

# COVID-19 PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
AUGUST 2020



**T H E C E N T E R**  
*at Sierra Health Foundation*

This opportunity is provided by The Center at Sierra Health Foundation in partnership with the State of California

The Center at Sierra Health Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization bringing people, ideas and infrastructure together to create a collective impact that reduces health disparities and improves community health for the underserved living in California. For information about The Center, visit [www.shfcenter.org](http://www.shfcenter.org).

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Campaign Background	1
II. Scope of Work	1
A. Priority Audiences	1
B. Design and Methodology	2
C. Budget and Timeframe	2
III. Eligibility and Selection Process	2
A. Selection Criteria	2
B. Evaluation and Selection Process	3
IV. Proposer's Capability Section Guidelines	4
V. Narrative Scope of Work Section Guidelines	4
VI. Proposed Project Team Section Guidelines	7
VII. Budget and Budget Narrative Section Guidelines	7
A. Itemized Budget	7
B. Budget Narrative	7
VIII. Other Required Application Attachments	8
IX. Application Timeline and Guidelines	8
X. Questions	8
XI. Submission Instructions	8

## READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS AND CRITERIA CAREFULLY

### I. CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND

The state's COVID-19 public awareness campaign launched in March 2020 and included rapid deployment of messaging to encourage Californians to follow public health safety measures to keep them and others safe and prevent the spread of the virus. The campaign also promoted new programs and financial support (such as disability, paid sick, and family leave) for Californians impacted by COVID, and highlights the importance of participating in contact tracing.

A statewide campaign is critical to the state's efforts to prevent further escalation of the virus that threatens lives and the ability to safely reopen the California economy and communities. Moving forward, it will continue to promote supportive financial and social programs and behavior change efforts to motivate and normalize preventive actions, such as the use of wearing a face mask. In addition, the campaign will cover other key messages for disproportionately impacted populations and communities, including essential workers and their employers. The campaign will also continue to use culturally and linguistically competent approaches, which are essential to its effectiveness.

The Center at Sierra Health Foundation has partnered with the State of California to serve as the management entity for the statewide campaign. The Center was founded by Sierra Health Foundation in 2012 as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. With offices in Sacramento and Fresno, The Center pursues the promise of health and racial equity and racial justice in communities across California. Leveraging leadership, operational and funding support from Sierra Health Foundation and its partners, The Center establishes investment partnerships with public and private funders; community members; community organizations; national, state, and local government agencies; nonprofits; and businesses.

### II. SCOPE OF WORK

The Center is seeking an experienced full-service communications firm to lead the next phase of the public awareness campaign. Because we are prioritizing messaging and support for communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, we specifically encourage applications from firms that are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and that engage in partnerships that demonstrate real diversity in leadership and strong community connections. The duration of this contract is approximately one year, from late-August 2020 through July 2021. Due to the evolving nature of this public health crisis, timelines and priorities can shift. The total budget for this project should not exceed \$85 million, dependent on a variety of factors. See below for guidance on how to present the budget and budget narrative.

The selected firm will serve as the primary contractor for the design and implementation of a statewide public awareness campaign. The firm will report directly to The Center at Sierra Health Foundation and work in partnership with The State of California, The Center and stakeholders, subcontractors, and vendors. The campaign must align with the goal of educating Californians about how to stay safe, do their part to slow the spread of COVID-19, and access resources available to them.

#### A. PRIORITY AUDIENCES

The campaign will prioritize needs of those whom current public health data show to be disproportionately impacted by the virus, including but not limited to, Latinx and Black individuals and families, immigrants, young "invincibles," essential workers, employers, multigenerational households, elderly, and immunocompromised individuals. Public health data will also help inform target areas. Priority communities, populations and languages will continue to evolve and be determined based on ongoing data review and scientific research.

## B. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The firm selected for this campaign will need to:

- Spearhead a nimble multimedia paid media strategy.
- Develop consumer-tested social content including, but not limited to, graphic design, video, radio, digital production, and webcopy.
- Develop and execute strategic, cost-effective advertising placement and media partnerships, including strong in-kind and added value.
- Develop and execute an earned media strategy that engages trusted messengers.
- Support an influencer strategy and develop partnerships with influencer networks.
- Develop partnerships to support targeted efforts to employers, workers, and their families.
- Engage community based organizations (CBOs) to support culturally competent approaches and information dissemination.
- Support transition from the first phase (March through July 2020), including an assessment and strategy for leveraging existing content and learnings.

