

**NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH)  
AIDS Institute (AI)  
Office of the Medical Director**

**Request for Proposals (RFP)**

**Public Health Social Media Outreach: HIV, Hepatitis C (HCV) and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)**

**RFP #20023**

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**SEPTEMBER 4, 2019**

*Questions below were received by the deadline announced in the RFP. The NYSDOH is not responsible for any errors or misinterpretation of any questions received.*

The responses to questions included herein are the official responses by the State to questions posted by potential bidders and are hereby incorporated into the RFP #20023. In the event of any conflict between the RFP and these responses, the requirements or information contained in these responses will prevail.

**Question 1a:** How should proposals be delivered? Must they be hand-delivered, or can they be mailed? Should Federal Express be used? Is fax or email definitely unacceptable?

**Question 1b:** Can we submit the proposals via email?

**Answer 1a & 1b:** See RFP Section 7.0 Proposal Submission. Proposals must be submitted, by U.S. Mail, by courier/delivery service (e.g., FedEx, UPS, etc.) or by hand, in a sealed package. Submission of proposals in a manner other than as described in these instructions (e.g., fax, electronic transmission) will not be accepted.

Faxed or emailed proposals will not be accepted.

**Question 2:** What is the address that proposals should be mailed to?

**Answer 2:** See RFP Section 7.0 Proposal Submission.

Proposals must be submitted, by U.S. Mail, by courier/delivery service (e.g., FedEx, UPS, etc.) or by hand as noted below, in a sealed package to:

Michele Kerwin  
Assistant Director, Administration and Contract Management  
AIDS Institute, Grants and Procurement Unit  
Empire State Plaza, Corning Tower Room 359  
Albany, New York 12237

**Question 3:** If a proposal is received after 4PM on September 26, 2019, will it be considered?

**Answer 3:** No. The proposal must be received by the NYSDOH no later than 4PM on September 26, 2019. Late bids will not be considered.

**Question 4:** Does the budget include marketing study, research, and focus groups?

**Answer 4:** Refer to the Deliverables outlined under Section 4.2.

**Question 5:** Can you confirm that NYSDOH AI and NYS Information Technology will be implementing all of the campaign webpages and that the vendor for this RFP will be required in a design and advisory role?

**Answer 5:** The NYSDOH AI and NYS Information Technology will be implementing the approved campaign webpages and the role of the vendor for this RFP will be a design and advisory role with regards to Deliverables outlined in 4.2.1 and 4.2.2. Please review Section (s) 4.2.3, 4.2.4 and optional 4.2.5 for details about these deliverables.

**Question 6:** What social channels are currently being used?

**Answer 6:** The NYSDOH AI has used a wide range of channels, each selected to match the specific intent and priority populations to be reached.

**Question 7:** In regards to section 3.0 subsection 3.1 Minimum qualifications: Our company has worked with a group on an HIV web campaign in the past. In order to be considered for this specific proposal do we need to have worked on that specific campaign for 3 years or does the project itself qualify us for consideration.

**Answer 7:** See Section 3.1 Minimum Qualifications. The minimum requirement for the prime contractor is a minimum of 3 years of experience with public health marketing, website development or health video production. Experience acquired concurrently is acceptable, meaning a minimum 3 years of experience in any combination of public health marketing, website development or health video production.

**Question 8:** The RFP states that the company must have a minimum of 3 years of experience with public health marketing. Our firm has been in business for 2 years, however, we have over 20 plus years of corporate media experience, having worked for ABC, Associated Press, CNN and News corporation. We were contracted by Robert Wood Johnson, Barnabus Health and have been working with them on several health initiatives. This has only been in the past 2 years. Does this not qualify us to respond?

**Answer 8:** See Section 3.1 Minimum Qualifications. The prime contractor must have a minimum of 3 years of experience with public health marketing, website development or health video production. Experience acquired concurrently is acceptable, meaning a minimum 3 years of experience in any combination of public health marketing, website development or health video production.

