

**Request for Quotes
Template for Service Engagements**

RFQ File Name/Title: College and University Tobacco/Nicotine Action Initiative

RFQ File Number:272471340130 **Object Code:** P01

Purchasing Department: Bureau of Community Health and Prevention

Engagement Team Leader/ Contact Person: Cin Wong

Email: Cin.M.Wong@mass.gov

1. Description Or Purpose of Engagement:

The Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program (MTCP) at the Department of Public Health (DPH) seeks to partner with Massachusetts public colleges and universities to strengthen tobacco and nicotine prevention and cessation strategies for young adult students. Selected schools will engage students and work with MTCP to implement activities designed to increase awareness of and connect students to cessation resources, and create and promote prevention resources that are relevant, accessible, and responsive to the needs of young adults.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States and in Massachusetts, accounting annually for more than 490,000 deaths nationally and more than 9,300 deaths in the Commonwealth (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2024). Despite progress in reducing commercial tobacco product use, Massachusetts continues to experience significant inequities in smoking rates and quit attempts by race/ethnicity, geography, and income.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health's (MDPH) Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program, within the Bureau of Community Health and Prevention (BCHAP), strives to prevent youth initiation of tobacco use, help people who use tobacco quit, protect all Massachusetts residents from exposure to secondhand smoke, and identify and eliminate tobacco-related inequities. MTCP acknowledges the history of structural racism and its impact on health and is committed to improving the quality of life for all Commonwealth residents while eliminating the inequities that disproportionately burden Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities affected by tobacco use and exposure.

To achieve these goals, MTCP maintains a strong infrastructure of municipal, community, and statewide programs that address the tobacco industry's pervasive influence and inequities created by structural racism in the places where residents live, work, play, and heal. As part of this effort, MTCP seeks to provide funding to Massachusetts public colleges and universities to support tobacco and nicotine prevention and cessation activities

Young adults are a critical population for prevention and cessation, with recent national data showing that e-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product among adults ages 18–24 (Vahratian et al., 2025). Additionally, young adults ages 21–24 are more likely to use multiple tobacco/nicotine products and nicotine pouches than younger people (Do et al., 2026). These trends highlight the need for prevention and cessation efforts that address evolving patterns of tobacco and nicotine use among young adults.

The proposed College and University Tobacco/Nicotine Action Initiative (CUTNAI) will complement existing MTCP programming by strengthening tobacco and nicotine prevention and cessation strategies for young adult students in Massachusetts public colleges and universities. Primary objectives include:

- Enhancing campus-based tobacco and nicotine prevention and cessation initiatives through evidence-based and/or -informed strategies tailored to the young adult population;
- Increasing awareness of and access to tobacco and nicotine cessation resources among students and faculty/staff communities in partnership with MTCP's existing mass media campaign efforts;
- Identifying and addressing campus-specific trends, needs, and barriers related to tobacco and nicotine use among young adults;
- Developing and recommending campus policies, practices, and environmental strategies that promote tobacco-free and nicotine-free communities; and,
- Sharing lessons learned, promising practices, and recommendations with MTCP to inform statewide tobacco and nicotine prevention and cessation efforts.

MTCP anticipates funding of approximately eight to ten institutions ranging from \$11,000-\$15,000 each annually.

Eligible institutions include Massachusetts public colleges and universities that are approved and have an executed contract under DPH's Master Service Agreement through RFR #247134.

In addition, awarded vendors are able to leverage student voice in planning and implementing tobacco/nicotine-related health-based activities, and demonstrate a commitment to strengthening organizational/staff capacity to advance and integrate racial and health equity principles into their work.

This project is funded through an agreement with the Massachusetts Attorney General (AG) from settlements paid by Juul Labs, Inc. (JUUL) for its role in contributing to the youth vaping epidemic. Tobacco companies like Juul have historically perpetuated health inequities by targeting their marketing, advertising, strategic product placement and pricing strategies at Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Development and implementation of effective nicotine prevention and cessation strategies, particularly those that engage marginalized populations, are critically important racial justice and health equity issues, and the selected awardees will be expected to align with DPH's Principles for Racial Equity (Appendix A).

