

Request for Proposal – 2024 RAPP Program

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
October 10, 2024 - 12:00 PM EDT (-4 GMT)

RFP TITLE: DIGITAL BUYERS’ GUIDE AND ENGAGEMENT/EDUCATIONAL PLATFORM FOR INTERNATIONAL BUYERS OF RENDERED AND REPURPOSED FOOD AND FEED INGREDIENTS

RFP CONTACT:

Email: rfp@nara.org

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: October 10, 2024 - 12:00 PM EDT (-4 GMT)

INTRODUCTION:

The North American Renderers Association, Inc. (NARA) formally requests proposals for an individual or firm to provide professional services to develop a digital buyers’ guide and engagement/educational platform to present information manuals, educational materials, research, training, and commercial best practices standards. The working title of the buyer’s guide is “Rendering University” and is envisioned as the premier point of reference for international buyers of rendered and repurposed food and feed products.

Through a global network of offices and consultants, NARA advocates for a sustainable food chain, public health, and the environment through the production and marketing of rendered animal products and used cooking oil (UCO.) NARA promotes effective public policy, regulation, and technology; encourages responsible business practices; supports the free movement of the industry’s products domestically and internationally; and improves stakeholder awareness and understanding of the value of rendered products in food, feed, fuel, and industrial applications.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

NARA routinely publishes RFPs to ensure that ongoing work in various markets is managed in an open and competitive manner. This type of cost analysis and benchmarking will assist in determining the fair market value for the services to be performed and allows NARA the opportunity to evaluate qualified proposals and select the best contractor for the job based on technical qualifications, subject matter expertise, experience, strength of industry connections and contacts, and suitable fees and availability that matches the needs under this contract.

The purpose of this RFP is to seek proposals from qualified individuals or firms for the development of a mobile- and web-based application to publish new and existing materials targeting the international buyer of rendered and repurposed food and feed ingredients. The content will be used as a reference point for international buyers of rendered and repurposed food and feed ingredients, including rendered animal proteins, fats and oils, and UCO.

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BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

NARA's predecessor organization, the National Renderers Association, published an information manual or "pocket guide" to be used as a buyer's guide to rendered products. The guide included:

1. A glossary of abbreviations and definitions of terms used in commercial transactions, quality control, and product specifications.
2. A listing of the products available from the rendering industry and descriptions of their product characteristics, grades, and specifications.
3. A section on conversion tables.

The [last update to the manual](#) was in 2009 and the information is dated. Since then, the rendering industry has undergone a significant transformation and food safety standards have evolved as well. The existing information in the manual should be updated, but the new manual should take a broader look at the landscape and the relationship between renderers, their international buyers, and what information NARA can provide stakeholders to help simplify commercial transactions, remove potential points of friction between supply chain partners, and operate as a reference point for the industry. The new manual may also contain additional product offerings that were not in the rendering product mix back in 2009.

When the last pocket guide was published, the iPhone was only one year old. In 2024, people expect to easily consume data and information at their fingertips so publishing this manual as smartphone and web-based application is how NARA plans to make the information easily accessible and searchable. NARA will promote the buyer's guide through its international marketing activities worldwide, through digital marketing, and as a resource on its website.

Some of the data and information to be published in the guide may be derived from resources developed by supply chain partners, and in those cases, the material will be co-branded as necessary.

In addition to updating and publishing an updated buyers' guide, NARA wants to leverage the web-based platform to create a one-stop resource to house all information and tools that will be useful to international buyers. Rendering University will combine buyers' guide, infographics, online training, research, market data, and a match-making function to connect buyers and sellers of rendered and repurposed food and feed ingredients. NARA believes this resource will help buyers understand the availability, reliability of supply, and useful tools to foster relationships throughout the supply chain.

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SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

Work with the NARA team to develop a user-friendly and efficient application that allows NARA to publish and distribute buyers' guide reference materials and other digital content on both mobile and web platforms. The application should be designed to provide an intuitive and engaging experience for users that positively reflects on the U.S. rendering industry. Key requirements include:

Platform Compatibility:

- The application should be compatible with both iOS and Android mobile devices.
- It should also have a responsive web interface for seamless access from desktop and tablet devices.

User Interface and Experience:

- Design a visually appealing and user-friendly interface for both mobile and web platforms.
- Ensure an intuitive navigation system to facilitate easy access to different sections of the buyers' guide and educational platform.
- Set features like user accounts and individualized resource library to enhance the overall user experience and foster customer loyalty.