**Question 9:** Can companies from Outside USA can apply for this?

**Answer 9:** Yes, companies outside of the USA may apply for this RFP if they meet the minimum qualifications.

**Question 10:** Do we need to come over there for meetings?

**Answer 10:** No. There is no requirement for in-person meetings or travel to Albany, NY.

**Question 11:** Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA?

**Answer 11:** Yes, tasks can be performed outside of the USA.

**Question 12:** Does the Bid Price for Deliverable #2 (Section 4.2.2 of the RFP) include formative research?

**Answer 12:** Yes. See response to question 13.

**Question 13:** On page #7 of the RFP, states "Conducting formative research, including 2-3 focus groups and 3-5 stakeholder interviews with the priority populations to identify culturally appropriate approaches to conveying the topic and public health objective." However, the description on the Cost Proposal Form "Part 1: YEAR 1 – Deliverables & Bid Price" does not mention the research as part of the deliverables.

**Answer 13:** In each column of the Cost Proposal next to the term Deliverable 1, 2, 3 and 4, you will find the following language: "Per Section 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3 or 4.2.4 of the RFP", respectively. This language is intended to bring to the attention of the applicants ALL items listed in the body of the RFP corresponding to each deliverable. As per this guidance, conducting formative research should be included in the cost proposal as outlined in the RFP.

**Question 14:** It appears that much of the formative work and development for the project is (front-loaded) taking place in Year 1. For example, Year 1 has 4 Deliverables (with possibly formative research) while Years 2, 3 and 4 have 2 Deliverables (with additional video development).

**Answer 14:** See Section 4.0 Scope of Work.

**Question 15a:** My questions is with a \$90,000 yearly cap, can Year 2 include Year 1 expenses?

**Question 15b:** Since the majority of the work will happen the first year, could we negotiate more money for that first kick-off year and less each consecutive year? We would not be asking for more money, just front-loading the payment to cover the costs of conceiving and launching a big 5-year campaign.

**Question 15c:** The RFP underlines a 90K budget. Will the State increase this amount in consideration of the multi-faceted media requests for deliverables and rising overhead, per diem and production costs?

**Answer 15a, 15b & 15c:** Annual amounts for the contract cannot exceed \$90,000. It is the responsibility of the bidder to formulate their bid to achieve the RFP requirements. The bid price is to cover the cost of furnishing all services in the RFP and Scope of Work Section 4.0, including but not limited to travel, materials, equipment, overhead, profit and labor to the satisfaction of the Department of Health and the performance of all work set forth in said specifications. Proposals received above the maximum allowable annual total bid price of \$90,000 will be disqualified.

**Question 16:** We are a certified WMBE, full-service marketing and communications firm with healthcare experience and a core competency in full video production and sharable content, is interested in being considered as a subcontractor to a prime contractor and would like to know how you would suggest we make ourselves known to prime contractors who may bid on this RFP?

**Answer 16:** Interested Certified MWBE's should send their information to: [hivet@health.ny.gov](mailto:hivet@health.ny.gov). They will be added to the interested parties list that will be posted to the DOH website.

**Question 17:** Will you have a way to connect Prime Contractors and Subcontractors such as: a list of inquiring bidders?

**Answer 17:** Information on prime contractors is unavailable for this RFP.

**Question 18:** How do we get invited to this RFP?

**Answer 18:** No invitation is needed. Review the RFP and all requirements and, if your organization meets the minimum qualification to propose, submit a proposal.

**Question 19:** Just for clarification, is NYSDOH AI and NYS ITS currently operating multiple disparate websites that will be migrated and combined into one website on Drupal CMS

**Answer 19:** The websites referred to in the RFP were developed by a contractor. These sites will be migrated to the DOH server which uses a Drupal CMS.

**Question 20:** The RFP states that this consultant will play an advisory role to NYSDOH AI and NYS ITS. Will this contractor be responsible for producing / reformatting / reorganizing content as well?

**Answer 20:** The selected contractor will play an advisory role on Section(s) 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 deliverables. The contractor will be responsible for producing and formatting videos and social media posts as outlined in Section(s) 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 deliverables.

**Question 21:** In what format would you prefer the proposal?

**Answer 21:** Refer to Section 6.0 Proposal Content on page 20 and Section 7.0 Proposal Submission on page 25 of the RFP for details on the format of the proposal.

