

Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation

Request for Proposal

Multi-Year Cannabis Programs Public Media Campaign RFP

26-440DFPR-SECRE-B-53922

Table of Contents

Section A.	SCOPE OF WORK	3
A.1.	OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE	3
A.2.	DESIRED OUTCOMES OF THIS PROJECT/ENGAGEMENT	3
A.3.	SCHEDULE & BUDGET	5
A.4.	UNIQUE CONSIDERATIONS	5
A.5.	TERM	7
Section B.	CURRENT CONDITIONS	8
B.1.	OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND	8
B.2.	VOLUMES & QUANTITIES	9
B.3.	AREAS OF CONCERN/CHALLENGES	10
B.4.	STRENGTHS	11
Section C.	PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS	12
C.1.	REQUIRED DOCUMENTS TO COMPLETE AND SUBMIT	12
C.2.	DUE DATE AND TIME FOR SUBMISSION OF OFFERS	14
C.3.	CONFLICT BETWEEN INFORMATION IN ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND ON BIDBUY	14
C.4.	PUBLISHED PROCUREMENT INFORMATION	14
C.5.	INFORMATION CONTACT	14
C.6.	OFFEROR QUESTIONS AND AGENCY RESPONSE	15
C.7.	PRE-SUBMISSION CONFERENCE	15
C.8.	SMALL BUSINESS SET-ASIDE	15
C.9.	BUSINESS ENTERPRISE FOR MINORITIES, WOMEN, AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT PARTICIPATION AND UTILIZATION PLAN	16
C.10.	TERMS AND CONDITIONS	16
Section D.	EVALUATION PROCEDURES	17
D.1.	EVALUATION PROCESS	17
D.2.	RESPONSIVENESS	17
D.3.	EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	18
D.4.	COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY ELEMENTS	19
D.5.	MINIMUM REQUIRED POINTS	20
D.6.	PRICE	20

D.7.	MAXIMUM AVAILABLE POINTS	20
Section E.	ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS	21
E.1.	GOVERNING LAW AND FORUM	21
E.2.	PUBLIC RECORDS AND REQUESTS FOR CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT	21
E.3.	MINORITY CONTRACTOR INITIATIVE	21
E.4.	EMPLOYMENT TAX CREDIT	22
E.5.	RESERVATIONS	22
E.6.	AWARD	22
E.7.	INVOICING ADDRESS	22
E.8.	PROTEST REVIEW OFFICE	23
E.9.	RESPONSIBILITY	23
E.10.	BidBuy Terminology and Guidance:	24
Section F.	PROPOSAL FORMS	25
F.1.	CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS	25
F.2.	MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS WITH EVIDENCE	27
F.3.	PROPOSED TECHNICAL SOLUTION – DESIRABLE ELEMENTS (600 points).....	28
F.4.	COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY	30
F.5.	DEMONSTRATIONS (400 points)	31
F.6.	PRICING	31
Section G.	ATTACHMENTS AND EXHIBITS	33

Section A. SCOPE OF WORK

A.1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation's Cannabis Control Section and the Cannabis Regulation Oversight Officer ("CROO," "IDFPR," or "Department") are seeking proposals from qualified Offerors to develop and implement a multi-year, state-wide, data-informed, and strategic communications and public education media campaign for the state's cannabis programs. The campaign will empower consumers with information to:

- Differentiate cannabis markets (i.e., legal vs. illicit) while promoting Illinois' legal cannabis industry and its benefits.
- Increasing consumer education on the benefits of purchasing from Illinois' legal cannabis market.
- Understand the risks of purchasing from illicit markets, including the dangers to public health and safety.

Offerors must possess the innovative skills, creative tools, and experiences on multiple platforms necessary to reach Illinois' diverse population and drive change in consumer behavior.

All information shall be submitted in the format stipulated in this RFP and within the State's eProcurement portal, BidBuy. Proposals should be signed by the person(s) duly authorized to bind the awarded Vendor to contracts.

A.2. DESIRED OUTCOMES OF THIS PROJECT/ENGAGEMENT

IDFPR desires to inform consumers on the benefits of purchasing safe, Illinois-grown and manufactured cannabis, and responsible consumption. To achieve these goals, we seek proposals of media campaign(s) that do not promote cannabis or stigmatize its use, but rather are informative, evidence-based, bias-free, and give resources to consumers (both Illinois residents and tourists) seeking information on the topics detailed in this RFP including, but not limited to:

- Benefits of the legal Illinois cannabis market.
- Risks of the illicit market.
- Responsible use and consumption.
- Available resources for cannabis consumers and medical patients in Illinois.

IDFPR desires proposals of the media campaign(s) that impact a multitude of target audiences. For more information, please see "Attachment B Target Audience." Target audiences may be further refined as additional insights and methods are obtained that define and influence these audiences. Target audiences in Illinois include, but are not limited to:

- Young Adults
- Women and Mothers
- Parents, Guardians, and Responsible Adults

- Mature Adults and Seniors
- Non-English-Speaking Communities
- Diverse Communities
- The General Population and Cannabis-Curious
- Medical Patients and Caregivers
- Veterans
- Rural Consumers
- Low-Income Consumers

IDFPR desires a phased approach in the production and execution of the media campaign(s). IDFPR desires the following phases, listed below. For more information, please see "Attachment A Campaign Phases." However, qualified Offerors may recommend phase alterations in their proposals, as long as all phase items are executed.

- Phase I: Research and Concept Development
- Phase II: Creative Content Development and Message Testing
- Phase III: Execution and Campaign Rollout
- Phase IV: Ongoing Review of Campaign Impact and Metrics
- Phase V: Campaign Impact Report, State Training, and Hand-Off

IDFPR requires all phases to be fully completed prior to the end of the initial contract term. Multiple phases can be executed at the same time dependent on resource availability. Meaning, Phase I does not need to be completed prior to Phase II kick-off.

IDFPR desires a qualified Offeror who will be responsible for the following activities:

- Project management, including signoffs on major deliverables.
- Developing and refining:
 - Campaign message
 - Creative content
 - Target audience
 - Partners and messengers
 - Mediums of outreach
- Distributing and promoting the content based on the approved plan.
- Assessing and documenting the real-time impact and efficacy of campaign messaging through quantitative and qualitative research methods.
- Continued improvements through the life cycle of campaign.
- Offerors should have prior work experience with:
 - Both state and non-state entities and private sector businesses.
 - Executing a multi-year, state-wide media campaign.
 - Navigating inherent challenges of marketing a complex and nuanced industry.

A.3. SCHEDULE & BUDGET

Procurement Schedule	
RFP Posting Date to BidBuy	10/15/2026
Pre-Submission Conference	10/27/2026
Offeror Questions Submission Deadline	10/30/2026
Tentative Date for Posting of Answers to Offeror Questions	11/4/2026
RFP Offer Submission Deadline	11/16/2026
Anticipated Evaluation Period	12/1/2026
Anticipated Demonstrations Period	12/14/2026 – 12/18/2026
Anticipated Notice of Award	12/21/2026
Anticipated Awarded Vendor Negotiations	12/21/2026 – 1/15/2027
Anticipated Contract Start Date	1/18/2027

Availability of Appropriations and Sufficiency of Funds: Offeror acknowledges and agrees that the Department's annual budget, and all associated funding, is made publicly available upon being signed into law. The Department's obligations under this procurement are contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds from which payment for contract purposes can be made. No legal liability on the part of the Department for any payment may arise under this awarded Contract until funds are made available to the Department for this awarded Contract and until the awarded Vendor receives notice of such availability, to be confirmed in writing. In accordance with the terms and conditions outlined herein, if funding for any fiscal year is reduced or deleted by law, the Department shall have the option to terminate the contract, or proportionally reduce the scope of work, without penalty or further liability.

Best Value Evaluation and Proposal Scoring: The State's RFP process will evaluate the quality of the proposal's content and the proposed price together, as described in the evaluation criteria. This process is designed to select the best-value proposal, rather than solely to the lowest cost submitted. For this RFP, the evaluation of price/cost is weighted at **20%** of the total possible proposal score, with the remaining **80%** allocated to technical merit, quality of content, and other non-price factors.

A.4. UNIQUE CONSIDERATIONS

A.4.1. STAKEHOLDERS

CROO coordinates all the cannabis teams across State government and will serve as the primary sponsor of the campaign(s). In this role, CROO has internal and external audiences and is often the main conduit for cannabis information. IDFPR's Cannabis Control Section oversees the licensing and regulation of retail cannabis dispensaries. The Illinois Department of Human Services ("DHS") has and

continues to run a public education campaign related to the health risks of cannabis use. The Illinois Department of Public Health ("DPH") are the State experts on public health messaging.

