

**Illinois Department of Public Health
 COVID-19 Hotline
 Request for Proposal
 DUE: August 17, 2020 5:00 p.m. CST**

Background

The State of Illinois seeks a private sector proposal to provide a hotline to provide information to healthcare providers and the general public to respond to COVID-19 pandemic-specific questions. The State will evaluate the proposals and make one award for the entire State of Illinois for all-inclusive hotline services. An award will be made to a vendor that can fulfill all the services requested. Partial awards will not be considered. However, the vendor may engage subcontractors to perform part or all of the services. If subcontractors will be engaged, the vendor must include a complete list of all subcontractors, their addresses, and a description of the work each subcontractor will be performing in the proposal.

At the direction of the State, the vendor selected will stand up and operate a call center that is scalable in both number of calls and types of calls.

The hours of operation for the hotline will be 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., seven days per week, for the term of the contract. The vendor selected will be expected to utilize the most current Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, provide the most current information available, and collaborate with IDPH throughout the contract period, in accordance with the terms of the contract. The vendor should have the capacity to receive up to 2,500 calls per week (see example below), including both public health-related and non-public health-related questions. The vendor shall be able to receive in excess of 2,500 calls per week as necessary.

Service Dates	Total Calls		Avg # Calls Daily	
	Number	Percent Change	Number	Percent Change
6/4/20-6/10/20	1,345		192	
6/11/20-6/17/20	1,327	-1.34%	190	-1.04%
6/18/20-6/24/20	1,303	-1.81%	186	-2.11%
6/25/20-7/1/20	1,846	41.67%	263	41.40%
7/2/20-7/8/20	2,530	37.05%	361	37.26%
7/9/20-7/15/20	2,515	-0.59%	359	-0.55%

The vendor selected will be expected to provide these services for the term of the contract, which is anticipated to be six months from contract execution. The contract may be extended at the State’s discretion.

The State will provide a State issued toll-free number (“Hotline Number” or “Hotline”) to the vendor’s designated direct inward dialing (DID) number. The State will provide IDPH and CDC guidance

information to adequately respond to inquiries regarding COVID-19 to the extent available. The State will provide a minimum of one IDPH staff available for consultation with the vendor, the vendor's staff, and the vendor's subcontractors on the COVID-19 guidance information provided. The State will disconnect the Hotline Number from the vendor's DID number upon expiration or termination of the contract.

The vendor must respond to all calls to the Hotline Number in a timely manner based on minimum call volume and staffing levels dictated by historical call volume levels shown in Attachment A. Staff will be required to field questions (see Attachment B for Frequently Asked Questions) from and provide information to the general public, healthcare providers, and others stakeholders, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., seven days per week.

The vendor must employ at least one medical professional licensed to provide direct patient care in Illinois who will be available at all times to provide guidance to Hotline staff. The vendor must provide scalable staffing to handle a surge of calls to the Hotline Number. Hotline staff should have a minimum of two years prior experience in the field of healthcare and/or public health. IDPH reserves the right to review the backgrounds and approve the staff assigned to answer calls and questions for the Hotline.

The vendor must schedule bilingual Hotline staff to answer calls Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. Hotline staff, under continuous and direct supervision of the vendor, will respond to Hotline Number calls and inquiries using only information, documentation, training, and directions provided by IDPH in accordance with current CDC guidelines and guidance information related to the COVID-19. The vendor will utilize Interactive Voice Response (IVR), and the vendor staff and/or subcontractor staff will answer questions not addressed by IVR at the caller's option.

The vendor will submit weekly invoices which reflect daily call volume, weekly reports on number of calls and types of calls, and monthly reports of trending data on number of calls and types of calls.

The vendor must provide all equipment (e.g., phones, computers, routers, etc.) required for Hotline staff in anticipation of, or in response to, call volume at vendor's expense. Any equipment acquired by the vendor for use under the contract will remain property of the vendor.

The proposal must also include the vendor's current insurance coverage plan applicable to the proposed operations and continuing operational management of all proposed deliverables for this contract during the contract period. The insurance coverage must meet the State's standard contract terms shown in Attachment C.

The proposal must provide for the employment of, or contract with, a supervising physician, physician assistant, advanced practice nurse, or registered nurse licensed to provide direct patient care in Illinois. Staff engaged in the performance of this contract, including subcontractors, will be supervised and employed by the vendor, and are not considered employees of the State.

Key Dates

August 7, 2020	RFP released
August 11, 2020	All questions from prospective vendors due via email to Ashley.E.Dorworth@illinois.gov.
August 13, 2020	Answers to questions from prospective vendors released via IDPH COVID-19 website link below: http://www.dph.illinois.gov/rfp/covid-19-hotline-rfp
August 17, 2020	Submissions due via email to Ashley.E.Dorworth@illinois.gov not later than 5:00 p.m. CST
August 21, 2020 (estimated):	Contract award
September 1, 2020	Start date for hotline

Directions

The State is seeking proposals from interested vendors to provide a Hotline service to respond to calls specific to COVID-19.