## C. BUDGET AND TIMEFRAME

The duration of the contract is from late-August 2020 through July 2021. The total budget should not exceed \$85 million. Based on the Scope of Work, the budget should take into consideration all anticipated costs, including the following priorities\*:

- Paid Media
- Research
- Creative content and production
- Staff and personnel costs
- Subcontractors, including ethnic media, should be reflected in the budget

\*Other categories may be added based on strategy

## III. ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION PROCESS

Eligible applicants are full-service communications, advertising, and public affairs agencies, private and nonprofit consulting firms, and other entities qualified to propose by demonstrated capacity to accomplish the goals of the campaign and capability to execute the scope of work.

### A. SELECTION CRITERIA

The most competitive applications (inclusive of narrative sections, work plan, staff resumes, and other materials) will demonstrate:

- A record of success leading large-scale, complex awareness and/or behavior change campaigns directed at diverse audiences across race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status, in fast-moving environments.
- Commitment to positive change, social justice, and equity.
- Dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion in staffing, partnerships, and leadership at the firm and on the project team.
- A strong, client-first work ethic and willingness to adapt to changing circumstances.
- Expertise developing, leading, and implementing large-scale strategic campaigns that involve working with multiple subcontractors and vendors.
- Expertise in designing and executing qualitative and quantitative research.
- Expertise in interpreting data to create effective messaging to targeted audiences in various demographic and geographic groups.
- Expertise in developing high-quality, data-supported, culturally competent, and multilingual creative content for all platforms—video, audio, digital and non-traditional.

- Expertise in creating high-impact, strategic media plans that combine paid, earned, and social tactics for maximum reach and effect.
- Expertise in media buying with a strong track record of maximizing resources to reach targeted audiences, including diverse and hard to reach Californians, and history of working in partnership with ethnic media.
- Expertise in developing and executing earned media, including history of working in partnership with ethnic media.
- Experience working or engaging with community-based organizations from racial, ethnic, and other disproportionately affected communities as part of outreach efforts.
- Ability to track and monitor campaigns and make adjustments to content and placement as needed.
- Experience partnering with and navigating relationships with government, philanthropy, and community-based organizations to deliver effective campaigns that reflect the sensitivities of such organizations to message content and tone.
- Ability to effectively scale and adapt campaigns based on budget, analysis of impact, and insights from iterative phases of work.

## B. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Applications submitted by the deadline and meeting the application guidelines will be evaluated by the degree to which the criteria above are met, as well as the qualifications of the staff, completeness with regard to the required elements and feasibility of the proposed plans. Applicants who submit the highest ranked proposals based on the evaluation and selection criteria will be invited for an interview with the review committee, which will include community experts in health and racial equity and large-scale public health campaigns, as well as The Center staff.

Up to three finalists may be invited to discuss their proposals with the review committee. Interviews are currently scheduled to take place on August 24. If invited, further information will be shared on how to prepare for the interview. The final selection will be based on the results of the interviews and recommendations from the review committee to The Center.

Each application will be reviewed and scored on the following criteria:

- **Proposer's Capability Section** – The extent to which the proposer (with partners/sub-contractors, if applicable) demonstrate the characteristics identified under the guidelines including, but not limited to, the proposer's overall capabilities; experience performing comparable services; firm's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and history in working with community-based organizations with deep ties to cultural and ethnic groups, as well as ethnic media experts and firms **(25 points)**
- **Narrative Scope of Work Section** – The extent to which the proposer provides plans that include the required elements and support the above selection criteria, as well as the adequacy of timelines; soundness and comprehensiveness of designs and approaches; likelihood of proposed approaches and methods to reach targeted populations and effectiveness of approaches toward public health and behavior change campaign; and adequacy of a detailed work plan to identify specific tasks, activities functions, deliverables and partners **(25 points)**
- **Project Team and Resumes** – The adequacy of labor allocation, number of team members, assigned responsibilities, staff experience, qualifications, and capability **(15 points)**
- **Budget and Budget Narrative** – The budget should not exceed \$85 million; the total amount proposed will be

taken into consideration, including cost effective media placement to maximize target audience exposure, strong media ‘added value,’ and commission rate for media placement and production **(20 points)**

- Other required proposal attachments **(15 points)**

**Grand Total (100 points)**

## **IV. PROPOSER’S CAPABILITY SECTION GUIDELINES (2 PAGES)**

The Proposer’s Capability section should provide evidence that the proposer and its partners/sub-contractors have the characteristics, experience, and expertise needed to carry out the project effectively.