External stakeholders include cannabis consumers, medical cannabis patients and their caregivers, cannabis businesses, and the broader community that interacts with community members. The broader community includes family, neighbors, teachers, health care practitioners, law enforcement, and other people who may be connected to cannabis consumers.

A.4.2. REDUCING STIGMA

Cannabis legalization in Illinois began with medical cannabis, originally as a pilot program in 2014. By 2019, Illinois passed legislation legalizing adult use with a strong emphasis on addressing criminal and social justice concerns. The law automatically expunged hundreds of thousands of past cannabis arrests and provided an economic opportunity into the legal market. The law reinvested cannabis tax dollars into communities most impacted by prohibition. These provisions had a large impact on communities with the largest numbers of cannabis arrests, particularly Black and Brown communities. Legalization meant that the market now operates openly within a set of laws and regulations and reduces the stigma that illegality carried for cannabis markets and cannabis consumers.

Further, strict federal research controls over cannabis meant that research and public information on cannabis often highlighted the negatives. The research was given to law enforcement and health authorities, in part to justify and support criminalization. Research on cannabis benefits or collateral harms of criminalization were not promoted. These policies have led to a complicated and culturally important history of cannabis.

A.4.3. IMPROVING CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE

The requested media campaign(s) will offer critical public information to support the legal market, reduce the illicit market, and increase consumer education. Despite medical cannabis' legal status since 2014, many consumers still lack meaningful knowledge of legal cannabis available in Illinois. Information on where to obtain cannabis legally, how to identify legal and illicit products, and how to assess potency for safe use require knowledge about regulatory structures, navigating state websites, and some understanding of the intoxicating compound in cannabis, THC. Currently, the primary source of information on cannabis has been from the industry. Many consumers rely on these sources and on different people to understand the chemical components, active ingredients, and risks of high concentration products and how they interact with other substances.

Overall, Illinois surveys indicate cannabis consumption in Illinois (and nationwide) have remained steady with the introduction of an adult-use marketplace and strict licensing requirements. While consumers are shifting their purchases from illicit

markets or informal sources to legal retailers, the State has a public health interest in seeing consumer consumption continue to shift to the legal and regulated market. An educated and informed cannabis consumer can help mitigate potential public health risks and improve the overall safety of Illinois.

A.5. TERM

A.5.1. TERM OF THIS CONTRACT: The contract resulting from this procurement will have an initial term commencing upon the last dated signature of the Parties and end on June 30, 2028, unless otherwise renewed by the Parties. In no event will the total term of the contract, including the initial term, any renewal terms, and any extensions, exceed ten (10) years. Vendor shall not commence billable work in furtherance of the contract prior to final execution of the contract except when permitted pursuant to 30 ILCS 500/20-80.

A.5.2. RENEWAL: Subject to the maximum total term identified above, the State has the option to renew for the following term(s):

- Renewal #1: July 1, 2028, through June 30, 2029.
- Renewal #2: July 1, 2029, through June 30, 2030.

A.5.2.1. Pricing for the renewal term(s), or the formula for determining price, is in the Pricing section of this solicitation.

A.5.2.2. Any renewal of the resulting contract is subject to the same terms and conditions that apply to the initial term of the contract unless otherwise provided. The State may renew the contract for any or all of the option periods specified, may exercise any of the renewal options early, and may exercise more than one option at a time based on continuing need and favorable market conditions, when in the best interest of the State. The contract may neither renew automatically nor renew solely at the Vendor's option.

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Section B. CURRENT CONDITIONS

B.1. OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND

In 2019, Illinois became the 11th state to legalize cannabis for adult use after legalizing cannabis for medical use in 2013. The legislature passed the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act ("CRTA") to legalize and regulate the production, consumption, and sale of non-medicinal, adult use cannabis and to recognize, reduce, and repair harmful effects of past criminalization and punitive drug policies on communities across Illinois and nationally. The CRTA framework has become a national model as the first legislative effort to integrate comprehensive equity measures in its legalizing statute. These measures comprise the three pillars of the Illinois cannabis program: diversity at all levels of the cannabis industry, criminal history record expungement, and reinvestment in communities most harmed by past criminalization of cannabis.

Three State agencies are generally responsible for oversight and licensing of the cannabis industry. Responsibility for cannabis regulation and control is shared by:

- The Illinois Department of Agriculture ("IDOA"), which regulates and licenses cannabis producers (cultivation centers, craft growers, and infusers) and transporters. They also certify the laboratories that test for consumer safety and potency in cannabis products and register community college vocational programs.
- IDFPR, which licenses and oversees medical and adult use cannabis dispensaries. CROO, which will administer the public education campaign, is an administrative unit in IDFPR.
- DPH, which administers the registry of patients and the medical program.

Several other state agencies play important roles in cannabis, including:

- The Illinois State Police ("ISP"), which conduct inspections for security and prevent non-compliant products from entering or exiting Illinois' market.
- The Department of Revenue ("IDOR"), which collects tax revenue from all cannabis licenses.
- The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity ("DCEO"), which operates a forgivable loan program for social equity businesses, as well as technical assistance supports for small cannabis businesses.
- The Restore, Reinvest, Renew ("R3") program, housed within the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, which has reinvested \$300 million in communities impacted by cannabis prohibition.
- DHS, which reinvests 22% of the adult use tax revenue into behavioral health services and supports. A portion of that reinvestment has been in public education efforts devoted to cannabis.

Illinois closely monitors the safety and concentration of cannabis products sold in the legal market. The State and its academic partners have also monitored public health indicators to monitor any adverse consequences as a result of the legal market. However, cannabis

obtained from unlicensed and illicit sources still pose health risks. Illicit cannabis is largely untested and can have an unknown production history. This means illicit cannabis products may contain contaminants like pesticides, herbicides, or heavy metals, and they may also contain mold, undisclosed additives, or other allergens. Further, illicit cannabis products generally do not adhere to any labeling standards or requirements, leaving consumers with potentially inaccurate views of cannabinoid content.

Because they operate outside of the regulated market, unlicensed retailers may not limit sales to only tested products or prevent access by minors. Instead, they may sell illicit cannabis products with attractive labeling, products that mimic popular candy and drinks, and other strategies to attract young consumers. The illicit cannabis market presents a challenge to the health and safety of Illinoisans, the environment, and the legal market, as well as undermine consumer awareness of responsible consumption. To an average consumer, there is no difference between these products and consumer confusion damages the well-regulated legal market.

Illinois has run two prior cannabis education campaigns, *Let's Talk Cannabis* and *Unfaded Illinois*, through IDHS. A new public education effort is underway through a Public Awareness Campaign on Substance Use and Supports, using four community organizations to develop and implement the messages. These efforts generally seek to prevent use and reduce harms of cannabis and are separate from this campaign, although there is a desire to generally offer consistent messaging.

State of Illinois Cannabis Acts and Rules: <https://cannabis.illinois.gov/legal-and-enforcement/laws-and-regulations.html>