In all references to tobacco, MTCP is referring to commercial tobacco; not the sacred and traditional use of tobacco by some American Indian communities.

2. Whether Single Or Multiple Contractors Are Required For Engagement(s)

☐

Single Contractor

☒

Multiple Contractors.

3. Indicate Engagement Performance and Business Specifications:

Scope of Service

The College and University Tobacco/Nicotine Action Initiative (CUTNAI) promotes and strengthens access to tobacco and nicotine cessation and prevention resources across the public institutions of higher education in Massachusetts. Through technical assistance, training, and funding support, CUTNAI enhances institutional capacity to implement evidence-based and evidence-informed prevention and cessation activities, strengthen referral pathways, and advance campus-based strategies.

Funding falls into three core categories and examples of allowable activities may include, but are not limited:

1. Infrastructure for campuses with health centers and/or campus staff currently providing or with the capacity to provide cessation and prevention services on-site. Allowable activities may include, but are not limited to:
 - Updating technology and digital infrastructure (electronic health records, screening systems, data security) to include tobacco screening, intake, and referral modules along with any affiliated infrastructure supports needed;
 - Health promotion events (e.g., tobacco/nicotine awareness day, etc.);
 - Additional clinical, administrative, or support staff (including student leaders in peer-to-peer models);
 - Implementing and enforcing tobacco/nicotine-free campus policies through a restorative justice approach;
 - Ensure and/or adding tobacco and nicotine questions into student health surveys and use this data to inform activities;
 - Additional training for student groups and other training needs (e.g., peer leadership or student leadership trainings, motivational interview training, etc.)
 - Incentives for young adult students to engage with and respond to MTCP surveys on tobacco and nicotine use and other surveillance efforts;
 - Membership fees and participation in related coalitions (e.g., [Tobacco Free Mass](#)); and,
 - Outreach to students to build awareness about cessation services. Campaign materials and assets currently exist for utilization and have been tested with Massachusetts young adults for efficacy. If interested in building campus-specific media campaigns, such activities must be conducted in collaboration with MTCP's communications vendor to ensure alignment with best practices.

2. Infrastructure for campuses without health centers and for campus staff providing prevention and referral services (not providing on-site cessation services). Allowable activities may include, but are not limited to:
 - Health promotion events (e.g., tobacco/nicotine awareness day, etc.);
 - Implementing tobacco/nicotine-free campus policies through a restorative justice approach;
 - Additional support staff (including student leaders in peer-to-peer models);
 - Ensure and/or adding tobacco and nicotine questions into student health surveys and use this data to inform activities;
 - Additional training for student groups and other training needs (e.g., peer leadership or student leadership trainings, motivational interviewing training, etc.);
 - Incentives for young adult students to engage with and respond to MTCP surveys on tobacco and nicotine use and other surveillance efforts;
 - Membership fees and participation in related coalitions (e.g., [Tobacco Free Mass](#)); and,
 - Outreach to students to build awareness about cessation services. Campaign materials and assets currently exist for utilization and have been tested with Massachusetts young adults for efficacy. If interested in building campus-specific media campaigns, such activities must be conducted in collaboration with MTCP's communications vendor to ensure alignment with best practices.
3. Concrete supports for students to be engaged in Sections 1 or 2 above. Allowable activities may include, but are not limited to:
 - Costs associated with interpreter services or other associated costs for students engaged in activities in Sections 1 or 2.

The selected awardee will be expected to:

- Meet monthly via virtual check-ins with MTCP staff to provide project updates.
- Submit an annual workplan to MTCP staff that aligns with the state fiscal year (July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027).
- Attend a two-day Racial Equity/Groundwater Training to build capacity for understanding impacts of structural racism and advancing health equity.
- Provide non-identifiable aggregated surveillance and evaluation data collected through this funding to MTCP. This includes data on referral and intakes to the Quitline or other cessation programs (when available), any outcomes collected from cessation programs and tobacco/nicotine-related information collected through student health surveys. MTCP will work with selected vendor to determine key metrics to track based on workplan.
- Involve subcontractors, as necessary, in any development of culturally and linguistically appropriate adaptations of materials alongside development of English-language materials.
- Aligning with the state fiscal calendar, provide final reports to highlight key progress and deliverables of the project.

