

STATE OF ILLINOIS
CREATIVE AGENCY FOR COVID-19 MARKETING CAMPAIGNS
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
DUE: JULY 12, 2021, 5:00 PM CST

Background

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is seeking to partner with a firm to provide full-service public relations, advertising, and marketing strategies in support of IDPH's mission to protect the health and improve the lives of Illinoisans as COVID-19 response and recovery efforts continue (Marketing Campaigns). The Marketing Campaigns will be COVID-19 public health related. The vendor will work closely with IDPH and other State of Illinois (State) stakeholders designated by IDPH to plan and implement campaigns across earned, owned, paid, and social media platforms. The services sought include communications strategy, creative content development, marketing materials, paid media strategies, and content production. Media planning and buying is NOT required of the resultant vendor.

These communications will fall under the State's "All in Illinois" initiative, a platform and united front to positively rally the State together to battle COVID-19. Current and former efforts include promoting mask-wearing, safe gatherings, social distancing, COVID testing, contact tracing, vaccinations, and more. Strategies to engage the communities hit hardest by the pandemic, with an enhanced focus on Black and brown communities, are central to the State's equity-centric pandemic response efforts and should be prioritized by the vendor.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is being issued under the Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation and is therefore exempt from the provisions of the Illinois Procurement Code.

At the direction of the State, the vendor will plan, develop, and execute the Marketing Campaigns for the duration of the contract. The Marketing Campaigns will advance the work and mission of IDPH, to protect the health and improve the lives of Illinoisans, specifically with regards to COVID-19 responses and recovery efforts.

Within seven (7) business days of the contract being awarded, the vendor will meet with the Deputy Director of Communications of IDPH and other State staff and identified stakeholders to gain a broad understanding of the communications goals and objectives, and the strategies necessary to achieve them.

The vendor and its team of creatives and professionals will, based upon the learnings from the aforementioned meeting(s), begin to set strategy and plan for advertising and public relations campaigns that advance the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts of IDPH, the number of which will be determined by the State. Concept themes could include seasonal and cultural observances including but not limited to: back to school, holidays, and cultural observances.

The concepts, once presented and then approved by IDPH, will be planned, developed (created), and executed strategically by the vendor team during the duration of the contract, on multiple platforms, including but not limited to paid, owned, earned, digital and social media platforms, and on the ground efforts.

All creative concepts will address/incorporate equity and diversity into their execution and delivery, and pertinent materials will be translated into other languages spoken within the State, including Spanish, Polish, and Chinese. Additionally, in the development and production of materials, the vendor will identify and utilize resources and platforms that support or originate within Black and brown communities.

The vendor will collaborate with agencies identified by the State to manage consumer research programs as well as media planning and buying (e.g., radio, TV, print, out of home, transit, and social media ads). The vendor must exhibit nimbleness and the ability to turn projects around in rapid time. The vendor must track and report the effectiveness of campaigns on a weekly and monthly basis. Metrics used to track campaign effectiveness will include:

- Change in public opinion or behavior (i.e., frequency of mask-wearing, vaccination rates, etc.)
- In-market campaign performance (i.e., video completions, click-through rates, post engagement)
- Qualitative and quantitative analysis of earned and social media
- Website traffic and engagement

The resulting contract with the awarded vendor shall have an initial term of 6 months from the date of execution with two 6-month renewal options. Renewal options may only be exercised in conjunction with the renewal of the COVID-19 Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation for the relevant contract period.

Any vendor requiring clarification of any section of this RFP or wishing to comment on any requirement of the RFP must submit specific questions in writing no later than the deadline for questions indicated in the “Key Dates” section of this RFP. Questions may be emailed to the point of contact for this RFP and listed below. Questions or comments not raised in writing on or before the deadline to submit questions are thereafter waived. At the close of the question period, a copy of all questions or comments and the State's responses will be posted on the IDPH’s website shown below. Every effort will be made to post this information as soon as possible after the question period ends, contingent on the number and complexity of the questions.

