Request for Proposal

Congressional Strategy Consultant

February 1, 2025-December 31, 2025

The National Committee for Quality Assurance is an equal opportunity employer and federal contractor or subcontractor. As applicable, the parties agree that they shall abide by the requirements of 41 CFR Section 60-1.4(a); 41 CFR Section 60-300.5(a); 41 CFR Section 60-741.5(a); and 29 CFR Part 471, Appendix A to Subpart A with respect to affirmative action program and posting requirements, and that these requirements are incorporated herein. These regulations require that covered prime contractors and subcontractors ensure nondiscrimination and take affirmative action in employment to employ and advance qualified individuals without regard to sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, religious creed, national origin, physical or mental disability, and protected Veteran status. These regulations also prohibit covered contractors from taking adverse action against applicants or employees because they have inquired about, discussed, or disclosed their or their co-worker's compensation information in certain situations.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this request for proposal (RFP) is to obtain the services of an organization that can assist the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) in designing and implementing congressional and regulatory outreach and engagement strategies.

II. CONTRACT TYPE

NCQA intends to enter into a Firm Fixed Price agreement.

III. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

A. Proposal Organization

An Organization responding to this RFP will need to include the following sections as part of its proposal:

- Cover Letter addressed to:

  Eric Musser
  Vice President, Federal Affairs
  National Committee for Quality Assurance
  1100 13th Street, NW Suite 1000
  Washington, DC 20005

- Section 1 - Technical Approach: This section should detail your organization's approach for meeting the attached scope of work (SOW) research questions and requirements. This section should be no more than 1 page.

- Section 2 – Organizational Experience/Key Personnel: Please provide:
    - 2-5 case studies from the last 3 years that show how you've helped health care organizations advance their position with congressional stakeholders. (What problems were you trying to solve, what were your solutions, and what were your results?)
    - Bio-sketches and/or CVs for all key personnel.
    - Conflict of interest statement acknowledging if any existing clients are in health care accreditation, quality measurement, or digital health. (Disclosure of organizations is not required to submit a proposal; but is required before final contract award.)
    - Contact information for two health care clients we can speak to about your work.

  This section should be no more than 3 pages. Full CVs/resumes may be included in an Appendix.

- Section 3 – Cost Proposal: Organizations should submit a cost proposal that contains clearly stated assumptions and basis for pricing. The budget should be delineated to align with the tasks below and indicate:
    - Total price per task.
    - Hours spent per person per task.

B. Proposal Submission

Organizations should submit their proposal as an email attachment to NCQA as Microsoft Office programs (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) or PDF files.

NCQA will not be responsible for any costs incurred by organizations in responding to this RFP.

Proposals should describe the most favorable terms and shall remain firm for 60 days from the proposal due date. All proposals, and materials submitted in conjunction with the proposals, shall become the property of NCQA for use as deemed appropriate; respecting all copyrights and will not be returned.

Final RFP responses are due January 14, 2025, 5pm Eastern Time (ET) to Michael Grier at the following email address: MGrier@ncqa.org.

C. Questions

Please submit all questions electronically to Michael Grier at MGrier@ncqa.org by December 27, 2024, 5pm Eastern Time (ET). NCQA plans to send out written responses to all questions submitted. Please refer to the specific section and page numbers and include "Congressional Strategy Consultant" in the subject line of the email. In the interest of fairness, NCQA reserves the right to communicate any clarifications it may make to all

vendors responding to this proposal. Organizations who submitted the questions(s) will not be identified.

IV. EVALUATION OF PROPOSAL

NCQA will evaluate proposals on a best value basis. This includes our review of the proposal's technical approach, the qualifications of personnel to be assigned to the project and the proposed cost. At its discretion, NCQA may also contact some or all of the clients listed in your proposal as part of the evaluation process.

NCQA is an Equal Opportunity Employer, providing equal employment opportunity based on valid job-related factors, without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, citizenship, familial status, disability status, veteran status, genetic information, or other protected statuses under applicable state and federal laws.