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

- Name of vendor, vendor's address and contact person, including work phone, cell phone, and e-mail address.
- Operational plan (not to exceed ten pages total) that describes the vendor's proposal for each of the functions described in the Scope of Work stated below to be performed.
- Timeline (not to exceed two pages) that includes being fully operational by September 1, 2020.
- Plan for data collection, tracking, and daily submission of a call log to the State. All data must be exportable to Excel or otherwise transferrable to the State in an agreed-upon format.
- Plan for hiring and training vendor's staff on the rapidly evolving COVID-19 information as it becomes available.
- Plan for provision of language access services.
- References, which shall include the company names and company representative's contact information (name, title, email and phone number) for three entities for whom the vendor has provided the same or similar services described in this RFP and of equal or greater call volumes.
- Proposed pricing (submitted separately on the attached budget template).

Proposals must be submitted via email no later than 5:00 p.m. CST on Monday, August 17, 2020 to:

Ashley Dorworth
Illinois Department of Public Health
Office of Preparedness and Response
Ashley.E.Dorworth@illinois.gov

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

Scope of Work

The State seeks to award one contract for a single, state-wide COVID-19 Hotline to provide information to callers. The State seeks proposals that include all of the following Hotline operations:

- 1) Utilization of Interactive Voice Response (IVR).
 - a. The IVR will address frequently asked questions (FAQs) in both English and Spanish, which will be updated as directed by the State.
 - b. The IVR system will be able to transfer calls to other State agencies or health care providers as dictated by IDPH.
- 2) Provision of sufficient staff to answer questions not addressed by IVR and at the caller's option.
 - a. Vendor will develop a Hotline staffing plan, including provisions for increasing Hotline staff, as necessary.
 - b. Vendor will provide all equipment necessary for Hotline staff activities.
 - c. Vendor will demonstrate capacity to receive up to 2,500 calls per week.
 - d. Vendor will provide adequate training in response to frequently updated scripts and guidance information.
- 3) Staffing at least one physician, physician assistant, advanced practice nurse, or registered nurse licensed to provide direct patient care in Illinois, available at all times, to provide the following:
 - a. Support for Hotline staff either onsite or remotely at all times when the current script does not address callers' questions.
 - b. Act as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) to work jointly with IDPH to develop updated scripts and training.
- 4) Tracking all inquiries and providing a daily written report to IDPH by 5:00 p.m. CST, which includes the following information:
 - a. Case number;
 - b. Date and time of call;
 - c. Caller zip code and county;
 - d. Caller's reason for calling including the questions the caller posed;
 - e. Information provided to the caller by vendor's staff;
 - f. Healthcare provider's institution, employer, or business affiliation, if applicable; and
 - g. For IVR calls, reports must include the number of callers and which prompt was selected and which message each caller received.
- 5) Providing weekly invoices reflecting daily Hotline call volumes, time spent on revisions to the FAQ, and the purpose of the revisions.

Additional Requirements

- 1) There is a Business Enterprise Program (BEP) target of 1% for this solicitation. Vendor submissions should include all BEP target information through a Utilization Plan (see attachment F). Failure to submit a Utilization Plan shall render the offer non-responsive. Businesses included in Utilization Plans as meeting BEP requirements as prime vendors or subcontractors must be certified by the Department of Central Management Services as BEP vendors. Vendors may visit <https://cms.diversitycompliance.com/> to search for certified BEP vendors. The NIGP codes used to calculate the Business Enterprise Goal, and a list of vendors associated with those codes, are attached to this solicitation as Attachment E. This is not an all-encompassing list of vendors that may be used as subcontractors to fulfill this goal. If the vendor has a potential subcontracting opportunity for goods or services that would be considered applicable to this contract, the vendor may use that subcontractor to fulfill the BEP goal, assuming that the subcontractor is BEP certified with the State of Illinois.
- 2) Vendor must demonstrate that they will follow best practices related to the distribution of information to healthcare providers and other callers.
- 3) Vendor understands that information disseminated will evolve over time as CDC and IDPH guidance is updated and new data and public options become available.
- 4) Any clinical personnel supplied by the vendor to meet the hotline staff support and SME requirement will be required to demonstrate the necessary qualifications to perform any medical services required under the contract.
 - a. Specific medical licensure requirements, regulatory statute, and administrative rules for various professions can be downloaded from <https://www.idfpr.com>
- 5) Prevailing Wage Rates shall apply.
- 6) Vendor's proposed flat-fee pricing shall be inclusive of all costs.

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

<u>Evaluation Elements</u>
Complete contact information of vendor to include name of vendor, vendor's address and contact person, including work phone, cell phone, and e-mail address.
Operational plan that addresses each of the functions described in the Scope of Work
Timeline for becoming fully operational by September 1, 2020
Plan for data collection, tracking, and daily submission of a call log to the State

Plan for hiring and training vendor's staff
Plan for provision of language access services
3 references with complete contact information
Demonstration of prior history of operating a hotline of similar capacity and scope as described in the RFP
Vendor is BEP certified with the State of Illinois and/or names subcontractor(s) that are BEP certified with the State of Illinois
Demonstration that vendor will follow best practices related to the distribution of information to healthcare providers and the general public.
Proposed Pricing (submitted separately)