Key Dates

6/28/21	RFP Release
7/1/21	Questions due from potential vendors due via email to William.Smith@illinois.gov not later than 5:00 p.m. Central Time
7/6/21	Answers to questions from potential vendors released via IDPH COVID-19 website link below: https://www.dph.illinois.gov/rfp/covid19-media-campaign-rfp
7/12/21	Submissions due via email to William.Smith@illinois.gov not later than 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time
7/21/21 (estimated)	Vendor notification of award

Directions

The State is seeking proposals from interested vendors with a minimum of 10 years' experience and expertise to provide full-service public relations, advertising campaigns, and marketing strategies of similar scale and scope to the services described in the RFP to protect the health and improve the lives of Illinoisans as COVID-19 response and recovery efforts continue.

The proposal must be submitted as two separate documents. The first document will include the vendor's response as to how it will deliver the services required and cannot include any pricing information. The all-inclusive pricing information must be presented on the attached budget template (see Attachment A). Each document will be evaluated separately. Proposals should include:

- Name of vendor, vendor's address, and contact person, including work phone, cell phone, and email address.
- Operational Plan that describes the vendor's proposal as described in the Scope of Work.
- Proposed staffing plan at the immediate commencement of the contract.
- References, which shall include the names and contact information for three entities for whom the vendor has provided similar services described in the proposal.
- Proposed pricing (submitted in a separate, clearly labeled attachment from the rest of the proposal).

Please ensure that there is no mention of the pricing within the technical proposal submission. Inclusion of pricing information within the technical proposal submission could result in the submission being deemed non-responsive.

Proposals must be submitted via email not later than 5:00 p.m., Central Standard Time on 7/12/21 to:

William Smith
Illinois Department of Public Health
William.Smith@illinois.gov

The State reserves the right to award the contract to the vendor that has the best overall proposal within the State's timelines and to issue supplemental solicitations as warranted.

The State is not obligated to award a contract pursuant to this solicitation. If the State issues an award, the award will be made to the responsive and responsible vendor whose offer best meets the specified criteria. If the State does not consider the price to be fair and reasonable, and negotiations fail to result in a contract or fail to meet an acceptable price, then the State reserves the right to discontinue negotiations with the vendor and begin negotiations with the next highest scoring vendor. The State will determine whether the price is fair and reasonable by considering the offer, including the vendor's qualifications, the vendor's reputation, all prices submitted, other known prices, the project budget, and other relevant factors. The State will notify each vendor if they were selected for award upon the completion of successful contract negotiations.

Partial awards will not be considered. However, the vendor may engage subcontractors to perform part of the services. If subcontractors will be engaged, the vendor must include a complete list of all subcontractors intended to be used, their addresses, and a description of the work each subcontractor will be performing in the proposal.

The State evaluates three categories of information: Responsibility, Responsiveness, and Price. The State considers the information provided and the quality of that information when evaluating proposals. If the State finds a failure or deficiency, the State may reject the proposal or reflect the failure or deficiency in the evaluation.

The State may award to the most responsive and responsible vendor whose proposal best meets the below criteria.

- The State determines how well a proposal meets the responsiveness requirements. The State ranks proposals, without consideration of price, from best to least qualified using a point ranking system (unless otherwise specified) as an aid in conducting the evaluation. Vendors who receive fewer than the minimum required points will not be considered for price evaluation and award.
- If the State does not consider the price to be fair and reasonable, and negotiations fail to meet an acceptable price, the State reserves the right to cancel the award and take appropriate action to meet the needs of the State. The State determines whether the price is fair and reasonable by considering the proposal, including the vendor's qualifications, the vendor's reputation, all prices submitted, other known prices, the project budget, and other relevant factors.

Scope of Work

IDPH is seeking to partner with a vendor for the Marketing Campaigns related to COVID-19 public health messaging.

The vendor will work closely with IDPH and other State stakeholders to plan and implement the Marketing Campaigns across earned, owned, paid, and social media platforms. The services sought include communications strategy, creative content development, marketing materials, paid media strategies, and content production. Media planning and buying are NOT required of the selected vendor.

To meet the State's requirements, vendor's proposals must include the below requirements. Please respond to each listed request for information and provide significant detail related to your firm's experience and approach toward each requirement. The responses to the requests below will be the basis for the technical evaluation of submissions and resultant award.

