

# BID BOARD NOTICE

PROCUREMENT ID NUMBER: PHPA-S1948

ISSUE DATE: July 10, 2015

**TITLE: Focus Group and Qualitative Information Gathering to Support the Responsible Tobacco Retailer Education Initiative- Baltimore Metro Area**

**PLEASE READ THE ENTIRE SOLICITATION BEFORE  
SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL**

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**THIS SOLICITATION SHALL BE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SMALL  
PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS DESCRIBED IN COMAR 21.05.07**

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This solicitation has been designated as a Small Business Reserve (SBR); only registered SBRs may respond. Please apply at <https://emarketplace.buyspeed.com/> to begin the process, and then follow the prompts to see if your business qualifies. For assistance in the SBR registration process, please call 410-767-1492. If you qualify, please put your SBR number on the bid page.

## **Summary Statement**

The Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control (hereafter referred to as CTPC) within the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) is soliciting services to conduct focus group sessions and other qualitative research methods with owners, clerks, distributors and others who sell licensed tobacco products in Maryland (hereafter referred to collectively as “retailers”) to evaluate their needs, receptivity, successes and barriers/challenges with remaining in compliance with federal, state and local laws that prohibit the sale of tobacco products to youth under the age of 18. The results of this formative information gathering will guide the development of health communication materials and resources to complement existing Responsible Tobacco Retailer Education Campaign materials. Focus group sessions will test existing materials as well as new ideas/concepts to expand the reach of the campaign. *\*Please note: The actual development of health communication materials and resources are not a part of this contract.*

A single contract will be awarded to the Offeror that best meets the needs of the evaluation criteria. The anticipated term of the contract resulting from this solicitation will begin *on or about* August 10, 2015 through November 30, 2015. Financial Proposals must equal \$25,000.

## **Background**

Tobacco use remains the number one cause of preventable death and disease in the United States. Currently, more than 480,000 Americans lose their lives each year due to smoking-related diseases, with almost 90% of these smokers starting in their teens and many experiencing life-changing effects at a relatively early age. Each year, for every adult who dies prematurely from smoking-related causes, there are more than two youth or young adults who become “replacement smokers,” and for every one smoking-related death, about 30 more individuals are living with one or more serious illnesses caused by smoking. If current trends continue, 5.6 million youth who are currently under the age of 18 will ultimately die prematurely in their adult lives from smoking.<sup>1</sup> Each day in the United States, more than 3,200 youth (younger than 18 years of age) smoke their first cigarette and another 2,100 youth and young adults who are occasional smokers progress to become daily smokers. Youth who use tobacco products may experience health risks immediately, including impairments to the cardiovascular and respiratory systems, addiction to nicotine, and the associated risk of other drug use. Efforts focusing on preventing youth tobacco initiation, and helping those who do use to quit should remain in the forefront of public health initiatives.

According to the Maryland 2013 Youth Tobacco and Risk Behavior Survey (MD YTRBS),<sup>1</sup> the percentage of underage high school youth who have used any type of tobacco product in the 30 days prior to responding to the survey has decreased from 29.4% in 2000 to 17.7%. Nevertheless, despite the reduction in youth tobacco usage over the past decade, over 12% of Maryland youth started using tobacco within the 12 months prior to responding to the survey. The MD YTRBS results show that initiation rates dramatically increase by grade level – from 3.0% in 6th grade to over 21% by 12th grade.

Retailers can play an important role in preventing youth tobacco initiation by eliminating or reducing access to tobacco. In fact, retailer behavior is the strongest predictor in the sale of cigarettes to youth;<sup>3</sup> youth who perceive cigarettes as easy to obtain are more likely to become regular smokers than those who perceive them as hard to get.<sup>4</sup> Underage smokers who are older are more likely than younger smokers to buy cigarettes directly in stores and become regular smokers.<sup>5</sup> Youth who are regular smokers are also the most likely to supply other youth with tobacco products.<sup>6</sup>

Data from the 2013 MD YTRBS shows that asking for photo identification does reduce cigarette sales to underage youth. Youth reported that when Maryland tobacco retailers requested to see photo identification, 32.7% of underage youth succeeded in buying cigarettes— compared with a 78.7% success rate when photo identification was not requested.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (2014). 2013 Maryland Youth Tobacco and Risk Behavior Survey.

<sup>3</sup> Klondoff, A & Landrine, H, “Predicting youth access to tobacco: the role of youth versus store-clerk behavior and issues of ecological validity,” *Health Psychology* 23(5):517-524, September 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Doubeni, C, et al., “Perceived Accessibility as a Predictor of Youth Smoking,” *Annals of Family Medicine* 16(1):137-45, July/August 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Dept of Health & Human Services, 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, September 9, 2004. <http://oas.samhsa.gov/NHSDA/2k3NSDUH/2k3results.htm#ch4>  
<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nhsda.htm#NHSDAinfo>.

<sup>6</sup> Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Factsheet, Where Do Youth Smokers Get Their Cigarettes, Retrieved June 22, 2015. <http://tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0073.pdf>.

The Task Force on Community Preventive Services recommends mobilizing communities in combination with active enforcement of retailer sales laws and retailer education with reinforcement as an evidence-based approach for reducing youth access to tobacco.<sup>7</sup> Education and awareness efforts for merchants and the public have also been recommended by state attorneys general and other experts as an important component of a successful enforcement program.<sup>8</sup>

CTPC is seeking to enhance its Responsible Tobacco Retailer Campaign to promote responsible tobacco retailing in sales outlets, change community norms, and reinforce that selling tobacco to youth under the age of 18 is in violation of local, state, and federal laws. The selected Offeror shall be responsible for qualitative research, including focus groups and other measures, for the Responsible Tobacco Retailer Campaign. CTPC and its partners will utilize feedback from the Offeror's efforts to create campaign materials to educate retailers and the public about remaining compliant with federal, state, and local youth tobacco sales laws.

*\*Note: material development is NOT part of this contract.*

### **Scope of Work**

- 1) **Work Plan.** The Offeror shall provide a work plan, including a specific timeline for the implementation of focus groups and other qualitative research, along with all preparatory work. It will be the responsibility of the selected Offeror to complete any required paperwork with the DHMH Institutional Review Board (IRB), and this shall be included in the timeline.
- 2) Within one week of award, the selected Offeror shall hold an in-person kick-off meeting with CTPC staff at DHMH Headquarters in Baltimore, MD. At this meeting a project timeline shall be finalized, and goals and objectives will be discussed.
- 3) The selected Offeror shall complete all required documentation with the DHMH IRB (<http://dhmh.maryland.gov/oig/irb/SitePages/Home.aspx>). Necessary documentation and approvals must be completed before focus groups and other qualitative research can be conducted. While participants may be recorded for transcription purposes during focus groups or interviews, CTPC does NOT require copies of audio/visual recordings to be provided; detailed summary reports and transcripts will suffice.
- 4) Qualitative Research Services.
  - a) **Recruiting.** The selected Offeror shall recruit focus group and other qualitative research participants with a composition to be discussed and finalized at the aforementioned kick-off meeting that supports the project's purpose. This shall include recruitment, screener development, consent forms both for participation and recording (for transcription

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<sup>7</sup> Guide to Community Preventive Services. Community mobilization with additional interventions to restrict minors' access to tobacco products. Retrieved June 22, 2015 from [www.thecommunityguide.org/tobacco/communityinterventions.html](http://www.thecommunityguide.org/tobacco/communityinterventions.html)

<sup>8</sup> Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. Enforcing Laws Prohibiting Cigarette Sales to Kids Reduces Youth Smoking. Retrieved on June 22, 2015 from: <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0049.pdf>

purposes only, if needed), confidentiality agreements, and incentives. CTPC will review and approve the recruitment process and related materials prior to its commencement. While CTPC may provide recommendations for recruitment, the selected Offeror shall assume the overall responsibility of participant recruitment for the focus groups and other qualitative methods.

- b) **Provide or Arrange for Facilities.** Provide (either through rental, lease, or ownership) facilities that support focus group and other efforts and the provision of the services hereafter listed. Professional facilities should be used whenever possible for face-to-face sessions. If a professional facility will not be used, please justify and describe the proposed alternative.
- c) **Moderator's Guide.** Develop a moderator's guide and related materials for each focus group/other qualitative research method, subject to review and approval by CTPC.
- d) **Focus Group Moderation.** Provide moderation of *at least four* focus groups. The length of each session shall be a minimum of 90 minutes for each focus group that is conducted and have at least eight participants in each group. Focus groups shall include "retailers" from the Maryland/DC Capitol Region that are representative of the thousands of retailers in this region of Maryland, including "retailers" from smaller "mom and pop" stores to larger franchise stores. Depending on the group composition, the moderator shall be culturally and ethnically appropriate for groups. If requested by CTPC, the selected Offeror shall provide a moderator that can speak English, Spanish, and/or Asian languages. Approximately three to five CTPC staff/guests plan on attending each focus group session.

Selected Offerors shall describe locations across the region where focus groups will be held, details regarding incentives, the composition of each focus group, and any other relevant details. Selected Offerors may propose cost saving measures (E.g., web-based forums) to be incorporated with face-to-face groups, but must justify why such measures are valid and the best method for obtaining the information needed.

Focus groups will assess (1) "retailers" attitudes towards tobacco sales to minors, barriers and successes of "retailers" in remaining in compliance with federal, state, and local laws by refusing to sell tobacco products to minors (2) "retailers" receptivity to existing campaign materials and (3) "retailers" receptivity to concepts for proposed materials to complement and expand the reach of the current campaign.

The selected Offeror is encouraged to provide more than the minimum number of four groups required. The results from the focus groups will guide the development of outreach materials. Focus groups shall be completed no later than **October 2, 2015**.

- e) **Other Qualitative Research.** Another form of Qualitative Research is required as part of this contract. The Offeror shall use their expertise to propose research methods that are most advantageous to the State and will provide the most relevant information in regards to the development of materials to reduce youth access to tobacco.

The Offeror must justify and describe how the proposed research methods will best reach and engage “retailers”; what information will be obtained from the research; and describe, in detail, what the proposed research entails. The Offeror must supply documentation to support this chosen method. The qualitative research shall include a diverse range of participants, including a range of ages, employment levels/positions, and locations. Examples of other qualitative research methods include in-depth/key informant interviews, online forums/communities, web surveys, observational research, etc. The selected qualitative research shall be completed no later than **October 2, 2015**.

- 5) **Findings.** Report findings from each focus group and other qualitative research to CTPC as hereafter provided:
- a) **Post Group Debriefing:** Immediately after the conclusion of each focus group session, and while still at the site at which the focus group was held, debrief and discuss findings with CTPC representatives attending the focus group.
  - b) **Post Qualitative Research Debriefing:** Once the other qualitative research is determined, an appropriate debriefing method and time will be finalized by the selected Offeror, in order to discuss research findings with CTPC representatives and partners.
  - c) **Reporting:** No later than ten business days after the final focus group is conducted, the selected Offeror shall deliver a detailed report reviewing the methodology, participant feedback, findings, data analysis, transcripts and recommendations to CTPC. All reports/transcripts shall be translated in English if another language is used for facilitation.

No later than ten business days after each proposed qualitative research is completed (or after the last date, when a series is planned), the selected Offeror shall deliver a detailed report reviewing the methodology, participant feedback, findings, data analysis, transcripts (if applicable), and recommendations to CTPC. All reports/transcripts shall be translated in English if another language is used during interviews.

At the conclusion of the contract, the selected Offeror shall provide a final report detailing completion of deliverables, expenditures and any suggested next steps or lessons learned, due no later than **October 30, 2015**.

### **Ownership and Rights of Materials**

All work produced as a result of this solicitation is and shall remain the sole property of the Department. The selected Offeror agrees that, at all times during the term of this contract and thereafter, the works created and services performed shall be “works made for hire” as that term is interpreted under the federal copyright law. The Department shall have complete ownership of all materials developed as part of this solicitation, in part or in whole, to utilize at the Department’s discretion. **All materials developed will remain the property of the State of Maryland. All related fees must be included in the final bid price.**

All final products must be available for the perpetual use of the Department and its designees for future campaigns at no additional cost. If talent is used, all talent fees and other related costs must be bought out for the indefinite use by the Department. Signed contracts and proof of talent buy-out must be provided to the Department to keep on file. The Department shall use all final ads at their discretion. The selected Offeror shall provide all material files in formats deemed necessary by the Department.

### **Mandatory Requirements**

This solicitation has been designated as a Small Business Reserve (SBR). Offeror must be registered as an SBR in order to submit a proposal.

Selected Offerors may not currently work with or have a history of working with the tobacco industry.

### **Technical Proposal Submissions**

The Offeror shall send a proposal that must be no smaller than 12-point font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Technical proposals shall be no longer than six (6) pages (this excludes attachments regarding organizational capabilities). The Offeror should secure the Technical Proposal using a single staple (no binding please). One original and four (4) copies should be placed in a sealed envelope labeled "Technical Proposal." **Do NOT include any financial information or reference to price in the Technical Proposal.**

### **Technical proposals shall include:**

- A. Background Information:
  - 1. Organization Name
  - 2. Name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, fax number, and position/title of the individual who will serve as the primary contact for this contract.
  - 3. The Offeror's small business reserve number and federal identification number.
  
- B. Organizational Capability
  - 1. Describe how the agency is organized and who will be responsible for working on this project.
  - 2. Describe the experience and capabilities of the organization and particular individuals relevant to accomplishing this project.
  - 3. Include descriptions of prior relevant projects; in particular those working within tobacco prevention and control, and/or other public health-related topics.
  
- C. Work plan
  - 1. The Offeror shall submit a work plan that includes a timeline for preparatory work and implementation of focus groups and other qualitative research. Time should be considered for receiving approval from the IRB – estimating approximately 45 days to complete. A total of *at least* four focus groups must be

conducted. The Offeror shall conduct focus groups no later than October 2, 2015 (successes and barriers to adhering to responsible retailer laws, determine effective means of communication). All other qualitative research must be completed no later than October 2, 2015.

2. The Offeror shall describe and justify focus group and other qualitative research methodology and overall number of focus groups and other applicable participatory research.
  3. The Offeror shall list the total number of focus groups proposed and recommend the breakdown of focus group participants in each, providing rationale for the breakdown and inclusion of participants.
  4. The Offeror shall describe proposed moderators and interviewers, and moderator and interview guides, as applicable.
  5. The Offeror shall describe how they will coordinate and conduct the sessions and other qualitative research, including participant recruitment, providing specific details on how they can achieve compositions to include as many of the Retailer participant characteristics listed in the Scope of Work. The Offeror shall provide sufficient details describing how the Offeror shall assemble focus groups, and other needed groups or interviews, within the designated regions of the state.
  6. The Offeror shall describe designating location(s) within different regions of the state, and selecting and securing the facilities where groups and interviews shall take place, providing audio, video, and other recommended technology services (if needed), detailing the participant incentives and/or honoraria (please identify specifics if this will vary by region) and other relevant details provided at the facility for participants and key personnel.
  7. The Offeror shall describe the debriefing and reporting process.
- D. Submit a required minimum of two (2) letters of support from other agencies with whom the organization has collaborated or from former or current clients.
- E. Offerors shall disclose all conflicts of interest (obvious and non-obvious), if any, and describe in detail how the conflicts of interest will be ameliorated. If the Offeror is receiving other funding for tobacco control efforts, please describe how this funding is being used and the source of the funding.

### **Financial Proposal Submissions**

Offerors shall submit one original signed and completed Financial Proposal Form (Attachment A) along with four (4) copies. Offerors shall also provide one original signed separate line item budget and narrative along with four (4) copies. The Offeror should secure the Financial

Proposal using a single staple (no binding please). The Financial Proposal shall be placed in a sealed envelope labeled “Financial Proposal.” The Financial Proposal shall be all inclusive – all costs associated with completing the deliverables of the contract must be included in the budget.

### **Award**

An award will be made on the basis of the most advantageous offer to the State of Maryland considering meeting the mandatory requirements *and* the evaluation criteria found in this solicitation.

### **Technical Evaluation Criteria of Proposal**

The State will evaluate proposals based on the following evaluation criteria. These are listed in descending order of importance.

- A. Organizational Capacity –
  - a. Extent to which the Offeror has the experience and capability to conduct focus groups and additional qualitative research across the state to meet the goals of CTPC.
  - b. Strength of the letters of recommendation and relevant past projects to demonstrate Offeror capabilities for the project outlined in this solicitation.
  
- B. Work Plan–
  - a. Is the Offeror’s work plan and timeline realistic?
  - b. Does the Offeror provide a relevant description and strong justification of focus group and other qualitative research methodology and overall number of focus groups to reach and support CTPC goals?
  - c. Does the Offeror provide sufficient details describing the number of focus groups they propose and a strong rationale for the breakdown and inclusion of participants?
  - d. Does the Offeror provide a strong rationale for proposed moderators, moderator guides, and any additional needs for the described qualitative research?
  - e. Does the Offeror provide a strong and relevant description and rationale on how they will coordinate and conduct the sessions and other qualitative research, including retailer participant recruitment, providing specific details on how they can achieve compositions to include as many of the participant characteristics listed in the Scope of Work?
  - f. Does the Offeror provide sufficient details describing how they shall assemble focus groups and any other participants for the qualitative research within the designated regions of the state?
  - g. Does the Offeror provide a strong rationale for designated location(s) within different regions of the state, and selection of the facilities where groups and interviews shall take place, providing audio, video, and other recommended technology services (if needed), detailing the participant incentives and/or honoraria and other relevant details provided at the facility for participants and key personnel?
  - h. Does the Offeror describe the debriefing and reporting process?

C. Does the Offeror have any conflicts of interest?

**Financial Evaluation Criteria of Proposal**

A. Does the Offeror provide a clear and rational budget and budget narrative?

**Contract Term**

The term of this contract shall be on or about August 10, 2015 through November 30, 2015.

**Billing**

Payment will be made by CTPC upon receipt of acceptable deliverables and invoices from the selected Offeror. The selected Offeror shall bill the Department 50% upon receipt of the contract. The remaining 50% will be billed upon satisfactory completion of project deliverables and receipt of a final itemized invoice and summary report from the selected Offeror. **Invoices must be on company letterhead and include vendor's name, address, date, line item breakdown, Tax ID #, contract number, Blanket Purchase Order (BPO) number, and signature in order to be processed.** Original, signed invoices must be mailed to the contract monitor in order to be processed for payment. No scanned, emailed, or faxed copies will be accepted.

**OFFER SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

Interested parties should place both their sealed Financial Proposal envelope and sealed Technical Proposal envelope into a single submission envelope with the Procurement Officer information and the Procurement ID clearly marked. The Financial Proposal must include ALL final costs for completing the project.

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

Proposals must be mailed or hand-delivered and must be received by the **Procurement Officer NO LATER than 12:00 p.m. NOON on July 24, 2015** in order to be considered. Submission envelope must show the Procurement ID number. **Offerors cannot submit multiple responses and only one proposal permitted per envelope.**

Offerors who hand-deliver proposals are requested to please ask the building's security desk for a visiting pass and go to the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) floor, room 306 and ask for Chuck Bailey. \*NOTE: When dropping off the bid, please obtain a receipt indicating bid was received.

Offerors that have a courier deliver proposals are requested to please ask the building's security desk to telephone the PROCUREMENT OFFICER (Chuck Bailey, 410-767-5601). \*NOTE: When dropping off the bid, please obtain a receipt indicating bid was received.

Offerors who mail proposals should allow sufficient mail transit time to ensure timely receipt by the PROCUREMENT OFFICER. Proposals and/or unsolicited amendments to proposals arriving after the closing hour and date noted above will not be considered. For any response that is not hand-delivered, the offers must confirm, at least 60 minutes before the deadline, that the proposals were received in PHPA Procurement. **PHPA is not responsible for proposals dropped off in the mailroom.** Questions regarding this solicitation should be directed (by e-mail only, no phone call will be accepted) to the PROCUREMENT OFFICER.

**NO FAX OR EMAIL PROPOSALS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

**PROCUREMENT OFFICER:**

Chuck Bailey  
Agency Procurement Specialist  
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
Phone: 410-767-5601  
[chuck.bailey@maryland.gov](mailto:chuck.bailey@maryland.gov)

**ISSUING OFFICE:**

Dana Moncrief  
Chief, Statewide Public Health Initiatives  
Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control  
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
201 West Preston Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201

**MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISES ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO  
RESPOND TO THIS SOLICITATION**

**Attachment A- Financial Proposal Form**

**PROCUREMENT I.D. NUMBER: PHPA-S1948**

**ISSUE DATE: July 10, 2015**

**TITLE:** *Focus Group and Qualitative Information Gathering to Support the Responsible Tobacco Retailer Education Initiative – Baltimore Metro Area*

**A. Offeror Information:**

Vendor Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Federal Tax ID (FEIN#): \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
SBR Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Total cost of contract must equal \$25,000**

**Signature**

**Date**

*Vendor signature and date certifies that technical and budget submissions are correct and that vendor agrees to perform all services stated in BBN PHPA-S1948.*

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Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Line Item Budget\*

Budget Period from 8/10/15 to 11/30/15

<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>	<b>PROPOSED DHMH SUPPORT</b>
1. Personnel costs	
2. Qualitative Research Services Costs	
3. Reporting	
4. Other direct costs (please explain)	
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>

\* Include Budget Narrative on a separate page and attach it to the Financial Proposal Form.