**Question 22:** Will you accept letters of recommendation from current clients in working in NYC healthcare?

**Answer 22:** It is the responsibility of the bidder to formulate their bid to achieve the RFP requirements.

**Question 23:** Are you willing to schedule a brief phone conversation so that I can ask more detailed questions about the RFP, the NYSDOH AI's ultimate objectives and other selection criteria?

**Answer 23:** No. The question period is provided so that questions may be asked and responded to by the DOH for the benefit of all bidders.

**Question 24a:** 2.1 Introductory Background

Existing single-purpose websites: HIV testing ([www.hivtestny.org](http://www.hivtestny.org)), HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) ([www.prepforsex.org](http://www.prepforsex.org)) and syphilis ([www.syphilistestny.org](http://www.syphilistestny.org)), can you share who developed those for NYS DOH?

**Question 24b:** What marketing firm executed the previous work?

**Answer 24a & 24b:** Better World Advertising is the current designer of the websites.

**Question 25:** 3.2 Preferred Qualifications

The RFP refers to “successful management of public health campaigns”. Can you talk about any expectations that would fall under “successful management” beyond those listed under Objectives and Performance Expectations (4.1) or Deliverables (4.2)? Are there other management responsibilities (strategic or tactical) that would fall under the banner of “successful management”?

**Answer 25:** See Section 3.2 Preferred Qualifications.

**Question 26a:** 4.2 Deliverables

In your RFP, you provide a target number of video deliverables, but you do not put any quantity to “Develop creative content for social media posting...” Can you provide a sense of how many times you would like to be posting or a quantity of creative content pieces you would want us to plan for in a given year?

**Question 26b:** For Deliverable 4, is there an expected number of social media posts per year?

**Question 26c:** How many posts per month are you looking to put out on each platform (and each account if applicable)?

**Answer 26a, 26b & 26c:** It is the responsibility of the bidder to formulate their bid to achieve the RFP requirements.

**Question 27:** In Deliverable 1, aside from migrating the existing .org sites, can we tweak these websites to match the over-arching 5-year campaign we launch? Could we possibly even add some useful functionalities that might entice more visitors?

**Answer 27:** The role of the vendor with regard to websites outlined in Section(s) 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 is advisory. As outlined in Section 4.2.1.a, the vendor will be responsible for “Reviewing the sites and identifying the key design and usability elements that make them culturally relevant and easy to navigate for the priority populations”.

**Question 28:** Would DOH be open to doing /ess videos and using some of that budget for site specific print / digital ads for subways, bus shelters, murals, installations that can target high-incident areas more effectively than solely online media. In the case of an installation, we could record and interview passerby's reactions to use as a video.

**Answer 28:** No. See Section 4.0 Scope of Work for requirements of the RFP.

**Question 29a:** What kind of data will we have on the priority populations we are targeting?

**Question 29b:** What is the population of focus for the HCV prevention campaign?

**Question 29c:** Will this campaign be broad or target specific demographics within the various effected communities?

**Answer 29a, 29b & 29c:** Bidders may visit <http://etedashboardny.org/> or <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/statistics/index.htm> for more information.

The HCV Testing Law campaign targeted baby boomers - person born between 1945 and 1965. This is also the target population of the testing law. The *NY Cures Hep C* target populations include: persons who use injection drugs, women of childbearing age (ages 14-55 years), and the baby boomer population (persons born between 1945 and 1965).

**Question 30:** We are creating the social media content, but is DOH disseminating it across their platforms or is that our responsibility? Will the partner have input on how it's disseminated?

**Answer 30:** Social media content will be distributed and disseminated by DOH on their platforms as well as the platforms of community partners such as community-based organizations, health care facilities, other public health agencies and stakeholders. As part of advising the NYSDOH AI, the selected vendor may provide suggestions for dissemination.

**Question 31a:** Will DOH handle the media buys (for example the ads on dating sites)?

**Question 31b:** Can the State identify the media buyer to be used in connection with this Contract?

**Answer 31a & 31b:** Yes, the media buyer selected via competitive solicitation for the period of 2018-2023 is OpAd Media.

**Question 32:** Is the focus of the overarching campaign prevention, treatment or both?

**Answer 32:** The focus of the campaign is both prevention and treatment.

**Question 33:** Will NYSDOH be open to more of an experiential campaign? Our team has connections with popular **LGBTQ bars** in NYC (specifically with one chain that is popular with gay men of color). Would we be able to collaborate with them on our campaigns?

**Answer 33:** Interested parties should prepare a proposal that follows the deliverables outlined in the RFP.

**Question 34:** How many levels / rounds of NYSDOH review are typically required for approval?

**Answer 34:** See Section 4.2.6 – DOH Executive Deputy Clearance Approval.

**Question 35:** Is there a standardized progress report?

**Answer 35:** See Section 4.4 of the RFP.

**Question 36:** How is the DOH measuring success on a social media campaign?

**Answer 36:** The Department does not have this information at this time.

**Question 37a:** What feedback (good and bad) have previous DOH campaigns in this space received so that we can improve in these areas? Were the objectives met?

**Question 37b:** What was the biggest challenge working with the previous vendor? In the proposal we would want to address any pain points from your previous experience.

**Question 37c:** Is there a reason (performance-based or otherwise) that the original designer(s) of the three referenced websites were not asked to integrate the existing campaign websites into the larger DOH.gov website?

**Answer 37a, 37b & 37c:** These questions are not relevant to the development of a proposal under this RFP.

**Question 38:** For the sake of clarity, is NYSDOH intending to develop a new overall, synergistic brand identity, visually inspired by your existing web pages and sites; making the content culturally relevant?

**Answer 38:** All websites will be brought under the NYSDOH server and will have synergistic brand identity. Each site will be tailored to be attractive to specific priority populations most impacted by HIV, STIs or HCV.

**Question 39:** Did NYS Office of Media Services—OGS participate or will partner on this? They apparently are the State's Marketing agency.

**Answer 39:** No.

**Question 40:** Are the focus groups to be video recorded & edited to be included as some of the annual video content deliverables?

**Answer 40:** Focus groups are conducted to gather input from members of the priority populations and are not intended to be recorded or shared publicly.

**Questions 41:** Are you looking to bundle all of these initiatives into one package under NYS Dept. of Health, or are each of these treated individually?

**Answer 41:** See Section 4.2.1. of the RFP.

**Question 42:** Can you provide research that has been conducted that led to the NYS Dept of Health to believe these initiatives will end HIV/AIDS?

**Answer 42:** Visit [https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/ending\\_the\\_epidemic/](https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/ending_the_epidemic/).

**Question 43a:** Have you run social campaigns in the past? If so, are we able to see historical strategies and results?

**Question 43b:** Do you have existing benchmarks for engagement rate, page growth, etc.? What does success look like to you? What types of analytics do you typically look at?

**Answer 43a & 43b:** The NYSDOH AI does not plan to share past analytics as part of the issuance of this RFP.

**Question 44:** Do you have website analytics? If so, are we able to have access?

**Answer 44:** The NYSDOH AI regularly reviews website analytics. Analytics related to work done under this initiative will be discussed with the selected vendor.

**Question 45a:** Are there any brand specific assets available for our team to use? (i.e. image libraries).

**Question 45b:** Will NYSDOH provide vendor access to a stock photo resource?

**Answer 45a & 45b:** The materials, graphics, photos, and models developed by the awarded contractor are expected to be original.

**Question 46:** Do you have a tag manager? If not, are we able to implement a tag manager or tags on your website?

**Answer 46:** The Department uses Google tag manager and can include tags within the page if needed.

**Question 47:** Are there campaigns you reference as inspiration of what you're looking for?

**Answer 47:** See the RFP, Section 2.1 Introductory Background.

**Question 48:** Do you require social moderation services? If so, a. Will we have guidelines for responses to use in moderation of things that can and can't be said? b. Have canned responses already been determined? If not, will these be provided or are we required to write them? c. Will we be granted creative freedom to respond in real time? d. Who will be the contact who we can get in touch with on specific questions? e. How quickly are moderation responses expected? within 24hrs, within 48 hrs, etc. We generally recommend responses within 24 hours, but can be flexible. f. What level of reporting is needed on moderation?

**Answer 48:** The contractor funded under this RFP will not be responsible for moderation.

**Question 49:** How many awards are being given?

**Answer 49:** One (1) contract will be awarded from this procurement.

**Question 50:** Does the technical expert (for website development, video production, etc.) need to be a staff person or can they be a consultant?

**Answer 50:** A technical expert can be either a staff person or a consultant. It is the responsibility of the bidder to formulate their bid to achieve the RFP requirements.

**Question 51:** For Deliverable 2 and 4, will the vendor be required to create both English and Spanish versions of design elements/graphics/social media posts? (with all translations provided by NYSDOH)

**Answer 51:** For Deliverable 2, see Section 4.2.2.g, page 7 of the RFP which indicates that material will be translated into Spanish by the NYSDOH. For Deliverable 4, see Amendment #1, #1 Section 4.0 Scope of Work, Section 4.2.4 – Deliverable 4.

**Question 52:** Section 4.2.3 – Deliverable 3: Video Development (Years 1-5) Page 8  
Is there a preferred resolution to film in? (4K, 4K RAW, 1080p)?

**Answer 52:** No. Resolution selected by the vendor should offer high quality resolution across multiple platforms that the priority population may use to access the material.



**Question 53a:** Section 4.2.3 – Deliverable 3: Video Development (Years 1-5) Page 8  
Will DOH provide a space for us to film at or should we budget to rent a studio?

**Question 53b:** a. Will DOH provide a space for us to conduct the focus groups or should we budget to rent space? If so, will DOH provide light refreshments/incentives for attendees to participate?

**Answer 53a & 53b:** No. The NYSDOH AI will neither provide space nor refreshments.

**Question 54:** Is our assumption correct - there is no need for a detailed line by line budget breakdown when it comes to the formal proposal. All we need to submit money-wise is a filled-out Attachment E?

**Answer 54:** Yes.

**Question 55:** Is there any range we should keep in mind when pricing out the 'optional services' section? I don't see any limits in the RFP, but it would be useful to know what the parameters are.

**Answer 55:** The bidder must determine the best methodology to achieve the RFP requirements.

**Question 56:** Do we need to upload our past videos somewhere, considering that usually government clients have a firewall at their offices and cannot watch YouTube or Vimeo?

**Answer 56:** Reviewers of the bids will have the ability to access both YouTube and Vimeo.

**Question 57a:** Please clarify what .25 means as it relates to FTE. Does FTE stand for Full Time Employee?

**Question 57b:** 4.3 Staffing

Staffing: You request – at a minimum - two times .25 FTE (or one .5 FTE) to support NYS DOH. That equates to approximately 1,000 hours per year. That would consume a significant chunk of the maximum allowed annual budget, not counting other expenditures that would be required to produce creative assets (videos, photography, licensed stock imagery). We just wanted to confirm our understanding of the staffing request and that you see this requiring an estimated 1,000 hours per year to support these efforts.

**Answer 57a & 57b:** FTE stands for full time equivalency or the percent of a full-time employee. For example, .5 FTE stands for a half-time person. The RFP states: At a minimum, the contractor must provide at least one .25 FTE program coordinator with expertise in program management, social media promotion and program evaluation, and one .25 FTE technical expert and access to per diem staff with expertise in video recording, editing and production.

**Question 58:** How many separate social media campaigns would you like to launch per year and will they be needed for all 6 public health initiatives each and every year (HIV testing, PrEP, HCV, sexual health, LGBT health, and Drug Use)?

**Answer 58:** The NYSDOH AI seeks to run social media campaigns for each of the 6 public health initiatives each year. Specific priorities and topics may shift from year to year. See Section 4.2.4.

**Question 59:** Will we need to launch new social media accounts to run the campaign or will we just use the existing NYS DOH accounts. If so, how many different accounts per platform?

**Answer 59:** The selected vendor will not be expected to launch social media accounts.

**Question 60:** Will we need to post the content for DOH and manage their community or is there an in-house team. If there is an in-house team will we need to train them on ways to make sure we help meet the campaign goals?

**Answer 60:** Content will be posted and managed by staff from the NYSDOH AI.

**Question 61:** Will we need to include in our budget, money for a social media ad campaigns to launch on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram?

**Answer 61:** No. See Scope of Work, Section 4.0.

**Question 62:** We see you have partners that we'll need to create posts to have them share. Will you need us to coordinate the distribution effort? Will you need us to help provide direction to the partners on best practices for posting? Will you need us to help arrange additional partnerships and influencers to help share the content?

**Answer 62:** See the RFP, Section 4.1 Objectives and Performance Expectations.

**Question 63:** Are you interested in paid search ads to direct traffic back to the websites? And will you need help to target LGBTQ communities outside of the DOH AI's social media and website platforms, besides the alternative channels listed in the proposal (i.e. dating sites)?

**Answer 63:** Paid ads will not be the responsibility of the selected vendor.

**Question 64:** Does the State have any current or recent (i.e., the last 10 years) campaigns focusing on HCV prevention?

**Answer 64:** A statewide media campaign was conducted in 2014 to raise awareness to the NYS Hepatitis C Testing Law. The NYSDOH recently launched, via the web, the NYS hepatitis C elimination campaign - [NY Cures Hep C](#). The broader campaign, featuring bus shelter, billboard and subway ads, will be released in September.

**Question 65:** Does Task 2 (Section 4.2.2) essentially call for the development of a web-based HCV campaign (comprised of a website, video content pursuant to Task 3 and organic social media pursuant to Task 4)?

**Answer 65:** Yes.

**Question 66:** Why are there only 4 videos required in Year 1 and 6 videos required in subsequent years (See 4.2.3)?

**Answer 66:** It is anticipated that much of year 1 effort will be dedicated to tasks associated with moving the sites to the DOH web environment. Therefore, the number of videos developed in year 1 was reduced.

**Question 67:** Are there any current videos on PrEP, HIV testing, syphilis or HCV elimination that the State features on the DOH websites, any campaign websites or social media that represent what it is seeking for Task 3?

**Answer 67:** It is expected that the bidder will provide a proposal based on the requirements in Section 4.2.3 Deliverable 3.

**Question 68:** To what extent is the DOH currently involved in social media engagement with respect to PrEP, HIV testing, syphilis and HCV elimination?

**Answer 68:** Engaging audiences about PrEP, HIV testing, syphilis and HCV elimination are part of the ongoing work of the NYSDOH AI.

**Question 69:** Are the videos and social media content sought in Tasks 3 and 4 to be tied to the three referenced websites (<https://prepforsex.org>, [www.hivtestny.org](http://www.hivtestny.org) and [www.syphilistestny.org](http://www.syphilistestny.org) and the HCV campaign? Are there any other existing campaigns for which the videos/social media content will be developed?

**Answer 69:** Yes, video and social media content will relate to the referenced websites and initiatives. In addition to the three sites, campaigns for Hepatitis C elimination will be the focus. See Section 4.2.2.

**Question 70:** Task 4 references dating sites. Does this mean that, in addition to the development of organic posts, Task 4 will require the development of ads for these sites?

**Answer 70:** See Section 4.2.4. of the RFP.

**Question 71:** Can you kindly explain what is meant by the following: “Designing draft creative materials in digital formats using text, computer generate[d] graphics or spokesmodels” (See 4.2.5(d))?

**Answer 71:** Digital formats are formats such as jpeg, MP3 and others that partners of the NYSDOH AI would reasonably be able to post on their social media platforms.

**Question 72:** Will Task 5 be the sole means by which the State engages a contractor for PrEP, HIV testing, syphilis or HCV elimination for the length of the campaign?

**Answer 72:** Execution of Deliverable 5 is at the option of the NYSDOH and the option may be exercised at the discretion of the NYSDOH AI one (1) or more times during years 1-5 dependent on funding availability and NYSDOH’s needs. NYSDOH AI does not commit to exercising Deliverable 5 or any portion of Deliverable 5 during the life of the contract. If exercised, based on available funding, needs and negotiations with the NYSDOH AI, the contractor will be responsible for all of the tasks outlined.