1. The State is looking to partner with a well-established professional creative firm with the capabilities to create large and mid-sized public relations and advertising campaigns backed by data and strategy. ***Please provide a detailed narrative explaining your firm's history and background. Please include areas of specialization and examples of previous projects of this scale, including experience managing an operational budget exceeding \$1 million.***
2. The successful vendor must be able to demonstrate the ability to deliver full-service public relations and advertising capabilities. ***Please provide a detailed narrative demonstrating your firm's approach to comprehensive full-service public relations and advertising incorporating examples of previous large-scale projects. Include a proposed staffing plan and specific examples of working with high-profile***

clients navigating through challenging circumstances.

3. The successful vendor must be able to set overall communications and campaign strategy, define target audiences and their unique qualities, and use those insights to reach diverse audiences. ***Please provide a detailed narrative outlining your firm's approach to the strategy phase of the creative process. Does your firm employ a dedicated insights team to manage strategy on behalf of clients? How does your firm translate insights into outreach to diverse audiences? Please provide specific examples of the measurable impact of the firm's strategy team.***
4. The successful vendor must be able to analyze existing comprehensive data sources or undertake research projects and then translate that research into effective marketing strategies. ***Please explain your firm's approach to using data to drive results. Provide specific examples of previous projects where initial research resulted in the creation of unique and effective marketing strategies.***
5. The State is particularly interested in reaching traditionally "hard to reach" audiences including:
 - a. People with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
 - b. Undocumented immigrants
 - c. People living close to or below the poverty line
 - d. Renters v. People who are young and mobile (often age 16-24, not enrolled in school and/or unemployed)
 - e. People experiencing homelessness or unstable housing
 - f. People who live in rural areas
 - g. Persons with disabilities (including deaf and hard of hearing)
 - h. Seniors and older adults
 - i. People experiencing domestic abuse
 - j. Migrant workers

Please provide a detailed narrative outlining your firm's approach to effectively communicate with some of the defined audiences. Provide specific examples of previous work targeting hard to reach audiences and the unique approach(es) taken to effectively communicate with them. Provide detail as to the firm's success in achieving equity through multi-lingual messaging.

6. The successful vendor must develop creative concepts addressing specific events and themes such as back to school awareness, holiday observances, and cultural celebrations, and produce content for a variety of traditional and new media channels on tight timelines. ***Please provide a detailed narrative outlining your firm's creative approach to educate, persuade, and drive action. Provide specific examples of previous projects and typical timelines.***
7. The successful vendor must demonstrate internal resources to produce quick turnaround projects. ***Please provide a detailed narrative of the content creation ability of your in-house team and external partners, including print design and the shooting and editing of video.***

8. The successful vendor must demonstrate the ability to plan, develop, and execute across a wide spectrum of channels, including but not limited to broadcast and cable television, radio, print, direct mail, out of home, digital display, streaming video and audio, and social media. ***Please explain your firm’s approach to utilizing each of the listed media types. Provide specific examples of scenarios in which you have employed “out of the box” thinking to engage your target audience.***

9. The State expects effective marketing strategies with defined measurable results. ***Please provide a detailed narrative explaining your firm’s approach to data collection and report generation that demonstrate the effectiveness of a marketing strategy. Further, what specific metrics do you track to determine the overall effectiveness of the marketing strategy?***

10. The vendor receiving the award will be required to work collaboratively with other creative/communication ad agencies. ***Please provide five (5) specific examples of your firm’s previous work with external creative/communication ad agencies. Please provide specific details regarding the collaborative effort and resultant outcomes for each of the five (5) examples.***

11. The State places a high value on diversity and inclusion. The successful vendor must employ a diverse workforce and will operate using policies that encourage and promote diversity and inclusion. ***Please include a detailed narrative that explains your firm’s policies and practices as it relates to diversity and inclusion.***

Please complete the chart below demonstrating the diversity within your firm. Make sure to include all full-time employees within one of the staff classifications.