Content Management System (CMS):

- Provide a pathway to integrate with NARA's CMS (which is currently under development).
- Data-mapping and self-service functionality that allows NARA staff to easily upload, edit, and manage content within the information manual and other digital content.
- Support multimedia content, including images, videos, and hyperlinks.

Offline Access:

- Provide an option for users to download the information manual for offline access, ensuring usability in areas with limited or no internet connectivity.
- Prospective contractors are welcome to provide input on the availability for offline use on a mobile device.

Search and Navigation:

- Implement a powerful search functionality to help users quickly find relevant information.
- Include a comprehensive navigation system with bookmarks, chapters, and a table of contents.

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Security and Privacy:

- Implement industry-standard security measures to protect user data and ensure the confidentiality of the information manual content.

Subscription Functionality:

- Provide an option for users to subscribe to the website/app and provide appropriate permissions to house subscriber's data in NARA's CRM and opt-in for future communications.

Learning Management System (LMS):

- Deploy a LMS to create, deliver, and report on training courses and programs related to the sector.
- Track and improve the learning evolution of the users related to the rendering industry.

Servers, Domains, and Databases:

- Implement a solid infrastructure, including reliable servers, secure domain management
- Set a scalable database solution to support the app and its content.

Course Certifications:

- Include a section or feature that allows users to get course certifications related to select products or services featured in the app (not all content will be certificate-worthy).

Feedback and Analytics:

- Integrate feedback mechanisms for users to provide comments or suggestions.
- Implement analytics to track user engagement, popular sections, and overall application performance.
- The initial version of the app will be in English, with the possibility of translation to other languages in the future. The Contractor will communicate and work closely with NARA's Accounting and Compliance personnel and management team, while reporting directly to the SVP of International Programs and the President & CEO.

Sections of the platform for coding:

- Home Page, Research Page and Publications, Market Data, Trade Leads/Match-making, News & Events, About Us, Rendering Guide, Commercial Standards/Code of Practice, Login and Registered User, User Settings, All News, Recorded Events, Feedback and Analytics.
- Admin (Traffic Data, Manage Events, Manage News, Manage Research, Manage Reports, Manage Data Charts, Manage Infographics)

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Training:

- Provide training to NARA staff and contractors to empower them to update the site as needed to keep content fresh.

Optional Language Translation and On-going Support:

- NARA seeks to work with a vendor or a team of vendors who can build upon the English language version of the website/app to make the content available in other languages such as French, Spanish, Portuguese and possibly others. Prospective contractors are encouraged to recommend possible pathways and solutions to present the content to a diverse audience. This portion of the project may need to be conducted as a Phase II activity, but we encourage proposals that will have the underlying infrastructure necessary to “future proof” the development of multi-language functionality without costly re-work.

DELIVERABLES:	
Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
Within 10 business days of contract signing	Conduct a kick-off meeting with NARA to brainstorm ideas and finalize the scope
October 31, 2024	Submit work plan for application development
January 15, 2024	Submit preliminary version of application for review
April 15, 2024 or sooner	Deliver final version of the application

PROJECT TIMELINE:
NARA anticipates the contract will begin October 2024 and end May 1, 2025, unless ongoing support and content curation is included.
RFP TIMELINE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFP Distribution: September 23, 2024 • Project Proposals Due: October 10, 2024, by 12:00 PM Eastern Time • Selections Made By: October 17, 2024 • Prospective Contractors Notified By: October 18, 2024

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INSTRUCTIONS:

Proposals must contain at a minimum the specific criteria listed below:

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@nara.org by 12:00PM EDT (GMT -4) on October 10, 2024.
2. A description of Prospective Contractor’s capabilities, resources, and experience. Emphasis should be placed on experience related to this RFP.
3. A thorough proposal outlining Prospective Contractors’ approach to the project and timeline to complete the work.
4. Resumes, Curriculum Vitae, or other summaries of credentials for each of the Prospective Contractor’s personnel assigned to work directly on the implementation of the contract.
5. Provide a minimum of two names and contact information for other similarly sized clients for reference purposes.
6. Detailed Budget - All bids for services must provide a breakout of how the fee was derived including but not limited to a breakdown of hourly rate and the amount of effort they anticipate doing the work.
7. If a Prospective Contractor has the expertise to compile the content for the manual and develop a mobile- and web-based application to disseminate the information digitally, please separate out the two functions into 1) professional services for content creation, and 2) application development services.
8. Proposals should be no longer than 10 pages (8 ½” x 11” Letter or A4), but shorter proposals are encouraged.