Awardees are also required to:

- Send any consent forms in advance to MTCP for review.
- Collaborate and coordinate with other MTCP programs as appropriate.
- Submit required financial reports and information in a timely manner.
- Submit quarterly invoices to MTCP/DPH that details associated costs including staff time, supplies, materials, travel, etc.
- Provide receipts for overhead or indirect expenses if requested.
- Receive approval from DPH prior to the publication or dissemination of reports, white papers, manuals, and other technical documents produced with DPH funds.
- Comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act regarding access to program services.
- Be compliant with state policies regarding soliciting charitable funds; see [soliciting charitable funds](#) for more information.
- Pay employees a livable, equitable wage.
- Have a policy of not accepting funds from the tobacco industry.
- Be a smoke-free work environment.

- MTCP resources may not be used for lobbying for state or federal level policy or for purchase of cessation medications or vape detectors.
- MTCP funds cannot be used for equipment, paid media, development of material or promotional items, or translation of materials without written approval from MTCP.
- Written permission from MTCP is required for out of state travel; reimbursements should adhere to U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) guidelines or agency policies.

Evaluation Criteria

- Demonstrated understanding of the institution's current health and well-being infrastructure, including existing tobacco/nicotine and/or substance use resources.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively reach and engage MTCP-identified priority populations through existing campus and/or community relationships and wellness services.
- Presented a specific, evidence-based or evidence-informed tobacco/nicotine prevention and/or cessation activity that addresses an identified need. Explained how the activity will advance health equity, reduce barriers to services, and improve student access.
- Detailed meaningful collaboration across campus departments and with community partners or the broader school community. Highlighted how students will have a meaningful role in planning, implementing, or improving activities and how student input will inform the project.
- Provided effective and feasible strategies to increase awareness and use of available tobacco/nicotine prevention and cessation services. Identified priority populations and plans to offer appropriate, accessible, and culturally responsive methods to reach them.
- Demonstrated ability to meet MDPH Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) (<https://www.mass.gov/lists/making-clas-happen-six-areas-for-action>) standards and ADA compliance in service access and participation.
- Provided a clear and realistic timeline with key activities, milestones, and responsible staff.
- Included a complete and reasonable budget that aligns with the proposed activities and demonstrates responsible use of funds. Included sufficient justification for requested costs.

Performance Requirements and Engagement Monitoring

The Department of Public Health is endeavoring to deliver the Best Value to facilitate our needs. However, it is important to measure the Contractor's performance to ensure the Engagement is in compliance with what has been requested and what the Contractor has offered in this RFQ. The following performance areas will be subject to measurement:

1. Timely Delivery (Commodities, Services, Reports, Billing, etc.)
2. Responsiveness to Departmental Inquiries
3. Quality of Deliverables (Commodities, Services, Reports, etc.)
4. Performance Targets/Benchmarks (Quantities, Outcomes, etc.)
5. Attendance at scheduled meetings

Payment through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) is required for any engagement awarded through this solicitation.

Engagement Performance Monitoring

MTCP will negotiate with the awardee to develop annual workplans, budgets, and deliverables for the overall project. The selected awardees will meet with MTCP staff on an ongoing basis

(e.g., monthly meetings or as needed) to ensure the scope of service is met. In addition, the selected awardee will submit detailed quarterly invoices to assist in budget monitoring.

4. Expected Duration of Engagement

Anticipated Initial Duration up to: 9 months; year(s)

Anticipated Renewal Options: 3 options to renew for 1 year(s) each option

Final End Date of this Engagement: June 30, 2030 (equals the initial duration plus all renewal options)

5. Anticipated Expenditures, Funding Or Compensation For Expected Duration

	Dollar Amount
Estimated total value of procurement including all potential renewals	\$562,500
Estimated annualized amount	\$11,000 - \$15,000 (per awardee)

Will Federal Funds be used to fund any part of Engagement(s)?	
☒	No
☐	Yes*

***Additional information for contracts with Federal Dollars:**

Sub-Recipient: Providers receiving federal grant funds will be considered sub-recipients for federal grant purposes and will be required to comply with applicable federal requirements, including but not limited to sub-recipient audit requirements under OMB Circular A-133.