The Proposer’s Capability section should be no more than 2 pages and should describe the proposer’s and proposer partners/sub-contractors’:

- Commitment to positive change, social justice, and equity.
- Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in staffing, partnerships, and leadership at the firm and on the project team.
- Experience leading large-scale, complex awareness and/or behavior change campaign.
- Experience planning and implementing effective campaigns directed to priority audiences as noted in section II (A).
- Ability to adapt to changing circumstances in fast moving environments in close consultation with and under the direction of the client.
- Experience of working with community-based organizations with deep ties to cultural and ethnic groups, as well as ethnic media experts and firms.
- Experience partnering with and navigating relationships with government and philanthropy to deliver effective campaigns.

- Expertise in media buying with strong track record of maximizing resources to reach targeted audiences, including diverse and hard to reach Californians, including the use of in-language, trans-adapted, and culturally relevant creative.
- Ability to track and monitor campaigns and make adjustments to content and placement as needed.
- Ability to effectively scale and adapt campaigns based on budget, analysis of impact and insights from iterative phases of work.

## **V. NARRATIVE SCOPE OF WORK SECTION GUIDELINES (10 PAGES)**

The Narrative Scope of Work Section should detail your plan for the overall Scope of Work. The vendor that is selected will work with The Center and Governor’s Office to finalize a detailed plan, schedule, and budget during the first two weeks of the contract.

The Narrative Scope of Work Section should be no longer than 10 pages (not including the sample media plan). It should provide an overall strategy that demonstrates an understanding of the purpose of the project and supports an effective COVID-19 outreach and education strategy among populations at high risk for COVID-19 and death from COVID-19.

The section should include the following elements: (A) a comprehensive campaign plan; (B) plans for producing assets; (C) media buying plan; and (D) a project monitoring, management and reporting plan. If detailed plans for producing assets or plans for reaching specific cultural and ethnic communities cannot be provided without further research and information, the information needed and the steps that will be taken to develop a plan should be described.

#### **A. Comprehensive campaign plan, including plans to:**

1. Develop a statewide communication strategy that leverages behavior change tactics, is cost-efficient and maximizes reach to priority audience communities, including populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 based on internal and external research. Communities and populations will continue to evolve over time, and the contractor must be nimble and flexible to address these fluctuations.
2. Utilize market analysis to provide information about specific target audiences, market segmentation, most effective media placement recommendations, campaign effectiveness analysis, how to best position COVID-19 messages and creative relative to other social marketing, and the relative merit of selected strategies and messages.
3. Strategies specific to California communities experiencing highest rates of positivity and exposure to COVID-19, as well as continue to share messaging to the general public as a secondary priority. Strategy and tactics must be data-informed and be inclusive of populations such as those listed above. Community and population specific campaign efforts are recommended for greater effectiveness and impact.
4. As needed, develop and manage collaborative partnerships with vendors and subcontractors, especially with subcontractors with deep ties and reach to the target populations.
5. Build upon the existing public awareness campaign assets developed by the Governor's Office and California Department of Public Health (CDPH), such as broadcast PSA's for radio and tv, out-of-home advertising, social and digital ads, and utilize the current California for All branding. Content can be found at [toolkit.covid.ca.gov](https://toolkit.covid.ca.gov).