B.2. VOLUMES & QUANTITIES

State of Illinois Population (estimated): 12.8 million people

State of Illinois annual tourism population (estimated): 113 million people

Number of active licensed dispensaries: 289

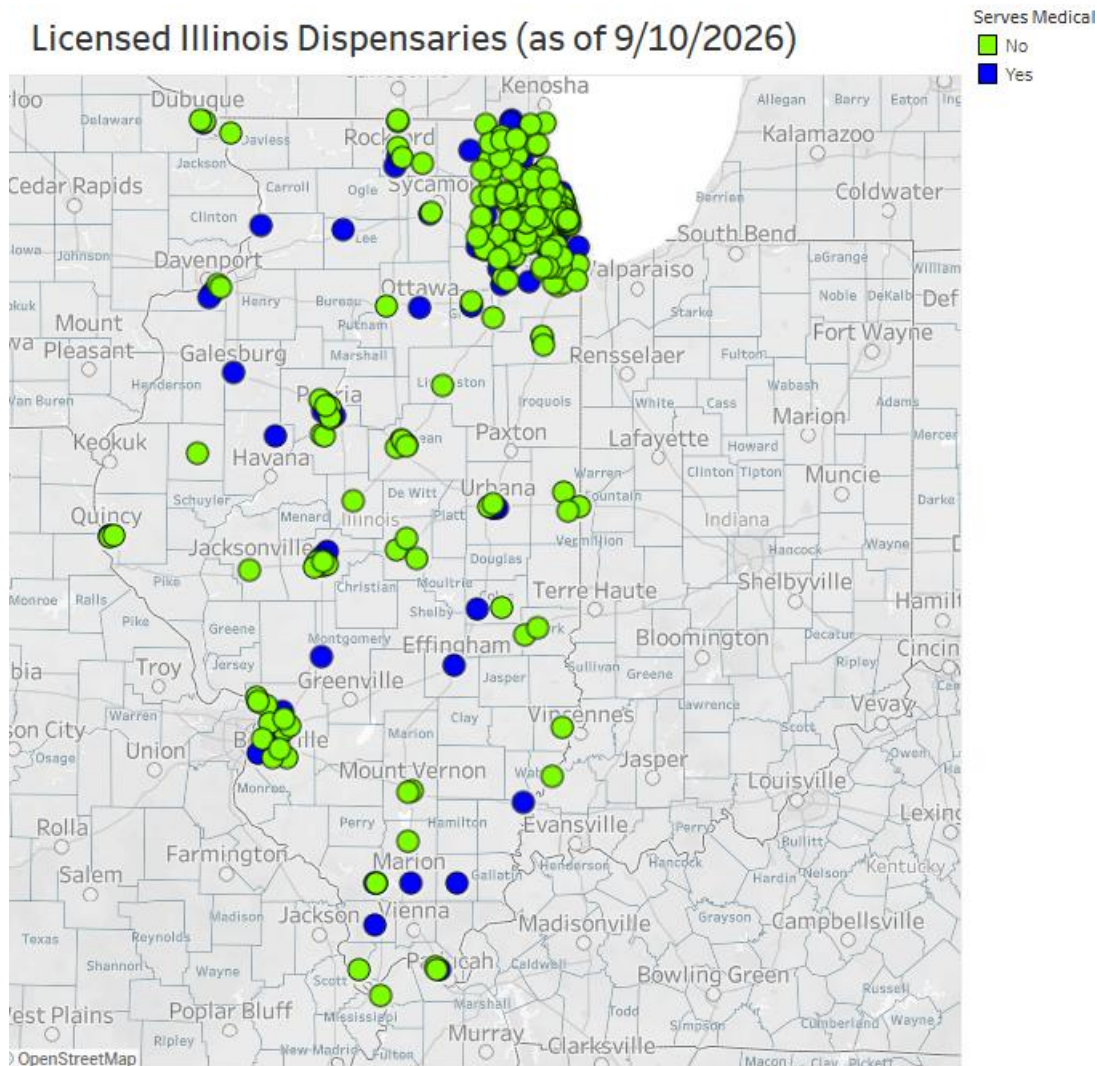
Number of social equity licensed dispensaries: 179

Calendar Year 2024 Cumulative Sales Revenue: \$2 billion reported – 86% adult use, 14% medical

Calendar Year 2024 Number of Products Sold: 56 million items

Calendar Year 2025 Cumulative Sales Revenue: \$1.7 billion reported – 88% adult use, 12% medical

Calendar Year 2025 Number of Products Sold: 58 million items



B.3. AREAS OF CONCERN/CHALLENGES

IDFPR is aware that a lack of federal regulation means there can be potential delays in advertising purchases due to FCC regulations and prohibitions. These policies may affect social media and other media companies' policies around cannabis advertisements. Illinois law excludes public education campaigns from the advertising restrictions on cannabis. The campaign should be aware of past stigmas placed on cannabis from government sources, along with the criminalization and racialization that occurred with past cannabis policy. The awarded Vendor should be prepared to address multi-cultural concerns and viewpoints to address some of this past stigma. The campaign should be seen as a trusted messenger of reliable cannabis information.

IDFPR has limited tools and skillsets to independently run outreach campaigns of this scale. While we regulate industry stakeholders, wider consumer outreach is limited. Additionally, as the regulatory body for cannabis dispensaries, IDFPR cannot drive traffic to any specific dispensary or show any appearance of such impropriety. The awarded Vendor should be cognizant of these potential issues.

Another challenge of this campaign will be combatting misinformation about cannabis and the cannabis markets that already exist. The main source of misinformation relates to regulated retail stores (licensed cannabis dispensaries) and unregulated retail stores (gas stations, hemp stores, head shops, etc.). Consumer confusion exists in differentiating legal stores and products in the regulated cannabis industry from unregulated retailers and products. The awarded Vendor's campaign(s) must be prepared to articulate these differences, while also understanding longstanding stigma around cannabis.

Further, decades of misinformation around cannabis use have created a complicated public perception. Sometimes, cannabis is conflated with other, more dangerous substances. Additionally, some communities outright oppose cannabis legalization or use. The awarded Vendor should be aware of and consider past governmental messaging when recommending markets, mediums, and target audiences.

Finally, the Cannabis Acts and Rules have robust provisions regarding advertising. Any campaign should be aware of these provisions for general compliance purposes. The Cannabis Acts are subject to legislative changes and thus the campaign(s) should be fluid to respond to any changes to the law.

B.4. STRENGTHS

IDFPR can facilitate and connect the awarded Vendor with subject matter experts from across State government, the research community, consumer advocates, and industry stakeholders. Our good working relationships with these partners means developing content and evidence-based facts will not be a barrier.

IDFPR has a wealth of data to pull from the 10 years that the cannabis program has been operational. This includes surveys and research into market trends, market diversity, and user trends as well as partnerships with universities to assist in data collection, analysis, and research. IDFPR also has access to other states with regulated cannabis markets.

The Illinois cannabis market has also seen consistent growth in terms of the amount of sales, year-over-year growth in the number of items purchased by consumers, and consistent market growth in the number of dispensaries opening each year. Each of these can be drawn on when deciding on target audiences and effective mediums.

Illinois has recently adopted an enhanced Seed-to-Sale Track and Trace system in June of 2025, which can provide additional tools and insight into the cannabis market.

Section C. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Only Electronic Submissions through BidBuy of Offers will be Accepted

C.1. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS TO COMPLETE AND SUBMIT

The Offeror shall submit the listed documents in BidBuy under the Attachments tab in the appropriate "Required Attachments" spaces.

- Vendor Disclosure or IPG Active Registered Vendor Disclosure
- Technical response
- Offer to the State of Illinois
- Commitment to Diversity
- BEP Utilization Plan

Blank documents may be found on the Chief Procurement Officer for General Service's website at <https://cpo-general.illinois.gov/solicitation-and-contract-templates.html> and on the BidBuy posting under "File Attachments:". Business Enterprise Program/Veterans Small Business Program Utilization Plan may be downloaded from the Commission on Equity and Inclusion's website at:

<https://cei.illinois.gov/purchasing-entity-resources/compliance.html>.

Failure to submit Vendor Disclosure or IPG Active Registered Vendor Disclosure, as applicable, and the Utilization Plan(s), as applicable, with the Offer submitted in BidBuy shall render the Offer non-responsive.

Offerors are required to submit their response to the State's solicitation through BidBuy. Any information sent to the State outside of BidBuy, for example by US Mail, FedEx, UPS, e-mail, or hand delivery, will neither be accepted nor considered. Offeror submissions will only be considered if they are received through BidBuy and on or before the time and date indicated as the "Bid Opening Date" on the BidBuy posting. Any required attachments must be submitted via BidBuy.

Price entries on the Items tab will be locked automatically upon submission of the quote. **Entering cost, pricing or discount information in the Alternate Description may result in disqualification.** If the agency requires pricing to be submitted in an attachment, Offeror shall upload pricing under the "Required Documents" section on the Attachments tab and check the box "Does the attachment contain any pricing, cost or discount information?". Failure to check this box allows your pricing to be viewed when bids are opened and will result in disqualification of your offer. NOTE: Do not check "Does the attachment contain any pricing, cost or discount information" if the attachment does NOT include pricing, cost, or discount information.

Documents shall be submitted in an electronic format that is accessible and readable using Microsoft Office suite software or Adobe Reader. Corrupted files shall not be considered.

It is the Offeror's responsibility to check that files are accessible and legible after uploading.

The Offeror is solely responsible for ensuring timely submission of their electronic solicitation response. Failure to allow adequate time prior to the Bid Opening Date to complete and submit a response to a solicitation, particularly in the event technical support assistance from the State is required, places the Offeror and their offer or response at risk of not being accepted.

The State encourages the Offeror to ensure that their BidBuy account is up-to-date. It is recommended that you access your BidBuy account prior to the solicitation due date and time to make sure that your company's information is up-to-date and your password is current. Files may be uploaded at any time prior to submission.

