentives that encourage the achievement of the minimum response rate. In no case, however, can the total amount of the bid exceed $152,500. We know that each bidder will seek to achieve the highest possible response rate possible for the amount of money in the contract.
However, as part of our agreement with NSF, we are required to solicit competitive survey cost estimates and to provide the most credible description possible of the costs and likely outcomes of the study. Thus, our agreement with the winning bidder must include incentives for performance.

Note: A partial interview, defined as a respondent breaking off the interview prior to the last question, will not be counted as a completed interview for purposes of calculating response rates. If the respondent listens to all questions, then we consider it a completed interview, even if he or she declines to answer some questions. If the respondent does something midway through the interview that prevents the interviewer from reading the remaining questions to the respondent, that is a partial interview.

In the 2004 ANES Panel Study, whose design is similar to this one, our unweighted reinterview rate was 71.8%.

To protect respondent confidentiality, all persons who are in contact with the respondents must sign a confidentiality agreement that meets our specifications.

The survey will be subject to IRB review, and you will need to fully describe the study implementation procedures for an IRB application.

The sample identified for our study can only be used for our study and may not be used by your organization or any other organization for any other purpose. All information gathered about the sample must be provided to ANES in full at the end of the data collection period without restrictions on our further use of it (we may want to reinterview the respondents at some later time). For both respondents and non-respondents, please plan to provide to us current and past names, addresses, phone numbers, and any other contact information (such as e-mail addresses) you collect; call records with dates and times of every contact; any information the persons provide about how to reach them; and results of your efforts to locate persons. We will keep this information absolutely and completely confidential and will use it only to conduct follow-up interviews.

We have contact information, including address, on file for the 1,212 respondents who were interviewed face-to-face in their homes for the 2004 ANES time series survey. We acquired a telephone number for 1,159 of the 1,212 respondents. 810 of the 1,212 respondents provided at least one secondary contact for a person who will know how to contact the respondent if he/she moved. We have not been in contact with respondents since the year 2004, however. Please plan to track respondents whose phone number is missing or has changed. Indicate in your bid what methods you will make use of for tracking these respondents, and quantify how successful these tracking methods have been in the past.

All products, data, and derivatives resulting from the survey are only to be distributed to ANES staff. Anyone, including members of your organization, who wishes to make use of any product of the data collection may do so only by downloading or requesting the data or items from the ANES website (http://www.electionstudies.org), as would any other user.
Other Details

We have a number of other details that may be useful to you in preparing a bid. This section includes descriptions of how we’ve implemented such studies in the past. Any exception or proposed deviation should be clearly identified and accompanied with supporting rationale.

Interviews should only be conducted in English.

The CATI software will need to carry out randomization of question order, randomized fills in question wordings, preloaded information, question-level recording of interviewer comments, open-ended questions, and other common survey features. We also expect the software to measure questionnaire and item-level timings.

We will provide questionnaire specifications in a convenient electronic format that is customized to your needs; you will be responsible for programming the CATI instrument itself. During the period of the study, the CATI software package used must be made available to ANES staff to install so that they can assist in testing the instrument remotely.

The sample is to be released all at once at the beginning of the study period. During the study, each part of the sample should be worked proportionately across the data collection period, with no preference given to geography or likelihood of completion. By this, we mean having interviewers work as many of the available geographical regions at each point in time as possible, especially at the beginning of the field period, and that we would prefer interviewers not to postpone or spend less time on sample lines they perceive (incorrectly or not) as more likely to refuse.

Advance mailings should be sent just prior to the beginning of the study. The tasks involved are a mail merge, printing the advance letters, and sending out the packets. The mailing should be sent by two-day mail in an 8.5” x 11” envelope so that it arrives just before the field period. The advance mailing typically includes: a token or monetary gift (in the past, its value has not exceeded $5.00), a hand-signed letter on letterhead, and a tri-fold brochure. ANES Staff will provide the letterhead, content, and the brochure – please include the costs of the other items in your budget. Please plan on printing the letters, signing them by hand, and assembling and delivering the mailing.

Each respondent will receive a check for $20, to be mailed to them after their interview. You may offer incentives at least this large or larger. Please include the costs of this payment in your budget.

You may propose interviewer incentives to reward performance to help achieve the goals of the study. Please include the costs of any such initiative in your budget.

Throughout the course of each study, reluctant respondents should be mailed tailored persuasion letters. The content of these letters will be provided to you by ANES staff – in the past, we have used six basic letters that address common concerns, such as “too busy” and “not interested in politics.”

Please budget for an end game strategy to be employed during the last two weeks of the study, in case it proves necessary to reach completion and response rate goals, or a boost in production would be beneficial to the study outcome. Toward the end of the 2004 ANES Panel Study, we sent a hand-signed letter on letterhead by two-day mail to the remainder of the eligible sample offering an
incentive of $50 (instead of $20 originally offered). This end game strategy resulted in the last 26.2% of completions receiving a $50 incentive instead of $20. You will want to budget for an elevated incentive of this size or larger for use in the end game period. Furthermore, 19% of the 1,212 respondents in the 2004 ANES time series survey receiving an increased incentive of $50 during the pre-election and post-election waves of the study, and may expect the same (increased) level of incentive again in the 2006 ANES Pilot Study.