V. OTHER TERMS

This RFP is not an offer to contract. NCQA reserves the right to reject any offer and to discontinue the FP process at any time, without obligation or liability to any potential contractor. This RFP does not commit NCQA to pay costs of preparing and submitting proposals. Your organization bears the costs of preparing a proposal. All submitted proposals and supporting documentation become the property of NCQA, subject to confidentiality obligations of the mutual nondisclosure agreement referred to below.

NCQA may accept or reject any proposal, whether or not it satisfies the requirements stated in this RFP and reserves the right to negotiate with other organizations for work related to the subject matter contained herein.

Submission of a proposal to this RFP constitutes your offer to do business with NCQA, in the terms stated in your response. If your organization is selected, NCQA will enter into negotiations for a contract with your company and may incorporate all or portions of your proposal into a negotiated services agreement.

The parties agree to enter into a mutual nondisclosure agreement if the sharing of confidential information is required for you to respond to this RFP. If selected, your company and all employees engaged in performing work under a contract with NCQA shall also be subject to a confidentiality and nondisclosure agreement.

VI. SCOPE OF WORK

A. NCQA Background

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving health care quality for all Americans through measurement, transparency and accountability. Established in 1990, NCQA sets standards for health plans and health care organizations, focusing on patient-centered care and evidence-based practice; and for nearly 3 decades, NCQA has stewarded the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®), which is the basis for nearly all value-based and performance measurement systems in the nation.

NCQA accreditation and certification programs are recognized by employers, insurers, and government programs to assess and reward high-performing health care. Our industry partners also utilize our expertise in research and evaluation to drive innovation in their services. Through our insights and tools, NCQA contributes to enhancing care quality, improving patient outcomes, and reducing health care costs nationwide. A few examples follow:

- More than 235 million people—72% of the US population—are enrolled in health plans that report quality results using HEDIS. Americans receive better care and can lead healthier lives thanks to the accountability and benchmarking that HEDIS makes possible.
- More than 192 million people are enrolled in NCQA-Accredited health plans, which undergo rigorous assessment of health plans' structure and process, clinical quality and patient satisfaction.
- More than 10,000 practice sites and 50,000 clinicians have earned NCQA Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Recognition.

For more background on NCQA, please see:

- About Us
- Our blog, where we discuss what's new and what's next for NCQA.
- The NCQA Public Policy website with information on our work with state and federal stakeholders to provide products and services to improve the quality of health care and oversight.
- Our public policy priorities outlined below.

B. NCQA Public Policy Priorities

1. **Digital Quality:** NCQA is committed reducing burden on an overstretched health care system by digitizing and automating the processes related to quality reporting, data quality, data management, and quality improvement. This will allow stakeholders to more accurately identify high-value care and enable a national learning health system; where clinical guidelines and data can be used in real time to improve care, reduce administrative burden and decrease overall health care costs.
2. **Integrated Quality Care:** As the nation's leading quality measurement and accreditation organization, NCQA is well positioned to reduce care fragmentation for Americans while helping to define high-quality care in emerging delivery models (ex. Digital health, care at home, behavioral health, virtual care). We aim to build on our existing position supporting state and federal value-based care programs while supporting new areas of care innovation.
3. **Behavioral Health:** NCQA seeks to support standardization, integration, and greater investments into behavioral health care delivery across the United States. America's behavioral health data and technology infrastructure is antiquated, and significant reform is needed to align with the physical health. This misalignment is impacting patients and their care teams in providing high-quality care while increasing American health care costs. The time is now to define high-quality, integrated, behavioral health.
4. **Telehealth/Virtual Care Accountability and Transparency**: Although there are differences in how virtual care is delivered, NCQA believes telehealth/virtual care must meet the same quality and coordination expected in brick-and-mortar health care settings. While these modalities are important to expand health care access across the country, public policymakers are seeking guidance to improve processes and enhance the virtual care experience of their constituents. In 2024, NCQA launched a Virtual

Primary Care and Urgent Care Accreditation program to drive accountability, transparency and quality improvement across the sector.