File size may impact the uploading and downloading speed and may lead to browser time-outs, resulting in failed upload/download attempts. Please consider this dependency when attaching very large documents.

OFFEROR INSTRUCTIONS TO SUBMIT IN BIDBUY

Create Quote:

General Tab	: Save and Continue
Items Tab	Follow instructions in the Pricing section of the solicitation document as to whether pricing will be entered in the Unit Cost of the Items Tab or submitted as a separate Pricing Document in the Attachments Tab. Note: any pricing entered in the Unit Cost of the Items Tab will be locked until after Technical Evaluations take place. Do not enter cost, pricing, or any discount information in the Alternate Description field. Entering cost, pricing or discount information in the Alternate Description may result in disqualification.
Terms and Conditions Tab	: Select "Yes", "No", or "Yes with Exceptions" Note: If taking any exceptions to Standard Terms and Conditions an offeror must submit a redline version of the Standard Terms and Conditions with their proposal.
Attachments Tab	For each required quote attachment listed: : "Upload" (next to each required attachment) : "Choose File" Note: If a pricing document is required, mark the box next to the question, "Does this attachment contain any pricing, cost, or discount information?" Failure to mark this box when attaching a pricing document will result in disqualification.

	Check this box ONLY if a separate pricing document is required. Do NOT check this box for any other required quote attachment such as the Technical Proposal, Vendor Disclosure / IPG Active Registered Vendor Disclosure, or Utilization Plan(s), or Offer.
Summary Tab	: "Submit Quote"

Offerors may also view the "Request for Proposal (RFP) Vendor Submission Instructions Video found at <https://cpo-general.illinois.gov/vendor-resources.html>

C.2. DUE DATE AND TIME FOR SUBMISSION OF OFFERS

Each solicitation contains the Offer due date and time, appearing as the "Bid Opening Date:" on the BidBuy posting. Offeror shall submit Offers in BidBuy, and the State shall open Offers electronically in BidBuy on the "Bid Opening Date". The Offer must remain firm for 180 days from opening.

C.3. CONFLICT BETWEEN INFORMATION IN ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND ON BIDBUY

If the State provides information in electronic documents (i.e., the RFP and other attachments) that is different or in conflict with the information the State provides on BidBuy, then the information in electronic documents is presumed to represent the State's intent. If the Offeror provides information in electronic documents that is different or in conflict with the information the Offeror provides in BidBuy through their Seller Account, then the information in electronic documents shall represent the Offeror's intended submission.

C.4. PUBLISHED PROCUREMENT INFORMATION

The State publishes procurement information, including solicitations, awards, and amendments, on the Chief Procurement Officer for General Services' Illinois Procurement Bulletin, known as the Bulletin or BidBuy (<https://www.bidbuy.illinois.gov/bsol/>). Procurement information may not be available in any other form or location. Offeror is responsible for monitoring BidBuy. The State will not be held responsible if Offeror fails to receive the optional e-mail notice of future amendments to the solicitation.

C.5. INFORMATION CONTACT

The individual listed in the "Info Contact:" field on the BidBuy posting shall be the single point of contact for this solicitation. Unless otherwise directed, Offeror should only communicate with the Information Contact. The State/Agency shall not be held responsible for information provided by or to any other person.

Suspected errors should be immediately reported to the Information Contact. Do not discuss, directly or indirectly, the solicitation or any Offer with any State officer or employee other than the Information Contact.

C.6. OFFEROR QUESTIONS AND AGENCY RESPONSE

All questions, other than questions raised at the Pre-Submission Conference, pertaining to this solicitation must be submitted in writing to the Information Contact no later than 3:00PM Central Time, October 30, 2026. Questions received and Agency responses may be posted as a Bid Amendment to the original solicitation on BidBuy; only these posted answers to questions shall be binding on the State. Offeror is responsible for monitoring BidBuy and BidBuy email notifications.

C.7. PRE-SUBMISSION CONFERENCE

The Agency may conduct a Non-Mandatory Pre-Submission Conference, listed in the "Pre-Bid Conference:" field of the BidBuy posting. Please refer to BidBuy for this information.

Join from the meeting link

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m60767fa03799e7adf93a38a830e8dbb0>

Join by meeting number

Meeting number (access code): 2633 020 8329

Meeting password: axVm7jPD9T5

Tap to join from a mobile device (attendees only)

+1-312-535-8110,,26330208329## United States Toll (Chicago)

+1-415-655-0002,,26330208329## US Toll

Join by phone

+1-312-535-8110 United States Toll (Chicago)

+1-415-655-0002 US Toll

Global call-in numbers

Join from a video system or application

Dial 26330208329@illinois.webex.com

You can also dial 173.243.2.68 and enter your meeting number.

C.8. SMALL BUSINESS SET-ASIDE

In the Bulletin posting, if "Yes" is shown to the question "Is this a Small Business Set-Aside Procurement?", then Offeror must be registered by the Illinois Small Business Set-Aside Program at the time Offers are due for the Offer to be evaluated. For requirements on qualifying Offeror's business in the Small Business Set-Aside Program, please go to the Chief Procurement Office for General Service's website at:

<https://cpo-general.illinois.gov/sell-2-illinois.html>.

C.9. BUSINESS ENTERPRISE FOR MINORITIES, WOMEN, AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT PARTICIPATION AND UTILIZATION PLAN

The BidBuy posting indicates whether this solicitation contains a goal to include businesses owned and controlled by minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. If this solicitation contains a goal, then failure to complete and submit a Utilization Plan, including documentation demonstrating good faith efforts when requesting a waiver, shall render the Offer non-responsive. 30 ILCS 575/4(e). All questions regarding the subcontracting goal must be directed to the Information Contact indicated in BidBuy no later than 3:00PM Central Time, October 30, 2026. See the Utilization Plan for NIGP codes (915-01 Communications and Media Related Services – Advertising Services) used to establish this goal.

BEP Goal: 16%

Go to <https://cei.illinois.gov/vendor-resources/get-bep-certified.html> for complete requirements for BEP certification. Go to State of Illinois Commission on Equity and Inclusion at <https://supplierdiversitymanagementportal.illinois.gov/home.aspx> to search for certified BEP vendors.

C.10. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Standard Terms and Conditions will become a part of any resulting contract. To view the Standard Terms and Conditions, please go to:
<https://cpo-general.illinois.gov/solicitation-and-contract-templates.html>.

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Section D.EVALUATION PROCEDURES

D.1. EVALUATION PROCESS

The State assesses each Offer for Responsibility (E.9) and Responsiveness (D.2.). The State considers the information provided and the quality of that information when assessing Offers. If the State finds a failure or deficiency, the State may reject the Offer or reflect the failure or deficiency in the assessment.

There are three scored parts to each proposal – technical, commitment to diversity, and pricing. Each part of the proposal is evaluated and ranked independently of the other parts of the proposal. The results of the evaluation of all three parts shall be used in ranking the proposals.

The State may award the most responsive and responsible offeror whose offer best meets the specified criteria.

D.2. RESPONSIVENESS

A responsive offeror is one who submits an offer that conforms in all material respects to the Request for Proposal and includes all required forms.

D.2.1. The State will determine whether the Offeror complied with the instructions for submitting offers. Except for late submissions, and other requirements that by law must be part of the submission, the State may require that an Offeror correct their deficiency(ies) as a condition of further evaluation.

D.2.2. Subcontractor Disclosure: If the Offer includes any subcontractors, then Offeror shall complete the Subcontractor Disclosure section of the Offer to the State of Illinois.

D.2.3. If completing IPG Active Registered Vendor Disclosure, then responsiveness may include and may not be limited to:

- Active Illinois Procurement Gateway registration # with expiration date
- Certifications timely to this solicitation
- Disclosure of lobbyists for Offeror and parent entity(ies)
- Disclosure of pending and current contracts

D.2.4. If completing Vendor Disclosure, required parts may include and may not be limited to:

- Business and Directory Information: Offeror should complete and return the Business and Directory Information form in Vendor Disclosure, Part 1.