NOTES:

Prospective Contractors are hereby notified that proposals will be duplicated for internal review only. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality of all information presented. The appropriate representatives from staff and legal counsel (when necessary) will review proposals. Proposals will not be returned.

NARA reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the submitter of the conditions contained in the request for proposal, unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the contract between NARA and the contractor selected.

Confidentiality - Without NARA’s prior written consent, Prospective Contractors and its officers, employees, agents, representatives, affiliates, and subcontractors shall not disclose to any third

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party any documents, materials, or information that the Prospective Contractors learns from or is provided in relation to the RFP request.

During the evaluation process, NARA reserves the right to request additional information or clarifications from proposers, or to allow corrections of errors and omissions.

NARA reserves the right to reject any proposal that is in any way inconsistent or irregular. NARA also reserves the right to waive proposal defects or deficiencies, to request additional information, and/or to negotiate with the Prospective Contractor regarding the proposal.

Prospective Contractor agrees that Fees are in lieu of any and all other benefits, including, but not limited to, repayment of any and all taxes related to contractor service fees, health and life insurance, administrative costs, and vacation.

The prospective Contractor agrees that any income taxes, value added taxes or any other form of direct or indirect taxes on compensation paid under the contract shall be paid by the Contractor and not by NARA or Funding Sources.

Prior to any payment to a U.S.-based Contractor, the contractor must provide a signed W-9.

Non-Competition. Contractor shall not act as agent or representative for any product or service that directly competes with rendered products and UCO from the U.S. for the length of the contract.

NARA and Prospective Contractor agree to comply with the provisions of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). NARA provides EEO to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty, or status as a covered veteran in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE & SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

A link to NARA's strategy can be found on the RFP page on its website: <https://nara.org/request-for-proposals/>.

NARA is the international trade association for the rendering industry which safely and efficiently recycles animal by-products and used cooking oil (UCO) from restaurants into rendered material that is used in the sustainable production of valuable products for the animal food, chemical, personal care, and biofuel industries. Rendering is sometimes called “the invisible industry” because many people are unaware that roughly 50% of an animal is considered inedible by North American standards. This leaves a large amount of leftover material that would be treated as food waste were it not for rendering.

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Rendering reclaims this otherwise wasted material (like protein, bone, fat etc.), as well as UCO from restaurants, and safely and hygienically processes it into rendered material for use in new products so nothing is wasted. This sustainable process transforms and upcycles what would have been food waste into safe, clean, and valuable ingredients for countless new goods – saving landfill space, and recycling 99% of this unwanted material. These rendered ingredients are then used in the sustainable production of new goods like safe and nutritious pet food, animal feed, household and industrial products, biofuels/renewable diesel, and many more common items that we use or come into contact with every day.

NARA's 35 member companies operate more than 170 rendering plants in the U.S. and Canada. Members represent more than 95% of North American production by independent renderers (many of which are multi-generation family-owned companies) and integrated packer/processor renderers (those rendering only their own animal by-products).

The U.S. rendering industry produces sustainable rendered products used to create a wide variety of ingredients for products critical to other industries. Companies are also developing new products, such as fuels and enzymes, to meet changing consumer preferences and commercial trends worldwide. Rendered products include fats, animal protein meals, chemicals, fatty acids, tallow, and hides. These high-quality fats and proteins improve the nutrition of farm animals, poultry, fish, and pets.

Renderers also contribute essential ingredients for industrial and consumer products, including lubricants, plastics, printing inks and explosives, and many common items that consumers rely on every day — including cosmetics, shaving cream, deodorant, perfumes, soap, polishes, cleaners, paints, candles, and caulking compounds. Rendered fats are also an essential raw material for use in biofuels and renewable diesel in the U.S. and abroad.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 {voice and TTY) or contact

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USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632- 9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. By mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410;
2. By fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. By email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

CIVIL RIGHTS STATEMENT

Contractor agrees that during the performance of this Agreement it will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status, parental status or protected genetic information. Contractor further agrees that it will fully comply with any and all applicable Federal, State, and local equal employment opportunity statutes, ordinances and regulations, including, without limitation, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Equal Pay Act of 1963. Nothing in this section shall require Contractor to comply with or become liable under any law, ordinance, regulation, or rule that does not otherwise apply to Contractor.