



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT CONSULTANT

Proposal Due Date: 11:00 AM ET on October 6, 2023

The North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) is seeking proposals from individuals and organizations to facilitate and conduct community-based assessments across its eight member towns in support of two initiatives:

- **Community Health Assessment (CHA)** - produce a written report aligned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) definition of a CHA that will serve as the foundation for a district-wide Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)
- **Vaccine Hesitancy Rapid Community Assessment (RCA)** – conduct an RCA as defined by the CDC with a focus on barriers to vaccination (routine, influenza, and COVID-19) in the district's eight towns.

NCDHD Point of Contact

Questions about this RFP should be directed to:

Patrice A. Sulik, MPH, RS
Director of Health
North Central District Health Department
31 N Main Street
Enfield, CT 06082
Email: psulik@ncdhd.org

During the proposal review process, NCDHD reserves the right, where it may serve the organization's best interest, to request additional information or clarifications from bidders, or to allow corrections of errors or omissions. NCDHD reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted and to use any ideas in a proposal regardless of whether the bidder is selected. Submission of a proposal indicates the bidder's acceptance of the conditions contained in this RFP.

Background

The North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) delivers local public health services to the largest population in Connecticut (164,315). The department’s eight towns (East Windsor, Ellington, Enfield, Stafford, Suffield, Vernon, Windham, and Windsor Locks) represent a broad crosscut of demographics including rural towns, small cities, and medium-sized suburban communities. Areas of our district have Social Vulnerability Indices (SVIs) upwards of 0.80. The Department is not accredited but may elect to pursue accreditation in the future. More information on NCDHD can be found [here](#).

In 2019, NCDHD was nearing completion of its first Community Health Assessment (CHA). With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, work on the CHA was suspended. With the pandemic emergency declaration lifted and additional funding for community assessment work, NCDHD is eager to revisit the CHA, consider ways to improve it, update statistics, and enhance the narrative with broader community-level data and input. NCDHD seeks support from an experienced consultant to complete the CHA in alignment with CDC and Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) definitions and standards.

Simultaneously, NCDHD anticipates receiving CDC Immunization and Vaccines for Children Supplemental Funds to enhance local health efforts to support routine vaccinations, influenza, and COVID-19 vaccinations. NCDHD is required to complete and submit to its funder a [Rapid Community Assessment \(RCA\)](#) as defined by the CDC that explores vaccine confidence in our health district. The RCA findings will be included in NCDHD’s final CHA and will also be used by NCDHD to inform media and outreach strategies aimed at the “movable middle.”

Eligibility

Qualified independent consultants and consulting firms are encouraged to bid on this project. If a bidder wants to team with another firm or consultant, the bidder should define a prime applicant and a subcontractor. All subcontractors are required to agree to the full terms of the resulting contract.

NCDHD is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer. Disadvantaged, minority, small and women-owned businesses are encouraged to apply.

Key Dates

Milestone	Date
RFP Issue Date	9/6/23
RFP Questions Due	9/20/23
Q&A Release Date	9/27/23
Proposal Due Date	10/6/23

Milestone	Date
Anticipated Project Start Date	11/6/23
Project End Date	No later than 5/31/24

Funding for this project is through approved grants pending final contracts execution. NCDHD reserves the right to adjust the start and end dates.

Project Goals & Requirements

This project has three goals:

1. To provide NCDHD with a broad snapshot of prioritized health needs in each of its eight member towns, factors contributing to higher health risks or poorer health outcomes, and community assets/resources available to improve health.
2. To conduct a Rapid Cycle Assessment (RCA) in the topic area of vaccine confidence that can inform NCDHD’s immunization campaign.
3. To leave NCDHD staff with increased capacity to conduct future assessments and a roadmap for developing a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

Knowledge of local health departments, Connecticut’s public health infrastructure, the 10 Essential Public Health Services, rural health challenges, and the CHA/CHIP process will be beneficial to successfully complete this project.