- Illinois Department of Human Rights ("IDHR") Public Contracts Number: Offeror shall complete and return the IDHR Public Contracts Number form in Vendor Disclosure, Part 2.
- Authorized to Transact Business or Conduct Affairs in Illinois: A person (other than an individual acting as a sole proprietor) must be a duly constituted legal entity prior to submitting an Offer and authorized to transact business or conduct affairs in Illinois prior to execution of the contract. For more information, see Authorized to Transact Business or Conduct Affairs in Illinois in Vendor Disclosure, Part 3.
- Standard Illinois Certifications: Offeror shall complete and return the Standard Illinois Certifications form in Vendor Disclosure, Part 4.
- State Board of Elections Registration: Offeror may be prohibited from making political contributions and be required to register with the State Board of Elections. For more information, see State Board of Elections in Vendor Disclosure, Part 5.
- Disclosure of Business Operations with Iran: Offeror should complete and return the Disclosure of Business Operations with Iran form in Vendor Disclosure, Part 6.
- Financial Disclosures and Conflicts of Interest: Offeror shall complete and return the Financial Disclosures and Conflicts of Interest form in Vendor Disclosure, Part 7.
- Taxpayer Identification Number: Offeror should complete and return the Taxpayer Identification form in Vendor Disclosure, Part 8.

D.2.5. The State will determine whether the Offer meets the stated Technical requirements. Minor differences or deviations that have negligible impact on the price or suitability of the supply or service to meet the State's needs may be accepted or corrections allowed. If no offeror meets a particular Technical requirement, the State may waive that requirement.

D.2.6. When the specification calls for "Brand Name or Equal," the brand name product is acceptable. Other products will be considered with proof that the other product meets stated specifications and is equivalent to the brand product in terms of quality, performance, and desired characteristics.

D.3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The Technical Requirements are described in Sections F.1., F.2., F.3., and F.5. The State evaluates the Technical Requirements without consideration of price.

D.3.1. Total Number of Points Available for Technical Requirements is: **1,000**

D.3.2. Offeror shall complete and return Sections F.1., F.2., F.3.

D.3.3. Relative Weight in Point Format

Technical Requirements	Points Available
F.1. Contract Requirements	0; all must be agreed upon and are evaluated as pass or fail
F.2. Mandatory Requirements with Evidence	0; all must be met and are evaluated as pass or fail
F.3. Proposed Technical Solution (Desirable Elements)	600
F.4. Commitment to Diversity (C2D)	200
F.5. Demonstration	400

D.4. COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY ELEMENTS

Sections 20-15 and 35-30 of the Illinois Procurement Code (30 ILCS 500/) require offerors to be evaluated on their commitment to diversity. The points available for Commitment to Diversity are described in Section F.4. and are equivalent to **20%** of the Technical Requirements points. The State evaluates Commitment to Diversity without consideration of price.

D.4.1. The total number of points for Commitment to Diversity is **200**.

D.4.2. Offeror shall complete and return Section F.4 Commitment to Diversity.

D.4.3. Commitment to Diversity Categories: The percentages at the end of each section reflect the weighted distribution of points available identified in D.4.1.

Commitment to Diversity Categories
Category 1 – BEP Compliance - Whether the Offeror meets the set goal for contracting or subcontracting with businesses owned by women, minorities, or persons with disabilities or completed a Good Faith Effort Waiver for this procurement. 5%
Category 2 – Subcontracting/Contracting with any WMD businesses (not limited to BEP vendors) - Whether the Offeror has contracted/subcontracted within the prior calendar year with businesses owned by women, minorities, or persons with disabilities. 10%
Category 3 – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Spend - Offeror's percentage of business, education and/or community spend from prior calendar year gross revenue that involves businesses owned by women, minorities and/or persons with disabilities. The assisted businesses are not required to be certified in the Illinois Business Enterprise Program. 20%
Category 4 – DEI Time - Offeror's hours spent in the prior calendar year on promoting DEI in the workplace, the community, education institutes, or supporting businesses owned by women, minorities, or persons with disabilities. The assisted business is not required to be certified in the Illinois Business Enterprise Program. The success or failure of each event does not impact the points achieved. The event may be voluntary or paid time. 20%
Category 5 – DEI Policies - The vendor has provided a written copy/screenshot of their current written workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion ("DEI") policy. The policy provided must be actionable plans, not overarching concepts around DEI. 10%
Category 6 – Diversity in Staffing - % of individuals on governing board and/ or Senior executives who identify as women, minorities or person with disabilities. 10% % of individuals in management /supervisor positions who identify as women, minorities or person with disabilities. 13% % of total staff who identify as women, minorities or person with disabilities. 12%

D.5. MINIMUM REQUIRED POINTS

Requests for Proposal may specify that offerors must receive a minimum number of points in their Technical and Commitment to Diversity proposals combined to be considered for price evaluation and award.

The State determines how well offers meet the Technical and Commitment to Diversity requirements and rank the offers from best to least qualified using a point ranking system (unless otherwise specified) as an aid in conducting the evaluation. Offerors who receive fewer than the minimum required points will not be considered for price evaluation and award.

D.5.1. The total number of available points for Desirable Elements and Commitment to Diversity is **800**.

D.5.2. A minimum of 500 of the available (Desirable Elements and Commitment to Diversity) points is required to be eligible for Demonstrations.

D.6. PRICE

The State opens Price proposals after evaluating all Technical and Commitment to Diversity proposals.

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 offer, including the offeror's qualifications, the offeror's reputation, all price proposals submitted, other known prices, the project budget, and other relevant factors.

D.6.1. The total number of points for Price is **240**.

D.6.2. The State will determine Price points using the following formula:

$$\text{Maximum Price Points} \times (\text{Lowest Price} / \text{Offeror's Price}) = \text{Total Price Points}$$

D.7. MAXIMUM AVAILABLE POINTS

The maximum number of points is 1,000 (Technical) + 200 (Commitment to Diversity) + 240 (Price) = **1,440 maximum available points**.

Section E. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

E.1. GOVERNING LAW AND FORUM

Illinois law and rules govern this solicitation and any resulting contract. Offeror must bring any action relating to this solicitation or any resulting contract in the appropriate court in Illinois. This document contains statutory references designated with "ILCS". To view the full text, go to <https://ilga.gov/Legislation/ILCS/Chapters>. The Illinois Procurement Code (30 ILCS 500) and the Standard Procurement Rules (44 ILL. ADM. CODE PART 1) are applicable to this solicitation. To view them respectively, go to [Illinois General Assembly - 30 ILCS 500/ Illinois Procurement Code](#) and [Illinois General Assembly - ADMINISTRATIVE CODE](#).

E.2. PUBLIC RECORDS AND REQUESTS FOR CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT

Offers become the property of the State. All offers will be open to the public under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 ILCS 140) and other applicable laws and rules, unless Offeror requests in its Offer that the State treat certain information as confidential. A request for confidential treatment will not supersede the State's legal obligations under FOIA. The State will not honor requests to keep entire Offers confidential. Offerors must show the specific grounds in FOIA or other law or rule that support confidential treatment. Regardless, the State will disclose the successful Offeror's name, the substance of the Offer, and the price.

If Offeror requests confidential treatment, Offeror must submit additional copy/copies (see Instructions for Submission of Offers in Section C.) of the Offer with proposed confidential information redacted. This redacted copy must tell the general nature of the material removed and shall retain as much of the Offer as possible. In a separate attachment, Offeror shall supply a listing of the provisions identified by section number for which it seeks confidential treatment and identifies the statutory basis or bases under Illinois law, including a detailed justification for exempting the information from public disclosure.

Offeror will hold harmless and indemnify the State for all costs or damages associated with the State defending Offeror's request for confidential treatment. Offeror agrees that the State may copy the Offer to facilitate evaluation, or to respond to requests for public records. Offeror warrants that such copying will not violate the rights of any third party.

E.3. MINORITY CONTRACTOR INITIATIVE

The State requires a fee of \$15 to cover expenses related to the administration of the Minority Contractor Opportunity Initiative. Any offeror awarded a contract of \$1,000 or more under Section 20-10, 20-15, 20-25 or 20-30 of the Illinois Procurement Code (30 ILCS 500) is required to pay a fee of \$15. The Comptroller shall deduct the fee from the first check issued to the Vendor under the contract and deposit the fee in the Comptroller's Administrative Fund. 15 ILCS 405/23.9.

E.4. EMPLOYMENT TAX CREDIT

Offerors who hire qualified veterans and certain ex-offenders may be eligible for tax credits. 30 ILCS 500/45-67 and 45-70. Please contact the Illinois Department of Revenue (217-524-4772) for information about tax credits [35 ILCS 5/216, 5/217].