#### **B. Asset Production Plan describing the conceptualization, development, pre-testing, and production of assets, including :**

1. Conceptualize, develop, pre-test, and produce assets, including activities such as:
  - a. Conduct formative research on the effectiveness of creative concepts via recommended testing methods (focus groups, online testing).
  - b. Utilize and/or adapt existing State of California and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention assets, where applicable.
  - c. Build on existing State outreach to community based organizations to secure their insights, feedback, and support, as well as an avenue for content dissemination.
  - d. Develop creative brief(s), including campaign strategy statement outlining potential settings, messages, message variables (tone, appeal), and key messaging.
  - e. Secure the most cost-effective licensing buy-outs and talent agreements.
  - f. Creative production should emphasize no or minimal live action production shoots.
  - g. Anticipate changes based on consumer research, public health recommendations and/or scientific advancements.
2. Ensure that facts in new ads are valid and consistent with scientific direction from the State. Obtain legal review and network clearance of ads, prior to production, when necessary.
3. Maintain, develop, and update content and materials for the State's open-source COVID-19 response toolkit page(s) and interactive digital assets:
  - a. Create content and graphics that can be used by the State, partners and the public.

- b. Provide graphic design, copy-writing, editing, and related services needed for a diverse set of content including, but not limited to, video and digital assets. Content shall be designed to optimize the user's experience across web platforms, including the growing number of mobile/device users.
- 4. Provide social media content to optimize the user's experience across social media platforms.
- 5. Provide translation and adaptation services and coordination.
- 6. Provide in-language communication assets that must include English, Spanish, Chinese (traditional and simplified), Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, and Arabic, with the possibility of more.
- 7. Deliver masters of all produced creative and messaging in requested formats to the State, for the purpose of archiving.
- 8. Upon request, create taggable versions of ads for use by state and local programs.

**C. Create media buying plans that align with the strategic plan and effectively reach campaign specific target populations, including:**

- 1. Negotiate the most cost-effective media placement to maximize target audience exposure with the recommended mediums to best reach target populations.
- 2. Develop media partnerships, especially with ethnic media experts that provide added value and additional opportunities for creative/innovative partnerships.
- 3. Collaborate with State staff to consult best practices, evidence base, and outcomes of previous campaign efforts for decisions about obtaining adequate Gross Rating Points and campaign intensity levels.
- 4. Report on the campaign's implementation and outcomes, including media monitoring and optimization, summarized quarterly media buy reports and post-analysis, and a summary evaluation of the effectiveness of media placement.
- 5. Provide detailed reports of media placement upon request, that shall include detailed information on the following actualized media:
  - a. Total impressions delivered, as applicable to each medium
  - b. Actual ratings delivered, as applicable for broadcast media
  - c. Target demographics, e.g., age, gender, racial/ethnic group used for planning and reconciling media performance
  - d. Detail by vendor, network or station for each designated media market (DMA), as applicable
  - e. Dayparts by market, as applicable. Days aired and time(s) of day, upon request
  - f. For digital, the click-through rates and cost per click or the agreed upon key performance indicator
  - g. Third party measurement and detailed viewer data, as available, when requested by the State
  - h. Provide a media buy plan that includes outreach strategies and tactics and budget details for a sample \$5 million plan
- 6. Craft an earned media approach that connects trusted messengers and public health officials to target audiences.

**D. Project monitoring, management, and reporting plan for keeping the State apprised of all campaign activities, current personnel and subcontractors responsible for activities, and monitoring the effectiveness and cost efficiency of these activities. Expectations include:**

- 1. Provide an overall timeline.
- 2. At a minimum, weekly status and insight reports and



monthly budget summaries will be provided by the Contractor to the State and The Center at Sierra Health Foundation, in a format approved by the State, with the assistance of The Center at Sierra Health Foundation, with additional reporting required at the discretion of State during peak activity periods. Weekly status reports from the Contractor and subcontractors shall contain the following information at a minimum:

- a. A daily update on priority action items and items pending review and approval.
- b. Provide at minimum weekly oral status reports by telephone conferences regarding activities of the campaign. Any community-focused and ethnic media subcontractors deemed necessary shall participate directly in status calls.
- c. Provide technical assistance and training to the State and partner organizations as needed.

## VI. PROPOSED PROJECT TEAM SECTION GUIDELINES (2 PAGES)

The Project Team Section should provide evidence that the members of the project team collectively have the characteristics, experience, and expertise needed to carry out the project effectively.

The Project Team Section should be no more than 2 pages and should identify each member of the project team and describe how the team demonstrates:

- Expertise in designing and executing qualitative and quantitative research.
- Expertise in interpreting data to create effective messaging to targeted audiences in various demographic and geographic groups.
- Expertise in producing high-quality, data-supported, culturally competent and multilingual creative content for all platforms.