Scope of Work/Deliverables

NCDHD drafted a Community Health Assessment (CHA) in 2019 that subsequently was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The selected contractor may use the draft CHA as a starting point, refine the CHA, and enhance the assessment with primary data collection on key topics including but not limited to:

- Vaccine confidence
- Opioid overdose
- Mental health
- Rural health
- Social determinants of health
- Environmental health issues
- Tobacco use/vaping

NCDHD seeks consulting support to:

- Review the 2019 draft CHA and provide strengths, weaknesses, and gap analysis
- Update data tables in the 2019 CHA using publicly available secondary datasets and local health data provided by NCDHD (e.g., overdose metrics)

- Recommend cost-effective ways to perform primary data collection across NCDHD's eight member towns
- Recommend subpopulations within NCDHD's district for focus groups
- Design interview guides & conduct interviews
- Design focus group/listening session guides & facilitate groups
- Design focused survey(s) that can be conducted in-person and online in English & Spanish
- Mentor NCDHD staff in survey and focus group/listening session methods – integrate NCDHD staff into the data collection process
- Analyze all primary and secondary data
- Write the 2024 CHA in a web-friendly, 508-compliant format that provides district-wide as well as town-specific results
- Present findings to NCDHD staff and Board of Directors
- Prepare NCDHD staff for using the CHA to develop a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

As part of this project, the selected contractor will need to integrate a Rapid Community Assessment (RCA) using CDC methods (see <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/vaccinate-with-confidence/rca-guide/>).

The RCA findings will need to inform:

- Vaccination messaging campaigns
- Promotion of trusted vaccination sites identified through the RCA
- Community partners and individuals trusted by the “movable middle”
- Well-defined target audiences within each of NCDHD's eight member towns for advertising and social media campaigns

Contract deliverables are as follows:

- Project Workplan
- Data Collection Plan
- Key Informant Interview Guide(s)
- Focus Group/Listening Session Guide(s)
- Surveys (English & Spanish)
- Community Health Assessment (draft and final)
- Rapid Community Assessment (draft and final)
- Staff Presentation
- NCDHD Board of Directors Presentation
- CHA to CHIP Roadmap

NCDHD Responsibilities

NCDHD will serve as a resource to the contractor to ensure adequate completion of the SOW and achievement of project goals by fulfilling the following responsibilities:

- Provide background information related to the project including access to NCDHD reports, data such as:
 - 2019 Draft CHA
 - Monthly Opioid Overdose Reports
 - 2022 NCDHD's COVID-19 After Action Focus Group Findings – Senior Center Directors and School Nurses
 - Hospital Community Health Needs Assessments in our jurisdiction
- NCDHD will assign one staff member as liaison to the selected contractor who will manage the project timeline and budget
- Help engage community partners in the CHA and RCA process
- Meet with the consultant(s) regularly to provide input, mitigate problems, and answer questions

Proposal Format & Evaluation Criteria

Bidders shall submit one electronic and five hard copies of the full proposal to the NCDHD Point of Contact listed on page 1 of this RFP. **Proposals will not be accepted after 11:00 a.m. ET on October 6, 2023.**

Proposals shall be formatted as follows:

Paper Size: 8.5" x 11"

Page Limit: 18 pages excluding Cover Letter, Cover Page, Table of Contents, Appendices

Font: Times New Roman 12 pt

Margins: 1 inch

Line Spacing: 1.5 minimum spacing for narrative sections – Appendices, Budget Form excluded

Cover Letter

Technical Proposal – 90 points – Page Limit: 10

- Organization Background (5 points)
- Qualifications & Experience (35 points)
 - Describe your organization's track record conducting CHAs, RCAs, and other needs assessments. Information on survey response rates and focus group recruitment strategies/success (absent participant incentives) should be included.
 - Include three references for similar projects in the last five years – provide links to sample reports, RCAs, and/or CHAs.

- Describe the project team including sufficient detail to demonstrate each individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the work – attach CVs for key staff.
- Approach (35 points)
 - Describe how you will meet the project goals and requirements. Clearly delineate your firm's responsibilities and NCDHD's responsibilities.
 - For the primary data collection activities specify the target number of interviews, focus groups/listening sessions, and completed surveys.
 - Highlight approaches you have used to ensure high participation/completion rates.
 - Describe strategies you will use to apply a health equity lens to the work.
 - For the vaccine confidence RCA, describe what, if any, adaptations you would recommend to the methods and why.
- Workplan (15 points)
 - Provide a realistic workplan including intermediate steps for achieving project goals, expected product deliverables, and timeline for completion.