We prefer that checks be mailed to respondents frequently, at least weekly, throughout the study period. As part of its privacy policy, ANES never asks for respondents’ Social Security Numbers. In the event that you require a Social Security Number in order to cut checks for respondents, ANES staff can be sent current address and incentive amount information for completions once weekly so that the checks may be produced in Ann Arbor. If ANES must thus process the payments of respondent incentives, we will subtract from the fee to be paid to you (1) $4,000 from the total amount of your bid to cover ANES Staff time and indirect costs involved in issuing the payments, (2) the total amount of the incentives you decide to give respondents, and (3) 52% of the incentives you decide to pay the respondents (for indirect cost recovery).

Please plan to conduct a pretest of 30 telephone interviews with respondents not slated for participation in the study, followed by a two-hour debriefing session that includes the interviewers, study managers, and ANES staff. The sample for the pretest should not be comprised of respondents the pretest interviewers know already, and although a convenience sample is acceptable, efforts should be made so that the demographics of the resulting interviews are not overly homogenous. An acceptable model would be to select a city or cities to conduct the pretest in, select random households within those geographical locations, then take interviews from the first 30 eligible respondents that are willing (we are not concerned about response rates in the pretest). Because the pretest will happen before the election, we often have to change verb tenses for certain questions (i.e. “how did you vote” to “how will you vote”) for the purposes of conducting the pretest. This seems awkward, and sometimes it is, but in our experience it has been manageable.

The pretest, staff testing of the questionnaire, and experience during interviewer training may all lead to decisions to change the questionnaire slightly. Please budget and schedule allowing programming time to complete such modifications. If you have other methods available to test the instrument, such as auto-completion software that can produce sets of random cases through a draft instrument, we would like to hear about that.

All specifications for the pre-election pretest questionnaire will be delivered to you by September 1, 2006. We may add or substitute up to twenty new questions after the pretest. However, after the pretest, the most likely changes to be made will be dropping questions to reduce the length of the interviews to 45 minutes. Most of the questionnaire will be new questions that have not been included on the 2004 ANES and will be evaluated in the pretest. We may want to make some adjustments to these questions, although probably only minor wording changes and not changes in programming logic. We may also want to make minor wording changes based on interviewer feedback (for example: adding segues, providing abbreviated versions of questions to repeat back to respondents, adding additional interviewer instructions or definitions or pronunciations). Any programming errors will also need to be corrected.

In addition to the general interviewer training you provide to all of your interviewers, interviewers should receive additional, study-specific training using materials jointly developed by your
organization and ANES staff. At a minimum, interviewers should receive an additional three hours of study-specific training. Some of the training should be spent reviewing the instrument and practicing interviewing peers, but the majority of the training time should be spent reviewing study-specific training items, going through the instrument as a group, and reinforcing critical interviewing guidelines. Our definition of study-specific training does not include general interviewer training, for we assume that you have a standard procedure for training interviewers so that they will already be prepared to conduct interviews in general prior to training for our study.

We ask that a randomly-selected 5% of interviews be tape recorded and provided to us at the end of the study, and a randomly-selected 10% of interviews be verified by telephoning the households with approximately seven verification questions that we will provide to you.

Please plan to provide a staffed, toll-free telephone number that will be available for respondents to call at any time during the study period. Personnel staffing the telephone line will need to be able to confirm interviewer assignments, set appointments, record concerns, and answer basic questions about the survey process. Those managing the telephone line will not need to answer substantive questions, which will instead be recorded so that study staff may later return the respondent’s call.

**Deliverables**

Please plan to provide daily project updates to ANES staff during the data collection period concerning field progress (completions, appointments, refusals by reason, and so on), and financial reports at least once weekly. These reports will be used by ANES to monitor the progress of the study.

Please plan to deliver the final data products to ANES staff by January 15, 2007. The final data should be delivered to us in a raw, unprocessed form either as a SAS file or in an alternate electronic format previously agreed on. All datasets should include appropriate documentation, and final data products should include all survey data (both partial and complete interviews), as well as all study administration data that are available (sample management and address files, call records, date of interview, final result codes, length of interview, interviewer characteristics, etc.).

Please plan to create a set of post-survey adjustment weights that address non-response (including adjustments based on basic demographics, etc.). The weights should be prepared using generally accepted scientific methods, preferably similar to those used in past ANES studies. Documentation on weight creation can be found in codebooks for recent studies on the ANES website. Please plan to provide similar documentation for the weights you create.

Please plan to provide the final electronic version of the CAI instrument programming. A copy of all other electronic files (study-specific training, etc.) should also be provided, as well as three copies of every non-electronic product (advance mailings, training documents, copies of answering machine notes, etc.).

Please plan to provide a brief technical report that documents the field procedures used.

Please budget for some support time during the first few months of 2007, so that ANES staff can ask technical questions and seek clarification on items as they process the data.
Appendices

Please provide the following two appendices (which have no length constraint, but must include only the following information):

In the first appendix, please provide detailed budget sheets listing all of your proposed costs, including line-item financial detail and justification. Please justify and explain each line item in the budget you submit. For instance, when budgeting personnel, please indicate not only the total cost, but the hours to be expended by each category of person.

In the second appendix, please provide the information necessary to calculate the AAPOR Response Rate 1 for each of the three national RDD telephone surveys you completed most recently (not involving reinterviewing people who had been interviewed previously and not involving any list samples). This information should be provided by filling in numbers on each line of the excel file that constitutes the AAPOR response rate calculator: http://www.aapor.org/default.asp?page=survey_methods/response_rate_calculator

Contact Information:

Please send questions and final bid documents to all three of the following addresses:
1. Jon Krosnick, Stanford Principal Investigator: krosnick@stanford.edu
2. Skip Lupia, Michigan Principal Investigator: lupia@umich.edu
3. David Howell, ANES Director of Studies: dahowell@umich.edu

Thank you!