5. **Artificial Intelligence in Health Care:** NCQA recognizes the promise of AI in reducing waste, administrative burden, and improving the care experience for patients and their care team. While the innovation is progressing at a rapid pace, NCQA inserts there needs to be accountability and transparency in the way AI is used, developed, and impacting Americans care experience. NCQA will look to evolve our accountability and measurement programs leveraging AI, while promoting best practices in AI oversight and safety.
6. **Responding to the Regulatory & Administration Changes:** With over 30 years of experience, NCQA has a proven track record of bipartisan collaboration to enhance healthcare for all Americans. Our Public Policy team continually strengthens relationships with Congress, HHS agencies, and the White House. In light of the Loper Bright Decision and the 2024 election, NCQA is actively adapting to and positioning itself for success in the evolving health policy and regulatory landscape.

C. Consultant Tasks

1. **Development of 2025 Congressional Strategy[1]:** Develop a "Congressional Strategy Guide" for the Federal Affairs team to enhance NCQA's visibility and reputation with Congress and the Administration, facilitating the integration of our research and product offerings into national policy landscape. Priorities and products include, but are not limited to:
    - Objective 1: Transition to Digital Quality Measurement
        (i) Accelerate national digital quality measure (dQM) initiatives to advance implementation.
        (ii) Identify and help navigate congressional stakeholders to further define TEFCA for health care operations and quality measure reporting.
        (iii) Attain additional flexibilities for the federal government to test dQM infrastructure
    - Objective 2: Advance Third Party Accreditation of Health Plans and Health Care Organizations
        (i) Expanding use/value of Accreditation in Medicare Advantage
        (ii) Advise on NCQA's Health Equity Accreditation program.
        (iii) Identify opportunities to promote new accreditation programs in legislation.
            - Virtual Care Accreditation
            - Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC) Accreditation
    - Objective 3: Artificial Intelligence positioning and planning
        (i) Define a Congressional outreach strategy and narrative.
        (ii) Identify key stakeholders to enhance NCQA's planning for increased use of AI in healthcare.

2. **Support Strategy Implementation:** Within the "Congressional Strategy Guide," include implementation steps and expected outcomes. In implementing congressional strategy, NCQA will expect the following activities from the Consultant:
    i. Create a stakeholder map featuring key legislators, executive branch officials, and other federal government collaborators to guide NCQA's initiatives in Washington, DC.

[1] Given the shifting health policy landscape, NCQA reserves the right to notify the consultant of a shift in priorities or objective to align organizational goals.

i. Present by March 14, 2025; make monthly updates through the contract as needed.

ii. Facilitate congressional engagements by fostering relationship-building efforts, including warm introductions to 20 new Congressional offices and health committee members. Key committees of interest to NCQA include the House Energy and Commerce, House Ways and Means, Senate HELP, and Senate Finance.

iii. Draft, advise on, and review collateral materials for NCQA Congressional meetings or public dissemination. Documents may include, but are not limited to:
   i. PowerPoint Presentations
   ii. Letters/One-pagers
   iii. Public Comments

iv. Provide strategic advice for the coordination of congressional activities, including 2 congressional briefings and 1 national fly-in for NCQA's Public Policy Team.

v. Support administrative management and follow-up from congressional meetings to include:
   i. Maintaining and updating congressional tracker.
   ii. Drafting follow-up communications.
   iii. Tracking outstanding deliverables to congressional offices.
   iv. Other tasks as defined by NCQA.

D. Timeline for Deliverables[2]

	Deliverable	**Quantity**	**Date/Frequency**	**Delivery Method**
Meetings	1-hr check in	24	Biweekly	Virtual
	Congressional meeting support	-	Ad hoc	In person and virtual
	Congressional briefing support	2	As needed	In person and virtual
	Congressional Fly-In Coordination and Support	1	As needed	In person and virtual
	Congressional meeting management and tracker	-	Ongoing	Virtual
Reports/ Summaries	Strategy Document and Implementation Plan	1	March 14, 2025	Email
	Recap of check ins	24	Biweekly	Email
	Summary of activities to support NCQA	12	Monthly	Email
	Recap of all activities 30 days prior to close of the contract period	1	Annually	Email
	Stakeholder map	1	Updated weekly	Word or other digital tool

[2] Depending on holidays and business needs, actual number may vary depending upon agreement of the parties.