Unique Entity Identifier: On April 4, 2022, the unique entity identifier used across the federal government changed from the DUNS Number to the Unique Entity ID also known as UEI or SAMS number. Any entity that wants to apply for federal contracts or wants to receive federal funds must register with SAM. Entities that use SAM include for profit businesses, nonprofits, government contractors or subcontractors, as well as state and local governments.

Registering with [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) is free and is required for your organization to receive federal funds. Your organization can submit an application to this RFR without being registered on SAM, however if awarded your organization will need to have an active SAM account prior to contract execution.

Unspent Funds: Any funds from Capital, Trust and/or Federal Accounts designated in the budget that are unspent in any fiscal year will not be available for expenditure in the subsequent fiscal year.

6. Confidentiality Agreement: will be required at time of engagement.

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes is checked, a copy of the confidentiality agreement is posted in attachments for informational purposes only. You do not need to sign and return it with your response.

7. Estimated Procurement Calendar

Times are Eastern Standard/Daylight Savings (US), as displayed on the COMMBUYS system clock. Bidders are responsible for checking the Bid record, including Q&A for Procurement Calendar updates.

Event	Date	Time	Contact Information
RFQ Release Date	September 3, 2026		
Deadline for Submission of RFQ Q&A. ¹	September 14, 2026	12:00 PM	Cin.M.Wong@mass.gov
<u>Deadline for Submission of Responses</u> Also known as the BID Opening Date in COMMBUYS	September 23, 2026	4:00 PM	
Anticipated Engagement Start Date	November 1, 2026		

¹All Questions must be received in writing. Questions can be sent by email no later than the date and time indicated in the Procurement Calendar. All questions should be sent to the email listed in the calendar and should include the RFQ title and number in the subject of the email. All Questions with answers will be posted on the COMMBUYS Attachment section for this procurement. **To be eligible for funding under this RFQ– applicants must have a fully executed contract under RFR 247134 – Support for Health Related Activities at Massachusetts Public Colleges and Universities.**

8. Instructions for Submission of Responses:

All bids should include the following elements addressed in a narrative. The proposal should not exceed 5 pages with 1-inch margins and 12-point font. Cover page, resumes, and budget should be attached and are not included in the 5-page limit.

1. Describe your institution's current infrastructure and approach to supporting student health and well-being, including existing tobacco/nicotine cessation and prevention resources and/or other substance use cessation and prevention resources. Describe your institution's vision for strengthening these efforts through the proposed project.
2. Describe how your institution will collaborate with other campus departments, community partners, or the broader school community to plan and implement tobacco and nicotine prevention and cessation strategies. Explain how students' voice and input will be incorporated into the activities.

3. Describe the strategies and activities your institution will use to increase awareness among the student body of available tobacco and nicotine cessation and prevention services. Identify the populations you intend to reach and the methods you will use to engage them.
4. Describe the specific tobacco and nicotine cessation and/or prevention activity for which your institution is seeking funding. Include how the proposed activity will advance health equity, reduce barriers to prevention and cessation services, and support student access, including through interpreter services, outreach activities, referrals, or other direct student supports.
 - a. Provide a detailed timeline, including key activities and milestones.
5. Describe how your institution will monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of the proposed tobacco and nicotine prevention and cessation activities. Identify the outcomes, performance measures, and data that will be collected, and explain how evaluation findings will be used to inform future activities.
6. Complete the separate budget template (CUTNAI PP Budget Template) provided on COMMBUYS. Provide detailed justification for the budget request. Flag capital budget items (single items or groups of similar items over \$5000). Include overhead or indirect fees* and any subcontractors.

