

Quick Turnaround Support



The Clients

In today's busy and extremely competitive climate, nearly all of ICF's clients require consulting support to be delivered within a short time period. As communication systems and computer technology have advanced in recent years, so have client expectations of rapid responses to their requests. We have found that federal, state, local, international, nonprofit, and private organizations all have a common need—on occasion if not as a matter of standard practice—for quick turnaround support. Certainly, federal scientific and regulatory agencies such as EPA, FDA, NIEHS, and others frequently have short-term demands for data, analysis, documentation, and logistical support from their contractors.

The Challenge

By its very nature, consulting support to federal scientific and regulatory clients involves frequent deadlines and short turnaround times. Such quick turnaround work has long been a core element of ICF's business, so we have developed systems and staff to ensure that we are adept at quickly responding to each client's changing needs. Quick turnaround support encompasses a wide variety of work activities, including long-term assignments that involve repetitive and recurring short response-time tasks, intense short-term projects requiring exceptional staff time commitments for a week or more, and smaller tasks where results are expected as soon as possible—often on the same day a request is made.

The truth is that nearly anyone can provide work products on a short deadline. The real challenge in quick turnaround work—and the real discriminator among service providers—is consistently achieving the required standard of quality for each assignment while working under the time constraint. ICF has learned that meeting a client's quality expectations, especially for quick turnaround activities, depends on clear and precise communications, a flexible managerial and staffing approach, and a positive and committed mindset among our managers and staff.

Solution and Results

Quick turnaround assignments vary greatly in size, scope, and subject matter, but ICF's approach to each is built upon the same fundamental principles of success:

- **Communications**—We emphasize up-front communications with the client to clearly establish the objectives (including quality objectives), context, schedule, budget, deliverables, and other parameters of the assignment, with ongoing communications to report progress and resolve issues. We just as strongly emphasize communications within the ICF team to ensure no oversights or misunderstandings among managers and staff.
- **Flexibility**—We are creative and experienced at adapting our resources to the significant challenges of rapid response projects. Where warranted, we will revise project priorities among key managers and staff, marshal additional staff internally and in some cases externally, and work additional hours to provide surge capacity.

The ICF Advantage

Everybody can offer quick turnaround support, but if you don't have the right attitude, approach, experience, and staff, you can't do it successfully. ICF offers a **proven approach** tailored to the demands of working under significant time constraints, an approach that has been tested and refined over decades of doing time-sensitive work. Our experience has taught us to be **proactive and persistent** in communicating with clients and among our staff and to anticipate the many pitfalls that may arise when deadlines are short. Most importantly, the **quality, commitment, and training of our staff** are major advantages in providing quick turnaround services, and that are the primary discriminators between ICF and others.

Contact

To learn more about how ICF's can help your organization, please contact Health Science Services:

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About ICF International

ICF International (NASDAQ:ICFI) provides professional services and technology solutions that deliver beneficial impact in areas critical to the world's future. ICF is fluent in the language of change, whether driven by markets, technology, or policy. Since 1969, we have combined a passion for our work with deep industry expertise to tackle our clients' most important challenges. We partner with clients around the globe—advising, executing, innovating—to help them define and achieve success. Our more than 5,000 employees serve government and commercial clients from more than 70 offices worldwide. ICF's website is www.icfi.com.

- **Mindset**—We don't view quick turnaround work as a nuisance or a burden, but rather expect and anticipate it as an important part of the broad range of services we provide to our clients. Our managers and staff embrace the challenge of quick response work, are fully committed to meet the deadlines we agree to, and maintain a positive attitude throughout.

These fundamental principles of success—communications, flexibility, and mindset—have created a work environment at ICF where clients' needs and expectations come first. The following examples reflect our commitment to excellence.

Health Effects Research Online—EPA's National Center for Environmental Assessment requested ICF's help in establishing best practices and providing user support for HERO, a large bibliographic data base maintained by EPA. In a six-month period, more than 40 ICF staff members worked on the database 8,000+ hours and completed a long series of individual quick turnaround tasks. We conducted quality assurance on several thousand HERO records with missing or incorrect data, inserted reference citations into 10 IRIS Toxicological Reviews scheduled for public release, and prepared user-support documentation. Throughout the project, the ICF team complied with extremely short timelines, managed a multitude of simultaneous tasks, and ensured that work products met stringent quality standards. To enhance communications and consistency among the large staff needed for this project, we created internal training courses and reference materials specific to the project, instituted strict quality checklists and standard operating procedures, maintained a project SharePoint site for managing files and assigning tasks among the team (including several subcontractors), and circulated weekly "project bulletins" to share information.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Pesticide Programs—For many years ICF provided scientific research, analysis, and documentation support to EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs Antimicrobial Division (OPP AD) by reviewing toxicology, exposure, fate, and chemistry studies on antimicrobial pesticides. Nearly all of this work was completed on short deadlines. Under the contract, EPA would issue Task Assignment Forms to ICF that defined the work products, budget, and schedule for a particular task. The work typically involved review and analysis of lengthy and complex studies on chemical substances, along with comparisons to accepted study protocols. Often a Task Assignment would include numerous types of studies on multiple substances, with a due date within a week or two. Because it was an ongoing project, ICF was able to develop standard operating procedures that responded to client feedback, technical and editorial review checklists to increase efficiency during the review process, and a team of experienced staff to facilitate meeting the short deadlines while maintaining strict quality standards.

OPP AD has continued to access ICF to conduct quick turnaround statistical analyses. Through a broad-based quick turnaround task assignment, ICF supports OPP AD in addressing a variety of questions on how best to implement the latest statistical techniques when addressing exposure data in risk assessments. A broad-based task assignment allows ICF to provide quick turnaround support without significant paperwork that could result in delayed responses. However, we recognize that given the undefined nature of this task assignment and the variety of support needed, frequent and effective communication with the client is imperative to ensure that we are quickly responding to client needs while providing high-quality statistical expertise.