- Expertise in creating high-impact, strategic media plans that combine paid, earned and social tactics for maximum reach and effect.
- Expertise in developing and executing earned media, including history of working in partnership with ethnic media.
- Experience working or engaging with racial and ethnic community based organizations as part of outreach efforts.

Resumes of the project team are required attachments and will not be counted against the page limit for this section.

## VII. BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE SECTION GUIDELINES

### A. Itemized Budget

The total budget should not exceed \$85 million, inclusive of limited travel and expenses. All items budgeted must be inclusive of all costs, including taxes and fees, in U.S. dollars.

### B. Budget Narrative

In no more than two pages, please describe the bases for the estimated costs for the design and the implementation phases. Include the hourly rates of each of the members of the communications team and their respective time requirements to this project, estimated travel expenses, and other operational expenses such as subcontractor costs, including community-focused and ethnic media experts required to complete the proposed design and the implementation plan for the project. Please be as clear as possible on the following items:

- Cost-effective media placement to maximize target audience exposure
- Strong media ‘added value’
- Commission rate for media placement and production

## VIII. OTHER REQUIRED APPLICATION ATTACHMENTS

In addition to the proposal narrative sections, the proposed budget, and justification for the proposed budget, applicants must include the following attachments:

- 1-page resumes for proposed campaign team members of primary applicant organization only
- 2-3 case studies that demonstrate qualifications – links to products may be provided instead of the work products themselves
- Sample \$5 million media buying plan
- 2-3 references who can speak to the primary applicant organization's demonstrated commitment to equity and excellence

## IX. APPLICATION TIMELINE AND GUIDELINES

At The Center's discretion, the timeline below is subject to change to best meet programmatic needs and funder requirements.

### APPLICATION DEADLINE:

August 13, 2020, at 5 p.m. (Pacific Time)

### REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS:

August 14-21, 2020

### INTERVIEWS WITH FINALIST CANDIDATES:

August 24, 2020

### CONTRACT FINALIZED:

Week of August 24, 2020

### CONTRACT START

DATE: August 31, 2020

## X. QUESTIONS

Questions about the Request for Proposal can be submitted via email to The Center at Sierra Health Foundation Communications Officer Samantha Garcia at [sgarcia@sierrahealth.org](mailto:sgarcia@sierrahealth.org). Inquiries and questions will not be accepted after 5:00 p.m. (Pacific Time) on Wednesday, August 12, 2020. Review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document for additional information.

### Email Inquiries

Email Address: [sgarcia@sierrahealth.org](mailto:sgarcia@sierrahealth.org)

Subject: Questions – COVID-19 Public Awareness Campaign

We will only respond to inquiries by email. We will not be able to respond to phone calls, as we are working from home during the pandemic.

## XI. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applying organizations must submit their proposals via email to [centergrants@shfcenter.org](mailto:centergrants@shfcenter.org) on or before Thursday, August 13, 2020, at 5 p.m. (Pacific Time). Proposals received after the due date/time will not be reviewed. Submission before the deadline date is advised in case you experience technical difficulties with submitting your proposal. We may not be able to respond to your requests for help on the deadline date.

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Applications received after the above deadline may not be considered.

For technical assistance in submitting a grant application, please email [centergrants@shfcenter.org](mailto:centergrants@shfcenter.org)

### Proposal Submission Address via email:

Email Address:  
[centergrants@shfcenter.org](mailto:centergrants@shfcenter.org)

Subject: COVID-19 Public Awareness  
Campaign Proposal Submission

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

### Required Proposal Attachments

- ☐ Proposer's Capability - 2 pages
- ☐ Narrative Scope of Work - 10 pages
  - Comprehensive campaign plan
  - Asset Production Plan
  - Media Buy Approach
    - Sample \$5 million media buying plan  
(not included in page limit)
  - Project monitoring, management and reporting plan
- ☐ Proposed Project Team - 2 pages
  - Brief resumes of proposed staff, no more than 1-page resume for each project team member (not included in page limit)
- ☐ Proposed budget
- ☐ Proposed budget narrative - 2 pages
- ☐ 2-3 case studies (can be submitted as links with brief descriptions or in an attachment to the proposal, not included in the narrative proposal page limit)
- ☐ 2-3 references who can speak to the firm's demonstrated commitment to equity and excellence