Indirect fees should be based on the agency's **federally approved indirect rate. Recipients and subrecipients that do not have a current Federal negotiated indirect cost rate (including provisional rate) may elect to charge a de minimis rate of up to 15 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC).*

Additional Response Requirements/Information:

All responses are to be submitted electronically using the online submission tools available to Vendors registered in COMMBUYS. There is no charge to register in COMMBUYS. To Register go to www.COMMBUYS.com and click on the "Register" link on the front page. [COMMBUYS Vendor Registration](#) Job Aide is also available.

All Quotes must be received by the Department of Public Health before the specified date, month, year and time of the Bid Opening Date displayed on COMMBUYS. Times are Eastern Standard/Daylight Savings (US), as applicable.

All Bidders are advised to allow adequate time for submission by considering potential online submission impediments like Internet traffic, Internet connection speed, file size, and file volume. DPH is not responsible for delays encountered by Bidders or their agents, or for a Bidder's local hardware failures, such as computers or related networks, associated with bid compilation or submission. Bids submitted via COMMBUYS are time stamped by the COMMBUYS system clock which is considered the official time of record.

Bidders are encouraged to upload attachments well in advance of the Bid Opening Date. This will help to reduce disqualified submissions that can occur if upload is not fully completed or if an attachment is missing at the deadline. Prior to the Bid Opening Date listed in the Procurement Calendar above, documents can easily be deleted and revised versions can be uploaded. If you wish to revise or delete a quote after submission, you may do so **prior** to the bid opening date. Please review the [Withdraw, Reopen, and Resubmit a Quote in COMMBUYS Job Aide](#) for additional instructions.

No Bid in COMMBUYS Quote If you plan to submit a quote to this RFQ "No Bid" **should not be checked** anywhere in your quote in COMMBUYS. This includes on the General Screen and the Items tab. Checking No Bid sends your quote to a different location in COMMBUYS than the rest

of the quotes for that Bid and you run the risk of the Department not receiving your response. The department will not guarantee that a bid received with a "No Bid" checked will be reviewed.

COMMBUYS Electronic Signatures

Quotes submitted via COMMBUYS must be signed electronically by the Bidder or the Bidder's Agent by accepting the terms and conditions of the bid on the "Terms & Conditions" tab in COMMBUYS. Bidders do this by selecting "Save & Continue" on the "Terms and Conditions" tab after accepting the terms and conditions of the bid. By agreeing to this the submitter attests that s/he is an agent of the Bidder with authority to sign on the Bidder's behalf, and that s/he has read and assented to each document's terms.

File Format

Scanned documents will be accepted and must be scanned in such a way that they can be read on a computer monitor and printed on 8 1/2" x 11" paper, unless otherwise specified. Attachments must be uploaded individually and cannot be combined in a zipped file.

File Size Limits

COMMBUYS will not accept files that approach or exceed 10 MB. If a large file fails to upload, the Bidder must save the contents as multiple files.

9. COMMBUYS Support

A link to a job aid on [How to Submit a Quote on COMMBUYS](#)

COMMBUYS Resource Information at www.mass.gov/osd/commbuys

Email: Send inquiries to the COMMBUYS OSD Help Desk at OSDHelpDesk@mass.gov

Telephone: Call the COMMBUYS Help Desk at 1-888-627-8283 or 617-720-3197. The Help Desk is staffed from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday Eastern Standard or Daylight time, as applicable, except on federal and state holidays.

Technical assistance is available during the procurement process. Every effort is made to respond to inquiries within one business day.

Bidders are advised that COMMBUYS will be unavailable during regularly scheduled maintenance hours of which all users will be notified.

Other Requirements Pertaining to this RFQ

Amendments to BID

MDPH reserves the right to make amendments to the RFQ after the initial publication. It is each Bidder's responsibility to check COMMBUYS for any amendments, addenda or modifications to this Bid and any Bid Q&A records related to this Bid. MDPH and the Commonwealth accept no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to Bidders who submit a quote based on an out-of-date Bid or on information received from a source other than COMMBUYS.