Cost Proposal – 10 points + 2 bonus points for small/disadvantaged firms – Page Limit: 8

- Budget – use the Excel template provided on the NCDHD website – guidelines for using the template appear in Tab 1: Budget Instructions.
- Budget Narrative – provide a detailed justification for each expense category:
 - **Personnel:** list staff positions by name and title, percent of each position's time for the project, and salary wages/hourly fees.
 - **Fringe Benefits:** provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs.
 - **Contractual Services:** identify funds to be provided to other consultants/firms working on the project, if applicable.
 - **Travel:** specify the purpose and details of any travel costs.
 - **Materials & Supplies:** identify supplies in the budget proposal and the intended use of these supplies to support project activities.
 - **Other Direct Costs:** describe other costs associated with the project.
 - **Indirect Costs:** indicate the percentage and how the rate is applied, if applicable.

Unallowable expenses:

- Food or restaurant gift cards (grocery store gift cards are allowable **with prior written approval** from NCDHD and its funders)
- Incentives for anyone except the newly vaccinated and only **with prior written approval** from NCDHD and its funders)

Appendices –Page Limit: None

- CVs of key staff
- 1-3 Past Project Examples

Selection of the successful offer shall be made on a best value basis after evaluation of the technical and cost proposals and other factors determined by NCDHD's Proposal Review Team. While cost is important, selection will not necessarily be determined by the lowest price from a qualified bidder.

NCDHD reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to negotiate changes to submitted proposals. During the proposal review process, NCDHD may elect to request any one or all firms to make an oral presentation. Not all firms may be asked to make an oral presentation.

Additional Provisions

- A. The contractor agrees that it is an independent contractor and that its officers and employees do not become employees of NCDHD nor are they entitled to any employee benefits as a result of the execution of an agreement with NCDHD.
- B. During the performance of any work resulting from this RFP, the firm and its subcontractors shall not deny benefits to any person on the basis of religion, color, ethnic group identification, sex, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, nor shall they discriminate unlawfully against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, or sex. Selected contractor(s) shall insure that evaluation of employees and applicants for employment are free from such discrimination.
- C. The firm shall indemnify NCDHD, its officers and employees against liability for injury or damage caused by any negligent act or omission of any of its employees or volunteers or agents in the performance of an agreement and shall hold NCDHD harmless for any loss occasioned as a result of the firm's performance of this contract.
- D. The selected contractor shall provide NCDHD with proof of:
 - a. Commercial General Liability insurance with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 each occurrence, \$2,000,000 General Aggregate, \$2,000,000 Products-Completed Operations Aggregate, and \$1,000,000 Personal and Advertising Injury.
 - b. Business Automobile Liability insurance with limits not less than \$1,000,000 combined single limit.
 - c. Worker's Compensation Insurance and Employer's Liability Insurance with limits not less than \$1,000,000.
 - d. Umbrella Liability insurance written over the underlying Employer's Liability, Commercial General Liability, and Business Automobile Liability insurance with limits not less than \$1,000,000.
 - e. Professional liability and errors and omissions policies insurance with limits not less than \$1,000,000 per claim and \$1,000,000 in the aggregate.

The selected contractor will name NCDHD as Additional Insureds under Subcontractor's Commercial General Liability (with regards to both ongoing operations and products-completed operations), Business Automobile Liability and Umbrella Liability insurance required above. Certificates of Insurance shall be provided to NCDHD immediately after contract execution. All insurance is to be provided by a company authorized to issue such insurance in the State of Connecticut. The insurance company rating should be no less than A-VII by A.M. Best. All insurance may not be cancelled or modified without sixty days written notice by registered US Mail to: Director of Health, 31 North Main Street, Enfield, CT 06082. The firm may not assign or transfer this agreement, any interest therein, or claim hereunder without the prior written approval of NCDHD.

- E. News releases pertaining to this RFP or the resulting contract shall not be made without prior approval of NCDHD.
- F. NCDHD shall not reimburse any potential contractor for costs associated with proposal preparations.
- G. NCDHD may terminate this RFP and any resulting agreement at any time by giving the selected contractor(s) not less than thirty (30) days prior written notice of such termination.