

Awarded Contracts for External Experts to Support the NIST World Trade Center (WTC) Disaster Investigation

Contract No.	Awarded to	Date Awarded
SB1341-03-Z-0008	NuStats	6/9/2003

World Trade Center (WTC) Investigation Survey Administration and Report Delivery: Questionnaires, Interviews and Focus Group Synopsis

Under solicitation SB1341-03-R-0013, "World Trade Center (WTC) Investigation Survey Administration and Report Delivery: Questionnaires, Interviews and Focus Group Synopsis," an indefinite deliverable, indefinite quantity (IDIQ) purchase order has been awarded to NuStats of Austin, Texas.

NuStats is a full-service research and consulting firm, employing more than 60 social scientists, research managers, and technical specialists. Since 1984, NuStats has conducted hundreds of large-scale studies in 40 states and nearly every major metropolitan area of the United States. These projects utilize tools such as computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), face-to-face interviews, focus groups, open-ended surveys, cognitive interviews, dyad and triad interviews, ethnographic studies, behavioral diaries, computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) using hand held computers, web-based surveys, and self-administered mail out questionnaires. Many of these projects have substantial vulnerable population research components, including families with terminally ill children, at-risk youth, illegal immigrants, and parents of uninsured children.

This contract will implement the survey methodology designed in conjunction with experts contracted under solicitation number SB1341-02-Q-0710 (Dr. Norman Groner, Dr. Dennis Mileti, and Dr. Guylene Proulx). These experts will continue to be involved with the survey instrument development, database design, and data analysis. The survey methodology is contained as Appendix 6 of the May 2003 NIST Investigation Progress Report

The objective of this solicitation is to contract for survey services. The surveys shall minimize the impact upon the population, maximize the investigative yield, and coordinate with other studies. The results of these surveys will be delivered to NIST in an encoded database, along with a summary report describing the overall approach, final encoding book, execution, problems, and solutions encountered during the survey process within 7 months of contract award. NuStats will not analyze the data or develop any findings, conclusions, and recommendations based upon the data collection effort. The specific tasks which NuStats will perform include:

Telephone Interviews

- Develop a telephone interview schedule (script) meeting the objectives of the NIST WTC Investigation subject to the approval of NIST.
- Administer the telephone interviews using the prescribed methods, including follow-ups until obtaining at least the minimum response rates.
- Collect the results of the telephone interviews and store in a database meeting NIST specifications.
- Provide training to interviewers performing the telephone interview segment in order to effectively implement the prescribed methods and to possess mastery of the goals and objectives of the Investigation.

Face-to-face Interviews

- Conduct face-to-face interviews of building occupants, managers, families of victims, and first responders including achieving the minimum response rates.
- Provide training to interviewers performing the face-to-face interview segment in order to effectively implement the prescribed methods and to possess mastery of the goals and objectives of the Investigation, including the technical probes.
- Collect the results of the face-to-face interviews and store in a database meeting NIST specifications.

Focus Groups

- Provide training to moderators to effectively implement the prescribed focus group methods and to possess mastery of the goals and objectives of the Investigation.
- Collect the results of the focus group interviews and store in a database meeting NIST specifications.

Supporting Tasks

- Obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for all data collection activities, including mental health provisions to protect the well-being of the respondents, as well as the survey administrators.
- Contact and coordinate all human subjects used in data collection efforts.
- One staff person who was directly involved with the database development shall assist with statistical computations.

Dr. Johanna Zmud, president of NuStats, will act as overall Project Director. Dr. Zmud received her Ph.D. in communication research from the University of Southern California (USC). Dr. Zmud is certified by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in Human Subjects Assurance Training and serves as Human Protections Administrator at NuStats. Dr. Zmud's work has focused on behavior measurement, particularly on issues relating to the movement of persons. She has published widely in this field with an emphasis on instrument design, non-sampling errors, and survey methods. She will direct a team which includes in-house task managers, expert consultants from leading universities, and subcontracts to companies including DataSouce, GeoStats, and MBC Research Center.