Staff Classification	# of Staff	# of Minority Staff	Diversity Percentage
Senior Executive			
Management			
Support			
TOTAL:			

Additional Requirements

- A) There is a Business Enterprise Program (BEP) target of 4% for this solicitation. Vendor submissions should include all BEP target information through a Utilization Plan (see Attachment B). **Failure to submit a Utilization Plan may render the offer non-responsive.** Businesses included in Utilization Plans as meeting BEP requirements as prime vendors or subcontractors must be certified by the Department of Central Management Services as BEP vendors. Vendors may visit <https://cms.diversitycompliance.com> to search for certified BEP vendors. The NIGP codes used to calculate the Business Enterprise Goal, and a list of the BEP vendors associated with those codes, are attached to this solicitation as Attachment C. This is not an all-encompassing list of vendors that may be used as subcontractors to fulfill this goal. If the vendor has a potential subcontracting opportunity for goods or services that would be considered applicable to this contract, the vendor may use that subcontractor to fulfill the BEP goal, assuming that subcontractor is BEP certified with the State of Illinois.

- B) Prevailing Wage Rates shall apply, if applicable.
- C) Vendor’s proposed pricing shall be inclusive of all costs. Expenses are not allowed.

The chart below describes the elements of responsiveness that IDPH will evaluate in the vendor proposals.

**Proposal Specification Checklist Table:
Mandatory Requirements and Evaluation Criteria**

Please indicate, utilizing the table below, the section and page number where the requested information is in your proposal. Respondent must complete this Proposal Specification Checklist Table provided as Attachment D to identify how their proposal meets the requirements of the solicitation.

Mandatory Requirements	Vendor’s Proposal Page Reference
Name of vendor, vendor’s address, and contact person, including work phone, cell phone, and email address.	Section Page(s)
Submission of Operational Plan.	Section Page(s)
Submission of separate a Pricing Plan distinct from the technical proposal submission materials.	Section Page(s)
Submission of plan to meet BEP requirement.	Section Page(s)
Vendor provides three (3) references with complete contact information	Section Page(s)
Vendor has a minimum of 10 years’ experience.	Section Page(s)
Vendor has expertise to provide full-service public relations, advertising campaigns, and marketing strategies of similar scale and scope.	Section Page(s)
Evaluation Criteria	Vendors Proposal Page Reference
Vendor provides a detailed narrative explaining firm’s history and background. Including areas of specialization and examples of previous projects of this scale, including experience managing an operational budget exceeding \$1 million.	Section Page(s)
Vendor provides a detailed narrative demonstrating firm’s approach to comprehensive full-service public relations and advertising incorporating examples of previous large-scale projects. Including a proposed staffing plan and specific examples of working with high-profile clients navigating through challenging circumstances.	Section Page(s)

Vendor provides a detailed narrative of the content creation ability of the in-house team and external partners, including print, design, and the shooting and editing of video.	Section Page(s)
Vendor provides an operational plan that addresses each of the functions described in the Scope of Work.	Section Page(s)
Vendor provides a timeline for delivery of campaign concepts and production of deliverables.	Section Page(s)
Vendor demonstrates ability to work with stakeholders, including but not limited to community-based organizations, professional associations, faith-based groups, etc.	Section Page(s)
Vendor provides examples of prior work demonstrating ability to reach and communicate with Hard To Reach (HTR) communities.	Section Page(s)
Vendor provides an explanation of firm's approach to utilizing the typical social media types, e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, producing content with rapid turnaround. Provide specific examples of scenarios which have employed "out of the box" thinking to engage target audiences.	Section Page(s)
Vendor provides a detailed narrative explaining firm's approach to data collection and report generation that demonstrates the effectiveness of a marketing strategy. Further, what specific metrics are tracked to determine the overall effectiveness of the marketing strategy?	Section Page(s)
Vendor demonstrates ability to manage translation of deliverables into multiple languages (oral and written).	Section Page(s)
Five (5) specific examples of your firm's previous work with external creative/communication ad agencies. Please provide specific details regarding the collaborative effort and resultant outcomes for each of the five (5) examples.	Section Page(s)
Vendors demonstrates diversity within their firm.	Section Page(s)