CORI Requirements: In accordance with EOHHS policy, an individual's background, including any CORI and other relevant information, must be carefully considered so that the vulnerable populations served by EOHHS are protected. It is also EOHHS policy that qualified rehabilitated offenders are given a fair opportunity to be employed and successfully reintegrated into the workforce. In accordance with this policy, prior to any work engagement, the awarded Contractor shall obtain a Standard (Employer) Access Massachusetts Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check on any and all individual employees who are to enter public offices of the Commonwealth or provide services to any Hiring Entity of the Commonwealth. The awarded

Contractor must 1) utilize the Internet-Accessible CORI (iCORI) system maintained by the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) to request and receive CORI in accordance with 801 CMR 2.00 et seq. and 2) comply with the EOHHS CORI check regulations, 101 CMR 15.00 et seq. in reviewing CORI and in documenting its hiring determination as set forth in 101 CMR 15.09. Any associated costs are the responsibility of the awarded Contractor.

Fraud Risk Management and Reporting Requirements: Fraud is defined as any intentional illegal act characterized by deceit, concealment, or violation of trust, committed by an individual or organization to obtain money, property, or services; to avoid payment or loss of property or services; or to secure personal or business advantage.

DPH requires that all providers have a zero-tolerance policy for fraud. All DPH providers must maintain internal fraud risk management policies and procedures that include regular risk assessments, internal controls, and a process for reporting and investigating incidents of suspected fraud. Such policies and procedures shall be made available to DPH for review upon written request.

Additionally, in connection with their work for DPH, providers are required to comply with the following obligations related to incidents of suspected fraud:

- Notification to DPH. Written notification of any incident of suspected fraud must be made as soon as possible, but no less than 5 business days, following discovery to your DPH program contract manager.
- Responsibility for Personnel. Providers are solely responsible for the actions of any individuals or entities it employs, contracts with, or otherwise uses in connection with the provision of the work under this RFQ to DPH, including, without limitation, any actions by such personnel that may result in an incident of suspected fraud and/or the misuse and/or abuse of Commonwealth funds.
- Cooperation. Irrespective of any actions taken by the provider, providers are expected to cooperate fully in any investigation, litigation, or other action deemed necessary by the Commonwealth in connection with an incident of suspected fraud.
- Corrective Measures. Immediately upon becoming aware of an incident of suspected fraud, the provider shall, at its own expense, take all reasonable and appropriate action necessary to mitigate, to the extent practicable, any harmful effect of the incident. Upon request, the provider, at its own expense, shall take such further actions as the Commonwealth may reasonably request, or shall take such additional action to assist the Commonwealth to further mitigate any harmful effect of the incident and prevent recurrence, including, without limitation, strengthening internal controls.

Failure to report incidents of suspected fraud in a timely manner may result in adverse consequences, including, but not limited to, any of the following: recoupment of funds, suspension of payments, required corrective action plans, suspension/termination of program participation and/or any contract with DPH, or civil or criminal penalties.

MDPH use of DocuSign for Execution of Contracts: Contracts and Engagements for the Department are sent through DocuSign. Vendors will be able to use DocuSign to electronically sign and return all applicable contract forms to DPH. A web browser and valid email are all that are needed to access the documents through DocuSign. A DocuSign account is not required. Contracted vendors will be expected to keep their contract contact information updated through the life of their contract with the Department. The Job Aide "How to Sign MDPH Contracts and Engagements" is available in the attachment section for this RFQ on COMMBUYS.

MBTA Communities Compliance Grant Policy: The receipt of grant funds is contingent upon the grantee being able to certify that it will comply with the Massachusetts General Laws, including G.L. c. 40A, § 3A, the MBTA Communities Act. Compliance with the MBTA Communities Act is determined by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.”

Public Records: All information, documents, and attachments submitted as a response to this RFQ are considered a public document subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L., c. 66, s. 10, and to c. 4, s. 7, ss. 26. **Please be aware that checking the “confidential” box in COMMBUYS does not bar these documents from being released as a public record pursuant to these statutes once the procurement is awarded, unless statutorily exempt from disclosure.**