

Request for Information: On-Site Photocopying and Information Retrieval Contractor

Purpose: The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) regulates a major segment of the U.S. energy industry and, through its actions, affects the economic well-being of most U.S. consumers. Under the Commission's public information rules (18 CFR, Part 388), members of the public, nationwide, must be provided with a variety of means of obtaining information and copies of public documents. As part of this service, the FERC requires that production and duplication services for various types of media, and research, technical assistance, information retrieval and delivery services be provided so that the public can obtain the material they require.

Background: In the past, the Commission has utilized a contractor to provide these services. The Contractor has been responsible for providing all equipment, supplies and personnel in support of these functions, and has been charged a fee for the space it occupies. The Contractor recovers its costs through fees charged to the public for the services provided. The Contractor proposes the fees for its services, but the Commission has final approval of the fees schedule.

Most services have been performed on-site, unless backlogs, non-standard equipment requirements, or oversized document reproductions have been a factor. Orders for services are submitted to the Contractor by onsite public requesters for themselves or for their firm/organization, by onsite information brokers for their clients, or by Technical Information Specialists within the Public Reference Room (PRR).

Typical services required include printing documents from authorized Commission resources and systems; paper-to-paper reproduction; self-service copying services; production/reproduction, downloading and/or printing of electronic information; information research and retrieval services; information and technical assistance; microfiche/microfilm - production, reproduction, research and/or printing; maintenance of subscriptions and/or mailing lists for various document or information releases; local and long distance fax services; document/product delivery services; management of financial transactions with the public for services rendered; and management of work flow and customer inquiries.

Typical requests referred to the Contractor by the Technical Information Specialists within the Public Reference Room include requests for multiple years of one or more different types of forms; voluminous historical data that requires extensive research and photocopying; requests for multiple documents from automated systems; over-sized colored maps/drawings; and other systems data.

Workload:

While the FERC makes no guarantee concerning the number of pages or documents to be produced or the use of one medium versus another, the following estimates are provided which represent the current workload experienced.

Self Service Copying: Approximately 35,000 copies per month

Full Service Copying: Approximately 15,000 copies per month
Local and Long Distance Fax: Approximately 275 per month
Daily Releases Subscription: Approximately 800 pages per month
Draft Order Subscription: Approximately 1,700 pages per month
Delivery Services (includes 1st Class, Courier & FedEx): Approximately 105 per month

The Commission maintains several systems and resources, including a Website, which contain publicly-available information. Implementation and enhancement of some of these systems has impacted the requirement for reproduction of hard-copy documents since they are available electronically. Therefore, the FERC anticipates that members of the public may have a need for portions of this material in various media, including diskette or CD-ROM. In addition, the Commission's Records and Information Management System (RIMS) will soon enable customers to request material from the Contractor electronically in situations where the requester does not wish to print the material themselves.

The Commission estimates that approximately 47,000 pages are printed per month in support of public requests.

Areas of Interest: The FERC desires information about capabilities of contractors, including past work experience in similar operations, who may be interested in providing these types of services in the Public Reference Room. The FERC is also interested in ideas for new or alternative services not identified above which may improve the services provided to members of the public interested in the Commission's information. For example, FERC would like to hear from vendors capable of providing value-added services for a fee over and above the free basic services offered through our website. These new or improved services might also include such things as providing research information through a 900 number or enabling the client to request material to be downloaded, printed, or e-mailed to large retail copying centers for local pick-up. These new services might also include one which would enable an individual or organization to request, via the internet, the eMailing to it of all future documents the Commission issues in one (or more) particular docketed proceeding(s). This service, subsequently, would eMail automatically and immediately to the individual or organization a copy of any document electronically issued by the Commission in any such docketed proceeding(s).

To explain the changes in the technical environment currently underway that will affect our online systems, FERC is considering holding a technical conference to demonstrate some of the new capabilities. Companies interested in participating should contact us.

Contact: Companies should contact Katherina Quijada-Cusack by phone at 202-208-1748, or E-mail at katherina.quijada@ferc.fed.us to identify interest in this contract or in participating in a technical conference.