



**ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Division of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention
Public Health System Preparedness and Response
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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

SUBJECT: Community Engagement Consulting Services for “Communicating Real-Time on Wildfire Smoke” Project

A. INTENT

The Alameda County Public Health Department’s Public Health Systems Preparedness and Response (PHSPR) Program, Office of Emergency Services, and General Services Agency Office of Sustainability (the “Project Team”) are seeking one qualified contractor to provide consulting services in Alameda County to assist Project Team with the development and implementation of the following tasks between January 2020 and May 2020:

1. Develop a Community Engagement Strategy for reaching target population:

- a. Identify, in consultation with the county staff project team, an approach to sampling/information gathering to represent the experiences and perspectives of a range of groups that are vulnerable to the impact of smoke on air quality and/or difficult to reach with advisory messages, guided by the Project Team’s list of priority target populations.

2. Facilitate at least 2 focus groups with individuals from target populations

- a. Conduct other appropriate outreach to gain knowledge about effective and preferred methods and avenues of advisory communication to members of the public, particularly those most vulnerable to smoke. The inquiry will focus on how to best use existing countywide channels of information, but also collect information about other avenues.
- b. Each focus group to contain at the minimum 7 members (up to 10 members) from target populations.
- c. During the focus groups, test and evaluate message templates with focus group members. The message templates content includes health alerts on air quality and protective actions.
- d. Message templates will also be tested with trusted agents in the community. This may be completed using a survey.

3. Summarize findings in a written report.

The maximum funding available for this project is not-to-exceed \$18,000.

RFP CALENDAR OF EVENTS

RFP Date: November 22, 2019

Proposals Due: December 9, 2019

Announcement Date: December 16, 2019

Estimated Term of Contract: January 1, 2020 – July 31, 2020

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION & BACKGROUND:

The Project Team has secured a grant from the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) for their project, “Climate and Health Adaptions in Local Health Departments” Project through the support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The project aims to gather and consider relevant information from past wildfire smoke events, and develop protocols for sharing information with the public through county channels so that they can best protect themselves from any health risk associated with smoke.

The Project Team will:

Contract with a consultant to explore and document the preferred **method of advisory communication** by members of the public in a community engagement process, particularly those most vulnerable to smoke, and summarize findings in a report. The inquiry will focus on how to best use existing countywide channels of information such as the “AC Alert” system (<http://www.acalert.org>) and social media accounts, but also collect information about other avenues. Information gathered will be considered in outreach approaches developed under the grant and beyond.

C. COMMUNITY CONTEXT:

Alameda County is already experiencing unprecedented wildfire smoke events characterized by unhealthy air quality as a result of climate change, and this trend is anticipated to continue in the future. This project will apply a health equity approach to respond to wildfire smoke impacts on respiratory health. Wildfire smoke presents health risks, particularly for vulnerable community members who are sensitive to the respiratory health effects of increased particulate matter in the air, or who may be able to adequately protect themselves. Given the task of communicating relevant information to members of the community, the Project Team is also interested to target community members who may have difficulty accessing information or be more difficult to reach. For the purposes of this project, “target populations” include both vulnerable and hard to reach groups, including but not limited to the following groups. Within each group, care should be taken to reach those who are most vulnerable (such as those who are low income or from a racially disadvantaged group) and/or least able to access information (such as those with language barriers).

Note that as focus groups will likely ask about previous experiences with air quality issues from smoke and what they heard about it, we are seeking to reach community members who resided in Alameda County during smoke events in 2017 or 2018.

Top priority groups (these groups must be reached):

- Elderly
- Homeless/unsheltered
- Outdoor workers
- Parents/households with children ages 5 and younger
- City of San Leandro residents (the city is a project partner)

Additional priority groups (please attempt to reach as many of these groups as possible):

- Non-English speakers or those with low proficiency or literacy in English
- People with respiratory or cardiovascular diseases
- Low-income residents
- Persons with disabilities – including vision and hearing
- Communities of color

In the initial meetings, this list may be refined and amended.

Because this project is designed to reach difficult-to-reach populations, it may also be useful to collect information from community leaders or service providers that may be conduits of information to these groups – for example, pastors that have congregations of monolingual non-English speakers or homeless outreach professionals.

For each of the groups above, the project team will offer community or county contacts that may assist with outreach, such as Alameda County Healthcare for the Homeless, the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program, and City of San Leandro Senior Community Center. However, we expect that the consultant will augment these contacts with their own suggestions.

D. POLICY FRAMEWORK:

Wildfires and their resulting smoke events are becoming more common in California due to climate change impacts such as rising temperatures and dry vegetation. In the Alameda County Climate Action Plan for Government Services and Operations (2010), the county commits to “integrate the impacts of climate change into agency plans for operations and service delivery.” Our public health programs and our community advisories are a part of our provision of services, and this project will help us to integrate community perspectives and the most up-to-date information about the impact of climate change into these services to best serve our community.

The mission of the Alameda County Public Health Department is to work in partnership with the community to ensure the optimal health and wellbeing of all people through a dynamic and responsive process respecting the diversity of the community and challenging us to provide for present and future generations. A community engagement process will help us learn community perspectives to inform our work.

