

## **Independent Evaluation of the New York Tobacco Control Program**

**RFP #18047**

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**November 27, 2018**

All questions are stated as received in the Bureau of Tobacco Control by the deadline.

The responses to questions included herein are the official responses by the Department to questions posted by potential applicants and are hereby incorporated into the RFP#18047 issued on October 18, 2018. In the event of any conflict between the RFP and these responses, the requirements or information contained in these responses will prevail.

#### **1.0 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Q1. (Expected Announcement of Grantee) With a submission date of December 14, 2018 and an expected start date is October 1, 2019 for RFP#18047, is there an expected announcement date for the group selected for this grant? Is there a typical past precedent for the length of time that is needed for proposal review, scoring, and award of grant before the grantee is informed?

- A. The NYSDOH intends to have a fully executed contract by October 1, 2019. There is not a typical precedent for the length of time needed for the proposal review, scoring and award of contract before the contractor is informed

Q2. (Current Program-level Evaluation) How is NYSDOH TCP program-level evaluation continuing currently and throughout the twelve months – given that your expected start date for RFP#18047 is October 1, 2019 and the preceding five-year program level grant ended in the fall 2018? Was an extension granted to this preceding five-year grant, or is there currently no program-level evaluation being completed, or was some other solution determined?

- A. The current contractor received a contract extension through 9/30/2019.

#### **3.0 Bidders Qualifications to Propose**

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Q3. Section 3.1 states that all firms must have “a written policy prohibiting any affiliation with a tobacco company or tobacco product manufacturer, including receipt of gifts, grants, contracts, financial support, in-kind support and other relationships.” Our organization performs work on behalf of commercial tobacco clients, however the bulk of our work is with the federal government. Our organization has proper protocols, conflict of interest policies which include firewalls to ensure secured separation from our government and commercial clients. Given these perimeters, could this enable this organization to bid this work?

- A. The work done on behalf of commercial tobacco clients results in your organization being ineligible to bid on this RFP.

Q4. Section 3.2 Is direct experience working with NYS Tobacco Control Program included in the evaluation criteria for submitted proposals

- A. Per RFP section 3.2, Preferred Qualifications “three (3) or more years of experience evaluating comprehensive statewide tobacco control programs”. This experience is not specific to New York State. It will be used for evaluation purposes.

#### **4.0 Scope of Work**

Q5. (Sections 4.1.1 Media Tracking) Is this intended to be a completely separate evaluation activity, or may media-specific questions be embedded into the other ongoing Surveillance Tasks/Deliverables described in Sections (4.1.4-4.1.6, 4.1.8, and 4.1.9) to accomplish this media tracking program evaluation goal?

- A. As described in RFP section 4.1.1, Media Tracking is intended to be a separate set of deliverables. Media-specific questions may also be embedded into other ongoing surveillance and evaluation deliverables to supplement the media tracking program evaluation.

Q6. (Section 4.1.3 Community Programs - ATFC) Are there any current Tobacco Control Program-level evaluation activities of the ATFC Community Programs that are being completed which must be maintained for trending purposes? Can you provide examples of recent-past ATFC Community Program evaluations? And/or are we free to recommend new approaches to ATFC Community Program evaluation?

- A. No, the evaluation activities in section 4.1.3 do not need to be maintained for trending purposes. Recent and past ATFC community program evaluation projects conducted by the current contractor are being used for internal program improvement and are not publicly available. Bidders are free to recommend new approaches to the ATFC community program evaluation.

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Q7. Section 4.1.4 For the purposes of the ATS, how does the NYS TCP define “adult civilian?” Is citizenship part of inclusion/exclusion criteria?

- A. “Adult Civilian” is not referenced in this RFP. Per section 4.1.4, The Adult Tobacco Survey (ATS) is conducted among “non-institutionalized adults, 18 years and older in New York State (NYS)”. Citizenship is not part of the inclusion/exclusion criteria.

Q8. In section 4.1.4 on page 7 of the RFP, the Department states that NY ATS sample size is required to be adequate to allow statewide estimates with 95% confidence intervals of +/- 3 points for general population based indicators and +/- 5 points for indicators within targeted subpopulations. We believe statewide estimates for key indicators like smoking prevalence may be feasible for sub-groups, but not for sub-groups of smokers, given historical ATS data and current smoking prevalence among New Yorkers – as these indicators would therefore be presented for a sub-group of a sub-group. Should we assume for sample size calculations that the margin of error guidance be applied to smoking prevalence for the overall population and subpopulations, but not for subpopulations of adults who smoke?

- A. Yes. Bidders should assume for sample size calculations, that the margin of error guidance be applied to smoking prevalence for the overall population and subpopulations, but not for the subpopulations of adults who smoke.

Q9. (Sections 4.1.4, 4.1.5 Adult Surveillance Methodology) Is there a preference between random telephone and online (self-administered email surveys) for these sections? Is there a mandate regarding landline telephone, cellular phone, and online minimum response distributions among participants in adult surveys? Are there any state-mandated limits on the size, source, and scope of potential participant rewards/incentives for participation that could be offered?

- A. To the extent possible, participants in the NY Adult Tobacco Survey and the NY National Adult Tobacco survey should be randomly selected. If that is not possible, efforts should be made to demonstrate that the sample selected is representative of the NY adult non-institutionalized population. The bidder should propose and justify the methods they deem appropriate to achieve a sample size adequate to allow estimates for the entire state, New York City and New York State (Section 4.1.4 New York Adult Tobacco Survey) and to provide national (US excluding NY) Section 4.1.5, New York National Adult Tobacco Survey. There is no mandate regarding landline, cellular phone and online minimum response distributions among participants in adult surveys. There are no state-mandated limits on the size, source and scope of potential rewards/incentives for participation, although any incentives that may affect the level of risk to human subjects, through possible perceived coercion, will

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need to be reviewed/approved by the New York State Department of Health Institutional Review Board.

Q10. Section 4.1.4, 4.1.6 For the surveillance components (New York Adult Tobacco Use Survey; Youth Tobacco Use Survey), does the TCP prefer the contractor use the existing data collection entity/company?

- A. No, the bidder is free to propose subcontractors they feel are appropriate. Per RFP section 5.9, “the contractor shall obtain prior written approval from NYSDOH before entering into an agreement for services to be provided by a subcontractor”.

Q11. In section 4.1.6 of the RFP, the Department states that the NY YTS will be conducted in the even-numbered years in the spring of 2020 and 2022 with preparation in summers of 2019, 2021, and 2023. In the Attachment B Cost Proposal, the shading indicates that bidders should propose costs for NY YTS preparation in years 1, 3, and 5 of the project and NY YTS data collection in years 2 and 4. However, as the summer of 2019 is outside of the anticipated period of performance and the anticipated 5-year project timeline (October 1, 2019 through September 2024) would include a 2024 NY YTS survey administration, should bidders plan for NY YTS preparation in years 2 and 4 and NY YTS data collection in years 1, 3, and 5?

- A. See Amendment #1, A. Scope of Work, 1. 4.1.6 Surveillance – New York Youth Tobacco Survey

Q12. (Section 4.1.6 Youth Surveillance Methodology) Is there a preference between hard-copy scan-able survey instruments to be completed by youths in schools versus electronic versions of youth surveys that could be completed using a tablet-type device in schools?

- A. Per section 4.1.6, the survey will use the same school-based methodology now used in NY and nationally and described in the 2016 Sampling and Weighting report. If all criteria can be met and the bidder can demonstrate feasibility, reliability and validity of data using alternate methods for data collection, these will be considered.

Q13. In section 4.1.7 on page 8 of the RFP, the Department states that the Retail Advertising of Tobacco Survey will take place in 2019, 2021, and 2023. In the Attachment B Cost Proposal, the shading indicates that bidders should propose costs for years 1, 3, and 5. If the Department will already be administering the Retail Advertising of Tobacco Survey in 2019 (in advance of the anticipated start date of this contract), should bidders plan for this data collection to occur in 2020 rather than 2019

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(and still aim to propose costs for administrations in years 1, 3, and 5)?

