

**State of Connecticut – Department of Public Health
Tobacco Control Program**

**DPH RFP Log# 2025-0906: Best Practice Tobacco Control Programs
Questions and Answers**

1. **Question:** Please confirm that it is \$10 million for a period of three years. Page 4 has approximately \$10,000,000 each year and page 5 refers to 3-year contracts in an amount close to \$10 million. Please advise.
Answer: The total funding available is approximately \$10,000,000, which may be distributed across multiple awards, each for 3-year contract terms. Funding will be allocated for three components up to the total amount provided in the table on page 5, *Section I.B.5*.
2. **Question:** The grant mentions that it is \$10 million per year for 3 years. Is it the goal to provide one grant for an integrated program that promotes smoking cessation at multiple levels, or will you be funding separate proposals depending on their merit for a total of \$10M maximum?
Answer: Multiple awards based on proposal amounts are possible for Component 1, State and Community Interventions, and for Component 3, Cessation Interventions. The total amount of funding available for Component 1 is \$4,275,000 for one or more 3-year contract term awards. The total amount of funding available for Component 3 is \$4,262,000 for one or more 3-year contract term awards. \$10,000,000 is the total amount of funding available for this RFP across three components and potentially multiple awards. Please refer to the table on page 5, *Section I.B.5*. for the listed funding allocation.
3. **Question:** Does the funding include indirect payments/costs?
Answer: Indirect costs should be included in the Budget Summary Form A found at page 57-58 of the RFP under Administrative and General Costs. Proposals must contain an itemized budget with justification for each line item included in the budget forms, which can be found in *Section VII: Application Forms*. Additional budget expectations can be found on page 23, *Section II.E.8*. Budget Summary Instructions, including information on Administrative and General Costs, can be found on page 56, *Section VII.A*. Please review the OPM website on Cost Standards for more information at: <https://portal.ct.gov/opm/fin-pos/standards/pos-cost-standards>.
4. **Question:** What is the Connecticut Department of Public Health's indirect rate? Is the indirect rate policy stated publicly in a document or website?
Answer: The Agency does not have an indirect rate that would apply to RFP applicants or a policy governing applicant indirect rates. All budget components will be evaluated by the RFP Review Committee to determine the fiscal competitiveness of the proposal. Additionally, proposals must contain an itemized budget with justification for each line item included in the budget forms, which can be found in *Section VII: Application Forms*.
5. **Question:** Can we propose fully loaded hourly rates within Salaries & Wages, noting rates are fully loaded and leave fringe, fringe benefit %, and admin costs as N/A? Will this budget approach qualify?
Answer: Such an approach would not comply with the RFP requirements to provide a detailed breakdown of all components, as stated on page 30, *Section III.B.4*.

6. **Question:** Is there a limit to how much funding can flow through to individual subcontractors, or to subcontractors overall? Is there a recommended or suggested budget limit for a proposal under Component 1?
- Answer:** The only limit is that the full amount of funding cannot be passed through to one or more subcontractors. There is no recommended or suggested budget limit for a proposal under Component 1 or for subcontractor allocations within a proposal. All budget components will be evaluated by the RFP Review Committee to determine the fiscal competitiveness of the proposal. Available funding for Component 1 is \$4,275,000 for one or more 3-year contract term awards, as listed on page 5, *Section 1.B.5* of the RFP. Budget expectations are found on page 23, *Section II.E.8*. A Budget Justification Subcontractor Schedule A – Detail Form, found on page 61 is required, and subcontractor information and details must be included in the itemized budget.
7. **Question:** The total 3-year budget for component 4, Surveillance and Evaluation, is listed as \$1,050,000. What is the annual budget limit for component 4?
- Answer:** The annual budget for Component 4 is expected to be approximately \$350,000 on average; however, there is no annual cap, and expenses may vary somewhat from year to year. The maximum award cannot exceed \$1,050,000 in total for three years.
8. **Question:** If funds in year 1 or 2 are not fully expensed, will they be carried forward to the next consecutive year? With or without a contract amendment?
- Answer:** Whether funds designated to be expensed in one year can be carried forward to the next is at the discretion of the Agency based on variables including but not limited to performance whether an amendment would be necessary would depend upon final contract language.
9. **Question:** Is there a salary cap for effort for physicians?
- Answer:** There is no salary cap for physicians; however, all budget components will be evaluated by the RFP Review Committee to determine the fiscal competitiveness of the proposal. Proposals must contain an itemized budget with justification for each line item included in the budget forms, which can be found in *Section VII: Application Forms*. Additional staffing expectations can be found on pages 21-22, *Section II.E.5*. Budget Summary Instructions, including information on personnel, can be found on page 56, *Section VII.A*. Please review the OPM website on Cost Standards for more information at: <https://portal.ct.gov/opm/fin-pos/standards/pos-cost-standards>.
10. **Question:** The application instructions state that CT DPH staff cannot provide references and letters of support. Can DPH consider an exception for applicants that have been funded by DPH for past work to verify an established working relationship?
- Answer:** DPH cannot consider exceptions to the requirement that letters of reference and collaboration and support cannot be provided by DPH staff as stated on page 26, *Section III.A.2d*; however, applicants may provide letters from any organizations they have partnered or contracted with, regardless of whether the project was tobacco specific. Letters of recommendation can attest to an applicant's performance, timeliness, completeness, etc. with respect to any project.
11. **Question:** The RFP states that the Agency reserves the right to answer questions only from those who have submitted a Letter of Intent. However, the RFP deadline for questions (10/1/24) is prior to the Letter of Intent deadline (10/24/24). If we submit questions by 10/1/24 without having previously or simultaneously submitted a Letter of Intent, would the Agency answer our questions by the anticipated Answers Released date (10/10/24)?

Answer: The Agency will answer all questions received before the 10/1/24 deadline. Answers will be released on October 10, 2024, and made available publicly on the [State Contracting Portal](#) and on the Agency's [RFP webpage](#). Additional inquiry procedures can be found on page 6, *Section 1.B.9*.

12. **Question:** If our proposed intervention would be developed, implemented, and evaluated almost entirely in-house and with less than three community organizations and/or project partners providing support, would we still be required to provide three letters of collaboration and support?

Answer: Yes, even if your proposal does not include collaboration with other parties, you must still provide three letters of collaboration and support as stated on page 14, *Section II.E.1*. Letters of collaboration and support from community organizations or partners that will not be involved in this project should provide details as to prior projects you have worked on with them and their support for you and should also specify their level of involvement in this project (which may be minimal or none).

13. **Question:** If submitting a proposal for more than one Component, is a letter of reference from one previous employer/grantor required for each Component?

Answer: Letters of reference are not required for each component if a proposer is applying for multiple components. Proposers are not required to submit separate attachments and other forms for each component within a proposal. If applying for multiple components, a separate Scope of Services and separate budget forms must be submitted for each component and an additional five pages per component can be added to the 25-page limit as stated on page 7, *Section 1.B.12*.

14. **Question:** The RFP cites placing statewide media locally and promoting evidence-based quit services as an example of an evidence-based intervention for Component 1: State and Community Intervention. Does the Tobacco Control Program (TCP) also consider placing statewide media to communicate the dangers of youth tobacco use as an evidence-based intervention to address the goal of preventing the initiation of use?

Answer: While placing statewide media to communicate the dangers of youth tobacco use would be considered an evidence-based intervention to address preventing use initiation, this type of intervention would not be approved because this RFP does not seek to procure a media vendor to create and implement a statewide media campaign. CT DPH TCP already places statewide media to communicate the dangers of youth tobacco use and the quit services available to young people and adults. As illustrated by the example, this RFP seeks proposals that would leverage existing CT DPH TCP statewide campaigns locally.

15. **Question:** What adult cessation, youth prevention, or other TCP campaigns has the state run since FY20?

Answer: Since FY20, TCP has developed and implemented an adult cessation campaign, *Commit to Quit CT* and developed and implemented a youth cessation campaign, *Vape Free CT*. Resources from the adult cessation campaign can be found at www.CommitToQuitCT.com and resources from the youth cessation campaign can be found at www.VapeFreeCT.org.

16. **Question:** Are results of any TCP media campaigns since FY 20 available to proposers? If not, will results be available to the selected vendor [contractor]?

Answer: Media campaign results can be shared with the selected contractors upon request.

17. **Question:** As stated in Component 1, the RFP emphasizes evidence-based efforts such as mobilizing community and engaging youth in initiatives that prevent tobacco use, including tobacco pricing

strategies, smoke-free protections, and retail environment strategies. Given this focus on evidence-based interventions, would the State be open to proposals that specifically educate youth on the harms of vaping and nicotine products, leveraging CDC best practices in prevention and cessation, particularly considering the RFP language to "prevent tobacco use"?

Answer: While it would be appropriate for proposals to include educating youth on the harms of vaping and nicotine products as a component of prevention, this RFP seeks proposals that go further and provide a more comprehensive approach to tobacco prevention. Applicants are encouraged to consider comprehensive approaches that change community environments and social norms as outlined on page 14-15, *Section II.E.2.a*.

18. **Question:** Within Component 1, to what degree would the State be open to receiving proposals for CT audience research to assess attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs toward quitting and using Cessation QL resources?

Answer: CT audience research to assess attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs toward quitting and using Cessation QL resources would be an appropriate element of, but not the entirety of, a proposal under Component 3: Cessation Interventions as outlined in pages 16-19 of the RFP (but not a proposal under Component 1). Please note that mass-reach communication and media vendor services are not part of this RFP.

19. **Question:** The RFP mentions cannabis twice. Does DPH wish us to address cannabis usage as part of this program?

Answer: The RFP does not require the program to address cannabis usage; however, although the RFP is focused on commercial tobacco, youth prevention efforts may also include activities to reduce smoking/vaping of cannabis and reduce secondhand cannabis smoke or aerosol exposure.

20. **Question:** In addition to smoking and vaping, should the program address other currently popular nicotine products, such as ZYN nicotine pouches?

Answer: Yes, as oral nicotine pouches are an emerging issue for tobacco control programs, addressing the concern as it relates to an increase in youth use is appropriate for this RFP.

21. **Question:** The RFP says: "Contractors are expected to cooperate and collaborate with this evaluation vendor hired for the independent evaluation of these tobacco control programs". Are we correct in assuming that this evaluation vendor will be hired by DPH rather than us?

Answer: Yes, an evaluation contractor will be awarded through Component 4 of this RFP to provide evaluation services for the Agency and its contractors' programs.

22. **Question:** The documents "Conflict of Interest – Disclosure Statement" and "Statement of Assurances" (labelled F and G) precede the Attachments (labelled H). On the Proposal Checklist (p. 43-44), these documents follow the Attachments. In addition, the "Declaration of Confidentiality" (labelled E) on p. 32 is not mentioned on p.43-44 and an "IRS Determination Letter" mentioned there is not mentioned on p.32. We plan to send all these documents, but do you have a preference as to their order or labelling?

Answer: Documents contained in Section H (Attachments) need not be in any specific order; however, they must be clearly labeled in accordance with the list on page 43, *Section VI.C*. Additionally, please note that proposals must include a Table of Contents that exactly conforms with the outline provided on page 32, *Section IV* and must include all the components listed, in the order specified, using the prescribed lettering and numbering scheme.

23. **Question:** We are considering a proposal under Component 1. Can nicotine replacement therapy, 1:1 cessation intervention, and direct counseling be a part of the implementations under Component 1?
Answer: No, nicotine replacement therapy, 1:1 cessation intervention and direct counseling would not be appropriate implementations under Component 1 but would be appropriate for proposals submitted under Component 3.
24. **Question:** How many contracts does DPH anticipate awarding for Components 1 and 3?
Answer: It is unknown at this time as the number of contracts awarded will be determined by the number of proposals received, their associated score as determined by the RFP Review Committee, and the availability of funding.
25. **Question:** Multiple submissions are allowed with additional components allowing for an extra 5 pages for the narrative. Can we submit multiple proposals for the same component? If yes, are these separate full applications?
Answer: The RFP does not prohibit one applicant from submitting multiple proposals for the same component, but this approach is strongly discouraged because the Agency expects applicants to submit their best proposal.
26. **Question:** If applicants are to include multiple components within one application, should the applicant submit one Work plan and one Evaluation Plan per component or one Work Plan and one Evaluation Plan that includes all components?
Answer: If multiple components are included within one application, one Work Plan and one Evaluation Plan that includes all components is required; however, a separate Scope of Service and separate budget forms must be submitted for each component. Please reference page 7, *Section 1.B.7* and page 14, *Section II.E.2* of the RFP.
27. **Question:** On the required cover page, it requires the applicant to denote which component the application is for: Do we include a separate cover page for each application component?
Answer: For a proposal that includes multiple components, a separate cover page is not required for each component. Instead, one cover page should list all components. However, a separate Scope of Services and separate budget forms must be submitted for each component. Applications for multiple components must include an overall summary that explains how the interventions will work together.
28. **Question:** Should applicants provide a separate Work Plan, Evaluation Plan, and Logic Model for each component for which they are bidding?
Answer: Applicants need not provide a separate Work Plan, Evaluation Plan, and Logic Model for each component for which they are bidding. Only a separate Scope of Services and separate budget forms must be submitted for each component. Applicants are not required to submit separate attachments and other forms for each proposal. Please refer to page 7, *Section 1.B.12* of the RFP.
29. **Question:** May applicants use single-spacing for the Logic Model forms?
Answer: Yes, applicants may use single spacing for the Logic Model form.
30. **Question:** What data elements are included the proposed minimum data set? Where can that be found in the RFP?

Answer: The “minimum data set” referenced under “Data and Technology” on p. 29 of the RFP refers to the data set included in an applicant’s Scope of Services (and thus varies from proposal to proposal).

31. **Question:** The RFP states that “the main body of the proposal within the required page limit, not including the Executive Summary, Work Plan, Cost Proposal, or the Application Forms?” Is the Evaluation Plan also excluded from the space limits?

Answer: As noted on page 43, *Section VI.C.*, the Evaluation Plan with Logic Model is considered an attachment to the main proposal; therefore, it is not included within the page limit.

32. **Question:** Which documents are included in the 25-page limit? Does the 25-page limit include attachments, such as personnel resumes?

Answer: The 25-page limit applies to the main proposal/scope of services. It does not include the Cover Sheet, Table of Contents, Executive Summary, proposed budget, or any of the attachments or forms listed on pages 43-44, *Section VI. Appendix C.*

33. **Question:** The evaluation criteria only show the number of points for the budget section (45 points). What is the total number of points available, and what is the point value for each of the other sections?

Answer: The number of points available and the point value for each section is information for the RFP Review Committee only. Please disregard the 45 points mentioned in the RFP as it was included in error.

34. **Question:** The RFP lists that toolkits as part of a standalone project are discouraged. However, we want to include toolkits as part of our comprehensive plan. Is this okay/allowed?

Answer: Yes, including toolkits as part of a comprehensive plan would be acceptable. As stated on page 16, *Section II.E.2.a.*, toolkits are allowed as part of a comprehensive approach to tobacco use prevention but discouraged as a standalone project.

35. **Question:** For component 3- cessation interventions- would educating healthcare, implementing “ask-advise-refer” and providing referrals to the CT Quitline, Vape Free CT, and Youth Recovery CT be enough to meet the requirements of the application? If you look on page 18 of the RFP, item iii, is it OK to only do #1, but not 2 & 3.

Answer: While the RFP does not preclude a proposal that includes only 1 (Outreach), but not 2 (Counseling) and 3 (Nicotine Replacement Therapies or Medications), the RFP seeks proposals that provide a more comprehensive approach to tobacco cessation. Applicants are encouraged to consider comprehensive approaches for tobacco use cessation listed on pages 18-19 of the RFP.

36. **Question:** Can you provide any information about what will be collected by the outside evaluator so that we can include it in our Evaluation Plan?

Answer: The Agency cannot provide information about what data the successful outside evaluator applicant will determine is necessary to evaluate program effectiveness. The Evaluation Plan format can be found on page 21, *Section II.E.3.*

37. **Question:** Regarding the audited financial statement requirement, is it possible to provide our parent company's audited financial statements? We do not have separate financial statements, but our data is audited and then combined into the consolidated financial statements for an audit report.

Answer: The entity responding to the RFP must provide audited financial data, although such data may be included within a parent company report. The RFP Review Committee will need the parent company's audit report, which must contain information specific to the proposer's company, that is easily found and understood.

38. **Question:** It appears that the paragraph under "Supporting State Quitline Capacity" on page 18 has nothing to do with supporting Quitline capacity, but instead belongs under the immediately following intervention, "(iii.) Direct Cessation Service Activities". Is this an acceptable reading?

Answer: This is not an acceptable reading. The component "Supporting State Quitline Capacity" on page 18 seeks interventions that, through culturally appropriate services, will increase knowledge and use of the Quitline by priority populations (as opposed to providing Quitline services, for which the Agency has already contracted).

39. **Question:** The call asks for large scale and statewide interventions. Does an intervention need to reach all parts of Connecticut?

Answer: No, interventions do not need to reach all parts of the state. However, regional or statewide coordination and impact will be weighted more heavily in proposal scoring.

40. **Question:** The wording of 2d (1) suggests that detail about the interventions planned is to be divided between 2b (page 17) and 2d (1) (page 20). Can you provide any guidance on how the detailed description of the interventions should be divided across these two questions?

Answer: Section II. E.2.d applies to all applications, whether they are for Components 1, 3 or 4 and must be incorporated into all Scope of Services descriptions. Applications for Component 3 services must include this information within the Scope of Services provided pursuant to Section II.E.2.b.

41. **Question:** It is appropriate through this RFP to request support in the budget to help patients who are smokers not only with smoking cessation but also with screening for disease such as vascular disease and lung cancer?

Answer: Screening for disease falls outside of the service expectations of Component 3: Cessation Interventions. However, providing education and information to promote lung cancer screening through health system change when appropriate is an example of an education activity that could be provided as part of Component 3, as described on page 17, Section II.E.2.b.i.

42. **Question:** As an independent third-party evaluator, we do not have community collaborators; we work with other organizations conducting evaluations and research. As outlined in the application instructions, can we substitute letters of support from organizations we have contracted with in lieu of letters from community collaborators?

Answer: Letters of collaboration and support from organizations that the applicant has contracted with are acceptable if they provide details as to the applicant's involvement in a particular project (or projects) and evidence that such involvement assisted in the project outcome.

43. **Question:** Application instructions focus on developing state and community, as well as cessation interventions. Our organization conducts program evaluation and does not have a list of names and individuals served or traditional partners but works with specific vendors to assist in data collection. How should we approach these slight incongruities in our application?

Answer: The Agency understands that applicants for Component 4 may not serve populations directly. Applicants should interpret and respond to the RFP requirements to the best of their ability within the context of the services they are proposing. For instance, the "target population"

for a Component 4 applicant may be the Components 1 and 3 interventions that the Component 4 applicant would be evaluating.

44. **Question:** Several application forms are focused on developing state and community, as well as cessation interventions. For example, forms on pages 53-55 (e.g., Work Plan, Evaluation Plan, and Logic Model). It is unknown what program indicators to measure until the state and community, and cessation interventions are selected and reviewed. If these forms need to be completed for component 4 applications, is the expectation that the information will likely change because it is contingent on the intervention programs selected for this RFP?

Answer: It is expected that Work Plans, Evaluation Plans, and Logic Models may change depending on proposals awarded and feedback from the awarded evaluator, RFP Review Committee, or as a result of contract negotiations. However, all applicants must submit an initial Work Plan, Evaluation Plan, and Logic Model for their proposed project.