The telephone interview task will be led by Ms. Heather Contrino, Director of NuStats Washington, D.C. office. Ms. Contrino has extensive experience in the management, development, and conduct of qualitative and quantitative research for federal, state, and local agencies. Under subcontract, DataSource will perform the telephone interview task. DataSource is a large-scale, multi-stage survey research firm specializing in CATI programming and interviewing, data entry, and high-volume mailing. DataSource is an affiliate company of NuStats employing approximately 200 part-time interviewers.

The face-to-face interview task will be headed by Ms. Della Santos of NuStats. Ms. Santos has 15 years of experience managing research activities for national, state, and local studies. Under subcontract, GeoStats, headed by Dr. Jean Wolf, will design and develop the computer assisted personal interview application which will record and deliver the interview results to NuStats. GeoStats is a company focused on the application of emerging technologies in the collection, processing, and display of survey data. NuStats and GeoStats have partnered previously to conduct year round, face-to-face interviews with visitors to Alaska for the State Department of Economic Development.

Ms. Kim Hilsenbeck, who has conducted more than 50 focus groups, including several for state and federal agencies, will be task manager for the focus groups. Dr. Carlos Arce will serve as primary

moderator for the focus groups. Dr. Arce, who founded NuStats in 1984 after serving as a research scientist the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan, has conducted over 400 focus groups over his 25 year career, which has focused on the application of anthropology, psychology, and survey research methods to the execution of large, complex studies.

Face-to-face interviews and focus group interviews will be conducted at the MBC Research Center. The MBC Research Center, located near Grand Central Station in New York City, offers convenience of location, a conference room for interviews and focus groups, and a state-of-the-art tiered viewing room.

All interview and focus group instruments, procedures, and protections developed by the contractor and its sub-contractors will be subject to the approval of appropriate Institutional Review Boards (IRBs). NIST will conduct an institutional review of the contractor's IRB documents.

Dr. Karol Krotki and Mr. Robert Santos of NuStats will provide statistical and sampling management over the implementation of the NIST methodology. Dr. Krotki is a sampling statistician with over 30 years of experience in sample and survey design of special population research studies. Mr. Santos has over 20 years of research experience directing statistical and qualitative research designs, multi-mode complex survey designs, and rare element sampling. Mr. Santos has had senior level appointments at several world renowned research institutions including special mission appointment with the National Academy of Sciences and has served on the IRB of the Urban Institute. He has reviewed and critiqued numerous Human Subjects Protocol statements.

Dr. Jon Krosnick, a cognitive psychologist and survey methodologist with the Ohio State University Departments of Psychology and Political Science, will provide supplemental expertise to the instrument development tasks. Dr. Krosnick has served as a consultant to such organizations as Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, the Office of Social Research at CBS, the News Division of ABC, the National Institutes of Health, NASA, the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and the Urban Institute. Dr. Krosnick's scholarship has been recognized with the Phillip Brickman Memorial Prize for Research in Social Psychology, the Erik H. Erikson Early Career Award for Excellence and Creativity in the Field of Political Psychology from the International Society of Political Psychology, and a fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Stanford, California. Additionally, Ms. Jamie Abelson, a senior research associate affiliated with the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, will bring over 20 years of experience working on large-scale mental health studies and in training research groups who are dealing with sensitive interview situations.

In addition to prior work with the California Highway Patrol, Austin Police Department, and Austin Fire Department, NuStats has procured the services of a 12-year veteran of the Phillipsburg, NJ police department to provide expert consultation in police procedures, protocols, and jargon. This individual was among a group of first responders who responded to the World Trade Center disaster. High-ranking expert trainers with the Austin Fire Department have been retained in order provide fire department consultation in procedures, protocols, and jargon.

The entire NuStats-led team will work closely with the NIST team. The NIST team and its outside experts will contribute to the development of survey instruments, protocols, and procedures; and designing the database, including selection of encoding variables. The NIST team will work with its outside experts in the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data to study occupant behavior and human factors, evacuation technologies and practices, firefighting technologies and practices, and observed physical conditions within the buildings during evacuation and emergency response. The NIST team and its experts have worked extensively in the areas of evacuation, fire safety, emergency communications, emergency planning, and natural disasters, and have expertise in cognitive, environmental, and social psychology, sociology, statistical sampling, questionnaire design and methods, interview techniques, and risk communication.