A. See Amendment #1, A. Scope of Work, 2. 4.1.7 – Retail Advertising of Tobacco Survey

Q14. (Sections 4.1.8 Local Opinion Leader Survey) Will the NYSDOH be identifying ‘who’ or ‘what roles’ specifically qualify as ‘local opinion leaders’, and will the State facilitate a warm hand off to these individuals for contact?

A. The NYSDOH will help to identify who or what roles specifically qualify as local opinion leaders. It is the responsibility of the contractor to recruit the sample.

Q15. (Sections 4.1.9 ‘Ad hoc’ Surveillance Study) This RFP request suggests as ‘an annual...’ that this ad hoc surveillance study is singular, with only one study per year. Is this true? This component is difficult to budget in a grant proposal since there is reference to ‘negotiated with TCP’. Therefore, could you provide recent-past examples of what typically has been conducted – from a size/scale/topic perspective within this Ad hoc category?

A. The ad hoc surveillance study is singular, with one study per year. Every study is negotiated with TCP via the study submission deliverable. The same is true for the ad hoc surveillance study. One recent-past example is an online survey of adolescents about their e-cigarette use. There are no publicly available documents demonstrating recent-past examples.

Q16. (Section 4.1.13 Reports and Manuscripts) Can you provide examples of recent-past Manuscripts that have been submitted for peer review and have contributed to the scientific literature on tobacco control?

A. Below are citations for peer-reviewed manuscripts that have been published related to the independent evaluation of the NYS TCP:

1. Curry L, Schmitt CL, Henes A, Ortega-Peluso C, Battles H (2018). How low-income smokers in New York access cheaper cigarettes. American Journal of Health Promotion. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2F0890117118805060>.
2. Brown EM, Olson LT, Farrelly MC, Nonnemaker JM, Battles H, Hampton J (2018). Comparing response rates, costs and tobacco-related outcomes

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across phone, mail, and online surveys. Survey Practice.  
<https://10.29115/SP-2018-0029>.

3. Watson KA, Gammon DG, Looms BR, Juster HR, Anker E (2018). Trends in cigarette advertising, price-reducing promotions, and policy compliance in New York State licensed tobacco retailers, 2004 – 2015. American Journal of Health Promotion. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0890117118764852>
4. Mann N, Nonnemaker J, Chapman L, Shaikh A, Thompson J, Juster H (2017). Comparing the New York State Smokers' Quitline reach, services offered, and quit outcomes to 44 other state Quitlines, 2010 – 2015. American Journal of Health Promotion. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0890117117724898>

Q17. Are there particular topic areas of interest by TCP that should drive the development and submission of the 4 peer-reviewed manuscripts noted in section "4.1.13 -Reports and Manuscripts"?

- A. See answer to Q16 for examples of past publications. All manuscript topics are negotiated with the NYS TCP via the study submission deliverable.

## 6.0 Proposal Content

Q18. Section D.1.4 For the Adult Tobacco Survey, the RFP states that three sampling frames will be utilized (landline RDD, cellphone RDD, and address-based). What response rate targets, if any, does the NYS TCP aim to achieve for each these 3 sampling frames?

- A. There are no specific response targets by sampling frame. The bidder should ensure that the sample collected is representative of the NYS population, while adhering to the criteria specified in sections D.1.4 and 4.1.4.

Q19. In section D.1.8 on page 25 of the RFP, the Department states that LOLS is expected to be conducted biennially, and mentions administrations in 2020 and 2022. In the Attachment B Cost Proposal, the shading indicates that LOLS would be conducted in Years 2 and 4. However, data collection administrations consistent with prior study timing (early in the calendar year) would take place in 2020 during year 1 and in 2022 during year 3 (and 2024 during year 5 if keeping with the biennial administration). During which contract years should bidders plan to conduct LOLS?

- A. See Amendment #1, B. Proposal Content