E. SCOPE OF WORK:

The tasks included in the requested consulting services are outlined below. This work will be accomplished in close collaboration with the Project Team staff, and from commencement of the project through to the end of July 2020, this team will include assistance from a Technical Intern, who will assist with scope-related tasks.

The scope of work is anticipated to include, but not be limited to, the following tasks:

1. Develop a Community Engagement Strategy

Lead the development and completion of a comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy for the Wildfire Smoke Communications Project. The Community Engagement Strategy will include a description of who in the community will be engaged and when, along with the strategies that will be used to engage them. The Community Engagement Strategy will include the proposed approach for gathering information from residents to inform outreach approaches and targeting of resources.

The development of the Community Engagement Strategy may include consultation with relevant community organizations as appropriate and inputs from, collaboration with, and approval by the Project Team.

2. Facilitate Focus Groups and Outreach

Apply the findings from the Community Engagement Strategy and lead the development and facilitation of community outreach to inform effective communication approaches, messaging, and targeting of resources. The community outreach programming will include:

- a. At least 2 focus groups with 7-10 participants each.
- b. Additional outreach efforts to engage the community. These could include meetings, focus groups, surveys, or interviews. Ideally, these will be embedded in community gathering points or facilities that will help create proximity and trust with vulnerable populations, such as faith community facilities, popular markets, schools, libraries, or community centers.
- c. Identification of community leaders or service providers that can reach the priority groups and input from them of how they can best receive smoke advisory information.

Focus groups are expected to maximize information-gathering from target communities. While the priority target groups are priority populations of interest to the County, community engagement efforts should strive to additionally capture how these populations intersect with low-income communities of color and communities with limited English abilities. Outreach efforts should endeavor to be as accessible as possible and address barriers to participation (such as providing childcare to allow participation of caregivers to children or providing food or compensation to allow participation of low-income people). Another approach that could increase accessibility is consultation with a sample of participants about the focus group agenda and logistics before it is finalized to make sure it is understandable and appropriate.

Given that many Alameda County residents have limited proficiency in English, consultants should ideally have the capacity to conduct outreach in other widely spoken languages such as Spanish and Chinese or to secure translation/interpretation support.

Community engagement outreach efforts may involve the use of incentives, as well as amenities for participants including food and childcare and services including translation, interpretation, and transcription. A complete bid response will include line items that account

for such expenditures. These costs and other costs related to execution of engagement will rest with the consultant. Some event/meeting locations, such as County libraries, may be possible to arrange the use of at low or no cost.

3. Provide a Summary of Findings

Provide a written memo detailing the Community Engagement Strategy, the implementation of the strategy, and findings from the focus groups and other outreach approaches. The community engagement findings memo will include preferred advisory communication methods expressed by the public, any additional insights expressed by those interviewed that are relevant to our larger project, and all methodologies used. Findings should be specific enough to allow for post-project evaluation of how the findings were implemented into the protocols developed.

Unless participants are not willing to share contact information, contact information for those spoken to during community engagement and contact information for the organization that helped recruit them will be collected and provided alongside the report to facilitate sharing of ultimate project results.

The consultant will be expected to meet with the Project Team to go over the memo in draft form to answer any questions and make necessary edits to the final memo, which will ultimately serve as a report to the project funder. This meeting may be requested before all data is collected, due to overall project timelines, and if so an early unfinished draft of the memo with preliminary findings will be acceptable for the purposes of the meeting.

In addition to the above specified tasks, the successful community engagement consultant bidder will also be required to:

- Attend a minimum of two meetings with County staff in the early phase of the project, as well as engage in ongoing communication by phone and email;
- Develop and maintain agendas, attendance lists with contact information, presentations, and key comments from all meetings, focus groups, and outreach efforts;
- Produce materials for publicizing focus groups and input opportunities, such as targeted mailings and notices for posting at community centers or social media posts;
- Maintain copies of engagement material (e.g., social media posts, web pages, mailers);
- Provide a summary memo of results of focus groups and engagement activities; and
- Provide a summary collection of contact information, meeting notes and outreach/focus group

comments.

F. PROJECT TIMELINE:

The scope of work is anticipated to commence in June 2020 with initial findings made available in a draft memo by June 2020, and finalized findings memo to be provided to the Project Team by mid-June. Finalized findings must be submitted by the Project Team to the project funder by July 15, 2020 at the latest to meet grant deadlines. Bid responses should indicate availability through July 2020, including any anticipated period of unavailability exceeding one week.

G. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

General Instructions

All proposals should be typewritten and have consecutively numbered pages, including exhibits, charts, or other attachments. Submit one (1) complete electronic copy (PDF, Microsoft word, etc.) version of your proposal by email to Zerlyn Ladua Zerlyn.Ladua@acgov.org CC YenYen.Cao@acgov.org with **Community Engagement Consulting Services RFP** in the subject line. All proposals must be received by email no later than December 9th, 2019 2:00 PM, PST. Proposals received late will not be considered for the proposed services unless doing so is deemed to be in the best interest of the County, as determined in the sole discretion of ACPHD.