E.5. RESERVATIONS

Offeror must read and understand the solicitation and tailor the Offer and all activities to ensure compliance. The State reserves the right to amend the solicitation, reject any or all offers, award by item/services, group of items/services, or grand total, and waive minor defects. The State may request a clarification, inspect Offeror's premises, interview staff, request a presentation, or otherwise verify the contents of the Offer, including information about subcontractors and suppliers. The State may request Best & Final Offers when appropriate. The State will make all decisions on compliance, evaluation, and terms and conditions, and shall make decisions in the best interests of the State and in accordance with the Illinois Procurement Code, rules and other applicable State and Federal statutes and regulations. This competitive process may require that Offeror provide additional information and otherwise cooperate with the State. If an offeror does not comply with requests for information and cooperate, the State may reject the offer as non-responsive to the solicitation. Submitting an offer does not entitle Offeror to an award or a contract. Posting a vendor's name in a Bulletin notice does not entitle the vendor to a contract. The State is not responsible for and will not pay any costs associated with the preparation and submission of any offer.

Awarded Offeror(s) shall not commence and will not be paid for any billable work undertaken prior to the date all parties execute the contract, unless approved in writing in advance by the State Purchasing Officer or the Chief Procurement Officer (or designee).

E.6. AWARD

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 offeror whose offer best meets the specified criteria unless otherwise permitted by the Illinois Procurement Code and Illinois Administrative Code. However, if the State does not consider the price to be fair and reasonable and negotiations fail to meet an acceptable price, then the State reserves the right to cancel the award and take appropriate action to meet the needs of the State. The State will determine whether the price is fair and reasonable by considering the offer, including the offeror's qualifications, the offeror's reputation, all prices submitted, other known prices, the project budget and other relevant factors. The State will post a notice to the Bulletin identifying the apparent most responsive and responsible offeror.

E.7. INVOICING ADDRESS

The awarded Vendor shall invoice at the completion of the contract unless invoicing is tied in the contract to milestones, deliverables, or other invoicing requirements agreed to in

the contract. The Bulletin posting contains the "Bill-to Address:" where invoices should be sent.

The awarded Vendor shall not bill for any taxes unless accompanied by proof that the State is subject to the tax. If necessary, the awarded Vendor may request the applicable Agency's Illinois tax exemption number and Federal tax exemption information.

E.8. PROTEST REVIEW OFFICE

Offeror may submit a written protest to the Protest Review Office following the requirements of the Standard Procurement Rules. 44 ILL. ADM. CODE 1.5550. For protests related to specifications, the Protest Review Office must physically receive the protest no later than fourteen (14) days after the solicitation or related addendum was posted to the Bulletin. or protests related to rejection of individual proposals or awards, the protest must be received by close of business no later than fourteen (14) days after the protesting party knows or should have known of the facts giving rise to the protest. The Protest Review Office's information is as follows:

Chief Procurement Office
Attn: Protest Review Office
Email: cpogs.pro@illinois.gov

E.9. RESPONSIBILITY

A responsible Offeror is one who has the capability in all respects to perform fully the contract requirements and who has the integrity and reliability that will assure good faith performance. The State determines whether the Offeror is a "responsible" offeror; an offeror with whom the State can or should do business. For example, the State may consider the following:

E.9.1. A "prohibited bidder" includes any person assisting an employee of the State of Illinois by reviewing, drafting, directing, or preparing any invitation for bids, a request for proposal, or request of information, or providing similar assistance unless such assistance was part of a publicly issued opportunity to review drafts of all or part of these documents. For purposes of this section, an employee of the State of Illinois means one who, by the nature of his or her duties, has the authority to participate personally and substantially in the decision to award a State contract. No person or business shall submit specifications to a State agency unless requested to do so by an employee of the State. No person or business that contracts with a State agency to write specifications for a particular procurement need shall submit a bid or proposal or receive a contract for that procurement need.

Nothing herein is intended to prohibit a vendor from bidding or offering to supply developing technology, supplies or services after providing the State

with a demonstration of the developing technology, supplies, or services; provided the subject of the demonstration to the State represents industry trends and innovation and is not specifically designed to meet the State's needs. Nothing herein is intended to prohibit a person or business from submitting a bid or offer or entering into a contract if the person or business: (i) initiates a communication with an employee to provide general information about products, services, or industry best practices and, if applicable, that communication is documented in accordance with Section 50-39 of the Illinois Procurement Code or (ii) responds to a communication initiated by an employee of the State for the purposes of providing information to evaluate new products, trends, services, or technologies.

E.9.2. Other factors that the State may use to evaluate to determine responsibility include, but are not limited to: political contributions, certifications, conflict of interest, financial disclosures, taxpayer identification number, past performance in business or industry, references (including those found outside the Offer), compliance with applicable laws, financial responsibility, insurability, effective equal opportunity compliance, payment of prevailing wages if required by law, capacity to produce or sources of supply, and the ability to provide required maintenance service or other matters relating to the offeror's ability to deliver in the quality and quantity within the time and price as specified in this solicitation.

E.9.3. Awarded offerors must always have financial resources sufficient, in the opinion of the State, to ensure performance of the contract and must provide proof upon request. The State may require a performance bond if, in the opinion of the State, it ensures performance of the contract. The State may terminate the contract, consistent with the termination for cause provision of the contract, if the vendor lacks the financial resources to perform under the contract.

E.9.4. The State may require that an offeror correct any deficiencies as a condition of further evaluation.

E.10. BidBuy Terminology and Guidance:

BidBuy is an online e-procurement system. There may be some difference between the procurement terminology used in this solicitation and the terms used in BidBuy. Please learn more about BidBuy by accessing the online resources found here: <https://pathway2procurement.illinois.gov/bidbuy.html>

Section F. PROPOSAL FORMS

Offeror **must** complete and return:

- The following three (3) tables include: Contract Requirements (Section F.1.), and Technical Requirements: Mandatory Requirements with Evidence (Section F.2.), and Proposed Technical Solution (Section F.3.). Submission of these responses must follow "Attachment C – Written Response Template" document for standardized submissions. The Written Response Template requirements for F.1. – F.3.:
 - No more than 50 one-sided pages, no less than Narrow Margins (0.5" on all boundaries), typical font styles (i.e., Tahoma, Calibri, Times New Roman, Aptos, or Arial), and no less than 9-size font on all response text.
 - Supplemental documentation such as resumes, biographies, or work samples from creative portfolio are not subject to this requirement.
 - The creative portfolio may also include a summary that provides short descriptions and campaign results.
 - Discuss the Offeror's experience as it relates specifically to the Selection Criteria. Do not look at the criteria headings and do not submit generic information on each one. Provide specific examples of what the Offeror has done for clients that address the criteria. Mini-case history format works best to illustrate the Offeror's experience.
 -
- Commitment to Diversity (Section F.4).
- Offer to the State of Illinois.

Please read and follow each instruction carefully.

F.1. CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Please read each contract requirement carefully in F.1. These contract requirements shall be included in any contract resulting from this solicitation.

CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS		Vendor Acknowledgement of Contract Term
F.1.1.	Vendor shall perform a commercially useful function relevant to the production and execution of the marketing campaign(s) while providing the necessary goods and/or services needed for the fulfillment of contract requirements and deliverables.	☐ Agree
F.1.2.	Vendor shall carry out the obligation of performing, managing, and supervising the work involved.	☐ Agree
F.1.3.	Vendor shall perform work that is normal for its business services and functions.	☐ Agree
F.1.4.	Vendor shall not subcontract a portion of the work that is greater than expected to be subcontracted by normal industry practices.	☐ Agree
F.1.5.	Vendor is responsible with respect to products, inventories, materials, and supplies required for the contract, for negotiating price, determining quality and quantity, ordering, installing (if applicable), and making payment.	☐ Agree
F.1.6.	Vendor shall employ, on behalf of IDFP, the Vendor's knowledge and best practices including, but not limited to, strategic marketing, creative	☐ Agree

	development, media planning/buying, partnership marketing, website development, management, and design.	
F.1.7.	Vendor is responsible for all advertising, creative development, and production, media planning, media buying, shipping/trafficking, measurement/analysis, and legal clearance for domestic/State markets. These responsibilities might include, but are not limited to, broadcast, print, out-of-home, collateral, social, digital, and other new media.	☐ Agree
F.1.8.	Vendor shall at time of proposal submission have an in-house or established partnership for providing digital services. Services may include website design and maintenance, creating and maintaining databases, creating and executing online and social marketing campaigns, creating e-Newsletters, and search functionality. Overall, the Vendor must demonstrate a seamless integration between online and offline account management to maximize the state's marketing dollars and effectiveness.	☐ Agree
F.1.9.	Vendor is responsible for marketing and advertising planning and execution based on research that includes a review of other similar marketing programs and an assessment of Illinois' consumers.	☐ Agree
F.1.10.	Vendor is responsible for strategic planning and research assistance, including but not limited to, design, execution, and analysis.	☐ Agree
F.1.11.	Vendor is responsible for media buying capabilities on a local and national market basis, and across all types of media.	☐ Agree
F.1.12.	Vendor shall provide account services to cover IDFPF needs in the management of the above, as well as assist IDFPF in field activities and/or activations with key constituents (individuals, associations, and businesses).	☐ Agree
F.1.13.	Vendor shall manage subcontractors in the performance of services deriving out of, or ancillary to, the final scope of services, including the ability to retain qualified BEP subcontractors. The awarded Vendor shall be required to contractually commit to the BEP goal outlined in Section C.9. for subcontractors that have been certified as owned and controlled by persons who are minority, female or who have disabilities as defined in the Business Enterprise Program Act for Minorities, Females and Persons with Disabilities (BEP) (30 ILCS 575/1).	☐ Agree
F.1.14.	Vendor team and associated partners/subcontractors will be required to meet with IDFPF and their partners on an as-needed basis at their own expense at the IDFPF Chicago office location during normal business hours of 8:30AM through 5:00PM CST. Meetings may also occur virtually.	☐ Agree
F.1.15.	Vendor is required to advance all costs incurred. See Section E.8 for Invoicing Requirements.	☐ Agree
F.1.16.	Vendor shall work as an extension of IDFPF. Vendor staff's relevant experience and tenure at the Vendor is important, as well as their knowledge of Illinois and the Illinois Cannabis Programs. Collaboration as well as a strong attention to detail are all qualities Vendor staff must possess. It is important that the Vendor's staff be able to establish strong working relationships with any or all subcontractors and Department personnel with IDFPF.	☐ Agree
CONTRACT MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES		Vendor Acknowledgement of Contract Term
F.1.17.	Vendor will provide the following reports to IDFPF as required. - Monthly project status reports detailing status of all projects (ongoing, completed, next steps, etc.). - Additional reports or information regarding performance under this contract as may be reasonably required by IDFPF.	☐ Agree
F.1.18.	Vendor will retain the following information and provide to IDFPF upon request: - All source documentation and records of all campaign materials placed, and integrated services contracted, including verification that the current campaign ran. - All time billing documents for all services provided under this contract.	☐ Agree

F.1.19	IDFPR and Vendor will mutually agree upon a process that will allow for periodic assessment and feedback concerning the overall performance by the Vendor and its subcontractors.	☐ Agree
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By submitting an offer to this solicitation. The offeror agrees that they will meet the contract requirements in Section F.1.

F.2. MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS WITH EVIDENCE

Please check "Met" to each of the mandatory requirements for the proposed solution. An Offeror that does not provide substantiating evidence for each requirement will be disqualified and the rest of the proposal will not be scored.

These Mandatory Requirements shall be included in any contract resulting from this solicitation.

Please provide substantiating evidence in your Proposed Technical Solution. Use the column on the right to indicate the section and page number where your evidence/response to each item may be found. The State will evaluate Offeror's evidence/response to verify the mandatory requirement is met.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS WITH EVIDENCE			Offeror's Proposal Section and Page Number
F.2.1.	Offeror shall have an experienced staff, including senior-level account managers, each with five (5) years' experience in the subject matter related to this RFP (developing and implementing multi-year, state-wide, data-informed, and strategic communications and public education media campaigns). Offeror's staff shall be available to meet with IDFPR when required. If Offeror is awarded the contract, they shall always maintain adequate staffing to meet the needs of the account, as agreed upon between IDFPR and the awarded Vendor. Offeror shall submit resumes for key team members	☐ Met	
F.2.2.	Offeror shall provide one (1) example of a media campaign for clients in non-English.	☐ Met	
F.2.3.	Offeror shall provide a list of current clients from the last five (5) years. Please create and submit a spreadsheet with the following format: - Column A: Budget Range (i.e., \$0-\$1,000,000 and \$1,000,000+). You do not need to provide exact dollar amounts). - Column B: Client Name. - Column C: Year the client was acquired. - Column D: Brief description of campaigns assigned (1 sentence will suffice). - Column E: Whether the client is a government entity or a private business.	☐ Met	
F.2.4.	Offeror shall have in-house digital services or an existing relationship to provide seamless digital services.	☐ Met	

F.3. PROPOSED TECHNICAL SOLUTION – DESIRABLE ELEMENTS (600 points)

Please explain how your organization meets or will meet each of the desirable elements. Use the column on the right to indicate the section and page number of your proposal where your response to each item may be found.

PROPOSED TECHNICAL SOLUTION – DESIRABLE ELEMENTS		Point Value	Proposal Section and Page Number
RELEVANT EXPERIENCE: Offeror should have significant consumer experience where media campaigns support giving customers evidence-based data and resources information (e.g., increase in knowledge, support, or inquiries). A general understanding of the public sector is necessary and experience in education and tourism is preferred. Offeror's proposal should highlight where the Offeror has helped differentiate a brand in a highly complex and nuanced industry/market. Offeror's proposal should highlight the Offeror's experience creating effective marketing partnerships as a way to maximize the client's budget are of interest but not required. Subcontractors are allowed and, where relevant, Offeror's proposal should demonstrate their ability to manage relationships with subcontractors on behalf of the client. IDFPF prefers experiences connected to the client list provided in F.2.3. Mandatory Requirements with Evidence.		TOTAL POINTS 25	
F.3.1.	Offeror should include in their proposal past successful media campaigns and brand building while simultaneously increasing knowledge, support, or inquiries of that brand.	10	
F.3.2.	Offeror should demonstrate previous experience in providing evidence-based data and resources information campaigns.	10	
F.3.3.	Offeror should demonstrate experience managing subcontractors.	5	
MEDIA PLANNING AND BUYING: Offeror should provide full-service media planning and buying capabilities as required, either in-house or seamlessly integrated with an outside firm with which the Offeror has/or will have an established relationship. Offeror should demonstrate in their proposal previous successful and aggressive negotiation of price and sponsorships.		TOTAL POINTS 50	
F.3.4.	Offeror should have full-service media planning and buying capabilities or have a strategic partnership to meet this need.	20	
F.3.5.	Offeror should demonstrate abilities surrounding negotiation of price and value-added media and sponsorships, including connections and past relationships with media companies, community influencers and messengers, and businesses for ad and campaign material placement.	30	
DIGITAL CAPABILITIES/INTEGRATION: Offeror's services include design and maintenance of websites, creating and maintaining databases, creating and executing online marketing campaigns, creating e-Newsletters, and search functionality, optimization and integration. Offeror's proposal should demonstrate successful use of search engine optimization to achieve results for a client. Also of interest are examples showing digital integration across website, search and online campaigns that provided positive and measurable results. Offeror should have the ability to maintain and manage the existing content management system. This support includes ensuring the content management system is operating properly and to full capacity, troubleshooting and initiating periodic improvements/ enhancements as needed. It is important to demonstrate capability to host, manage, and maintain both the image library, videos, and the content management system database.		TOTAL POINTS 80	
F.3.6.	Offeror should have in-house design capability (e.g. Out-of-Home, e-communications and print publications) or an existing partnership to provide seamless design services.	25	
F.3.7.	Offeror's proposal should demonstrate an ability to create successfully integrated digital services effectively integrated into the overall advertising campaign that provide positive and measurable results. Digital services include website design and maintenance; creating and executing online marketing campaigns; creating e-Newsletters; and search functionality, optimization and integration.	30	

PROPOSED TECHNICAL SOLUTION – DESIRABLE ELEMENTS		Point Value	Proposal Section and Page Number
F.3.8.	Offeror should have a dedicated search, research, and assessment approach specifically assigned to manage search-engine optimization on behalf of clients.	25	
STRATEGIC MARKETING: Offeror should demonstrate the ability to oversee research projects on behalf of IDFPR while translating large amounts of consumer research and data into effective marketing strategies and campaigns that deliver positive, measurable results. Offeror should have account planning experience. It is important to take into consideration the consumer's interests and marketing trends, that include an annual advertising schedule, target markets, and budget allocation.		TOTAL POINTS 50	
F.3.9.	Offeror should demonstrate the ability to oversee research projects and translate research information into effective marketing strategies that deliver positive and measurable results.	25	
F.3.10.	Offeror should assess and document the real-time impact and efficacy of campaign messaging through quantitative and qualitative research methods.	25	
DESIGN (ONLINE AND OFFLINE): Offeror should provide in-house design services or have an existing partnership to provide seamless and timely design services (e.g. Out of Home, digital and print publications). At a minimum, the Offeror must have the ability to establish strategic partnerships to provide design services. Offeror's proposal should demonstrate how design elements are effectively integrated into overall advertising campaigns.		TOTAL POINTS 130	
F.3.11.	Offeror should have the ability to create educational media campaigns that are memorable and creative and that cross all mediums with seamless integration. Offeror must provide examples of work that is compelling and memorable and that spans a range of styles and tones. A creative portfolio containing five (5) TV spots, five (5) online/web executions (can be examples of website development, banner ads or pre-roll), five (5) social media examples (can include video), and a selection of five (5) print pieces (can be a mix of ads, collateral or out-of-home). All portfolio work submitted shall be examples of the Vendor's work within the last three (3) years. All work shall be clearly labeled with the client's name and year produced. All portions of the creative portfolio shall be submitted via BidBuy. 1. Offeror's creative portfolio should show that the Vendor has the ability to develop creative campaigns that are integrated across multiple mediums. 2. Offeror should submit examples that provided compelling, iconic and persuasive, spanning a range of styles and tones. 3. Offeror's submission should show positive and measurable results.	100 (25 for TV) (25 for online/web) (25 for social media) (25 print/physical)	
F.3.12.	Offeror must be able to explain the results and impact from each campaign, including how the impact was assessed and evaluated by the client.	30	
PROJECT RESOURCES: The Vendor should submit an informative and entertaining team biography to give the Department the opportunity to learn about the team members, their experience, and to give a sense of the culture of the Vendor and how they would be of benefit to IDFPR. This is an opportunity for the evaluation team to be introduced to the Offeror's media campaign team.		TOTAL POINTS 25	
F.3.13.	Offeror's submission should provide a sense of the Vendor culture that would benefit IDFPR and demonstrate the Vendor's creative thinking by portraying the day-to-day team members in an informative and entertaining manner.	5	
F.3.14.	Offeror's submission should also include resumes of the team members assigned to this campaign, demonstrating how their expertise aligns with IDFPR and this RFP.	20	
PROJECT PLANNING: Offeror's proposal should demonstrate understanding of what is being requested for this media campaign(s). Offeror should have the ability to provide project management services, such as scheduling, developing and implementing timelines, status meetings and reports, identifying and resolving campaign risks and issues, and maintaining all project materials. Offeror should provide their ability to develop and refine campaign messaging, creative content, target audience, partners and messengers, as well as mediums of outreach. Offeror should display their distributing and promoting efforts of media content. Offeror should provide continued improvements through the life cycle of campaigns.		TOTAL POINTS 120	

PROPOSED TECHNICAL SOLUTION – DESIRABLE ELEMENTS		Point Value	Proposal Section and Page Number
F.3.15.	Offeror's submission should demonstrate the ability to manage a media campaign that crosses multiple mediums, addresses multiple target audiences, with many stakeholders to ensure deadlines are met. Offeror must provide three (3) examples with timelines for implementing a complex media campaign.	20	
F.3.16.	Offeror's submission should feature dynamic and creative content that is compliant with mediums' publishing policies, as well as federal, state, and local laws, and integrated with programmatic ad networks to manage cannabis campaign messaging.	20	
F.3.17.	Offeror's submission should include and highlight strengths and challenges in approaching the proposed target audiences that encompass a mix of demographics and age groups, as outlined in the RFP above. The proposal should explain past experiences reaching these target audiences and possible methods to reach those audiences with a non-judgmental, informative, and evidence-based campaign.	20	
F.3.18.	Offeror's proposal should identify and define the ways to connect with strategic allies, community voices, and influencers or brand ambassadors who can amplify and deliver the campaign messages. It should outline the criteria for selecting partners to ensure credibility, compliance, and maximum audience resonance.	20	
F.3.19.	Offeror's proposal should explain how they will evaluate mediums of outreach and how promotional efforts will be aligned to most effectively communicate the goals of the campaign: • Benefits of the legal Illinois cannabis market. • Risks of the illicit market. • Responsible use and consumption. • Available resources for cannabis consumers and medical patients in Illinois.	20	
F.3.20.	Offeror should demonstrate that their messaging campaigns represent ongoing performance metrics and data-driven optimization to get the most impact from media campaign dollars. The Offeror should describe past experiences assessing and evaluating of messaging to adapt and address the goals of campaigns.	20	
PHASED APPROACH: Offeror's proposal should explain how they will use a phased approach, with milestones and checkpoints to ensure alignment on content, messaging, and strategy throughout rollout of the media campaign(s). The proposal should suggest how the phases inter-relate or overlap and how they will assist in ensuring all deliverables are provided during the campaign and completed by the end of the initial contract term. The phases are currently: Phase I: Research & Concept Development Phase II: Creative Content Development and Message Testing Phase III: Execution and Campaign Rollout Phase IV: Ongoing Review of Campaign Impact and Metrics Phase V: Campaign Impact Report, State Training, and Hand-Off		TOTAL POINTS 120	
F.3.21.	Offeror should have experience researching consumer behavior, knowledge gaps, and how to persuasively and effectively connect with target audiences to address those gaps.	30	
F.3.22.	Offeror's proposal should describe experience and approach to creative content development, message testing and refinement, and feedback loop improvements based on qualitative and quantitative assessments of impact and key performance indicators.	30	
F.3.23.	Offeror's proposal should have a plan for how phases interrelate, overlap, and accomplish full rollout within the initial contract term.	30	
F.3.24.	Offeror should demonstrate ability to transition campaign to the State at the end of the contract, including transitioning creative content, ad placement contracts, and recommendations for next steps.	30	

F.4. COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

Commitment to Diversity Vendor Guidance including Vendor Submission Forms are located on the Chief Procurement Officer for General Service's website at

<https://cpo-general.illinois.gov/commitment-to-diversity/c2d-guidance.html> and on the BidBuy posting under "File Attachments:"

F.5. DEMONSTRATIONS (400 points)

Notice to Offerors to schedule demonstrations will be sent out with 10 business days advanced notice with further details, which will include location, Webex information and time limits.

DEMONSTRATIONS		Point Value (TOTAL 400)
F.5.1.	Proposal demonstrates Offeror's understanding of Illinois' cannabis programs and the requested media campaign.	100
F.5.2.	Proposal demonstrates Offeror used a strategic, research-based approach when developing the presentation.	100
F.5.3.	Demonstrates Offeror's ability to deliver unique and well-crafted creative assets that are brand focused.	100
F.5.4.	Demonstrates Offeror's depth of experience and team capabilities.	100

F.6. PRICING

F.6.1. FORMAT OF PRICING:

F.6.1.1. Offeror shall submit pricing in the Quote Items Tab on BidBuy, based on the terms and conditions set forth in this Request for Proposal Solicitation Document. Offeror's price offer shall serve as the basis for the compensation terms of the resulting contract. Failure to submit pricing in the Items Tab on BidBuy may render Offeror's entire Offer non-responsive and ineligible for award. Note: any pricing entered in the Unit Cost of the Items Tab will be locked until after Technical and Commitment to Diversity Evaluations are complete. Do **not** enter cost, pricing, or any discount information in the Alternate Description field. **Entering cost, pricing or discount information in the Alternate Description may result in disqualification.**

F.6.2. TYPE OF PRICING: The Illinois Office of the Comptroller requires the State to indicate whether the contract pricing is firm or estimated at the

time it is submitted for obligation. Pricing pursuant to this contract is estimated.

F.6.3. EXPENSES ALLOWED: Expenses are not allowed.

F.6.4. TAXES: Pricing shall not include any taxes unless accompanied by proof the State is subject to the tax. If necessary, Offeror may request the applicable agency's Illinois tax exemption number and federal tax exemption information.

F.6.5. OFFEROR'S PRICING OFFER: Enter pricing in the line items of BidBuy.

F.6.5.1. Renewal Compensation: If the contract is renewed, the price shall be at the same rate as for the initial term unless a different price is submitted by the Offeror. The formula for determining the renewal compensation is the same as the initial term pricing.

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Section G. ATTACHMENTS AND EXHIBITS

Attachment A Campaign Phases

Attachment B Target Audience

Attachment C Written Response Template

In compliance with the State and Federal Constitutions, the Illinois Human Rights Act, the U.S. Civil Rights Act, and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act, the State of Illinois does not discriminate in employment, contracts, or any other activity.

The State of Illinois encourages prospective vendors to consider hiring qualified veterans and Illinois residents discharged from any Illinois adult correctional center, in appropriate circumstances.