Specific RFP Content:

Section 1: Cover Letter

- a. Provide a one-page cover letter on your letterhead which includes the addresses, telephone and fax numbers, and email address of the contact person(s).
- b. Indicate who is authorized to represent the proposer in negotiations.
- c. Description of Bidder's capabilities and approach in providing its services and a brief synopsis of the highlights and overall benefits of the Proposal.

Section 2: Qualifications and Experience

It is the intent of these specifications to describe an experienced and qualified consultant to assist County staff with the facilitation and engagement necessary to complete a Community Engagement Strategy. The selected consultant will have demonstrated expertise and extensive experience in community engagement, especially in vulnerable, low-income, and/or underserved communities. The selected consultant will be perceived as trusted or neutral by the community. The consultant will also be expected to become familiar with the impacts of the November 2018 Butte County fire on Alameda County and become capable of responding to questions from the public regarding wildfire smoke safety.

- a. Provide a statement of qualifications for your organization that shall include:

Key Personnel: Complete list of key personnel associated with the bid and a description of the role that the person will play in connection with the project.

Relevant Experience: Details of recent experience on or knowledge in relation to similar

projects and/or for similar clients. Please include in the work sample an example question that was used in past conducted focus groups or interviews.

SLEB Status: The County is interested in promoting the growth of small and emerging local businesses. Indicate SLEB status and any potential for certification. (See <http://www.co.alameda.ca.us/auditor/sleb/index.htm>)

Multilingual Capabilities: Details of recent experience, if any, working with limited-English or non-English speaking communities and ability to adapt methods to engage residents.

Section 3: Proposed Services

- a. Provide detailed description of terms and conditions of services to be provided during the contract term including response times, how the services in the bid response will meet or exceed the requirements of the County, any special resources, procedures, or approaches that make the services of the bidder particularly advantageous and any limitations or restrictions in providing the requested services that the County should be aware of.
- b. Note any changes, additions or deletions to the requested scope of work.

Section 4: Implementation Plan and Schedule

- a. Provide a proposed timeline/schedule that indicates how the bidder will ensure adherence to the proposed Project Timeline.
- b. Include major dates and milestones needed to successfully complete the deliverables.
- c. Include key staff responsible for each milestone/deliverable as appropriate.

Section 5: Availability

- a. Indicate availability through July 2020, including any anticipated period of unavailability exceeding one week.

Section 6: Pricing and Cost

- a. Provide a clear and concise fixed price proposal.
- b. Provide a detailed description of estimated hours and hourly rate.

Section 7: References

- a. Provide the reference contact details of two current or former clients. The County may contact the references provided to determine performance record on work similar to that described in this request.

EXHIBIT A

PUBLIC RECORDS ACT:

A. Per the Public Records Act, County will make available to the public the SOQ, all correspondence and written questions submitted during the bid period, all bid submittals opened in accordance with the procedures and all subsequent bid evaluation information. Except as otherwise provided by law, the County will not disclose trade secrets or proprietary financial information submitted in response to the Request for Proposal (including but not limited to the SOQ). Any such trade secrets or proprietary financial information, which a Bidder believes should be exempted from disclosure, shall be specifically identified and marked as such. Blanket-type identification by designating whole pages or sections shall not be permitted and shall be invalid. The specific information must be clearly identified as such.

B. Upon a request for records regarding the Bidder's bid, the County will immediately notify the Bidder involved and specify a time when the records will be made available for inspection. If the Bidder, in a timely manner, identifies any "proprietary, trade secret, or confidential commercial or financial" information which the Bidder determines is not subject to public disclosure, the Bidder will be required to fully defend, in all forums, the County's refusal to produce such information, and to the fullest extent permitted by law, to indemnify the County against any and all losses, damages, expenses or liabilities (including, without means of limitation, the attorney fees and costs of parties for the request for records action or proceeding) resulting from any and all judgments or awards in any such action or proceeding, or the settlement of any claim in any such action or proceeding, relating to or arising out of the County's failure to produce such information; otherwise, the County will make such information available to the extent required by applicable law.

C. Information disclosed in the SOQs and the attendant submittals are the property of the County unless the Submitter makes specific reference to data that is considered proprietary. Subject to the requirements in the Public Records Act, reasonable efforts will be made to prevent the disclosure of information except on a need-to-know basis during the evaluation process.

EXHIBIT B

REQUEST FOR PREFERENCE FOR LOCAL PRODUCTS AND VENDORS

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO REQUEST THE LOCAL PREFERENCE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN IT WITH YOUR BID

A five-percent (5%) preference shall be granted to Alameda County products or vendors on all sealed bids on contracts except with respect to those contracts which State law requires be granted to the lowest responsible bidder. An Alameda County vendor is a firm or dealer with fixed offices or distribution points located in and having a street address within the County and which holds a valid business license issued by the County or a city with the County. Alameda County products are those which are grown, mined, fabricated, manufactured, processed or produced within the County.

Company Name:

Street Address:

Telephone Number:

Business License Number:

The Undersigned declares that the foregoing information is true and correct:

Print/Type Name:

Title:

Signature:

Date: