



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT

Issue Date: April 16, 2026

Proposal Due Date: 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on April 30, 2026

Contract Period: May 15, 2026 – January 31, 2027

Budget: \$37,500.00

Submit submissions to: Bekki Lee-Wendt, bleewendt@phi.org

A. Introduction

The Public Health Institute (PHI) is a national, independent nonprofit that advances the health and wellbeing of all people, particularly those facing the greatest barriers to health. For more than 60 years, PHI has been working with public, private, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations to strengthen the public health ecosystem. We achieve our goals through deep experience in communities, strategic partnerships, policy leadership, and proven ability to turn ideas into actions that improve conditions for communities to thrive.

Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), PHI seeks bidders to provide the services and specifications as outlined below.

The Western States Regional Collaborations Project Management Office (PMO), housed at the Public Health Institute, supports two streams of multi-state public health collaboration among western states: implementation support for the West Coast Health Alliance (WCHA) and voluntary regional collaboration among a broader group of western states on priorities they identify.

Communications work runs through both streams. For WCHA, it includes supporting four states in developing and communicating unified public health guidance working under WCHA governance processes and in coordination with state communications staff and health officials. For the broader regional work, states have identified communications and public trust as priorities; the specific work will be shaped by ongoing engagement with participating states and will continue to evolve over the contract period.

A successful consultant will demonstrate expertise in effective public health communications in today's environment. People get health information from a wide range of sources, communities have different information needs and different levels of trust in public health institutions, and the communications strategies that work vary across populations and contexts. We are looking for a consultant who understands this landscape and knows how to navigate it: grounding communications in science and evidence while making information accessible and actionable for a range of audiences, building and sustaining public trust, developing strategies grounded in

community perspectives and shaped for specific community needs, and using data and feedback to continuously assess and strengthen approaches over time.

What We're Looking For

A consultant who:

- Understands how governmental public health works — how federal, state, and local health departments operate, what constraints they face, and how to work across different political and operational contexts
- Can write clearly and credibly on public health topics across a range of formats: guidance documents, messaging frameworks, talking points, rapid response drafts — grounded in evidence and accessible to diverse audiences
- Has substantive experience supporting communications across jurisdictions, not just single-organization work. Strong preference for communications experience in western states/western context
- Understands what effective public health communications looks like in practice: building trust, addressing misinformation, reaching communities with different information needs, and communicating under uncertainty
- Navigates the social media and traditional media landscape for maximum public health impact
- Crafts communication strategy using input from state and local public health, partners, community organizations, and audiences — not just producing materials in isolation
- Has experience monitoring how communications strategies are performing and using that feedback to adapt approaches over time
- Works in partnership with state communications staff, contributing expertise and capacity while building on what states are already doing
- Is available to respond on reasonable turnaround when situations require it
- Is comfortable in a collaborative environment where priorities are set by states and evolve over time

B. Proposal Format

In order for PHI to conduct the most efficient proposal evaluation, bidders are required to include the following information in their proposals, of up to 10 pages total, as described below:

1. Consultant/Organizational Overview –

- a. A description of the bidder: relevant experience supporting public health communications, with emphasis on multi-state or multi-jurisdictional public health communications work, including experience in western states contexts, and methodology and any key initial work plan elements for supporting this scope of work
- b. Approach to public health communications, including but not limited to how the bidder grounds communications in science and evidence while making content accessible to different audiences, incorporates community perspectives, builds trust through communications approaches, and understands the effectiveness of communications efforts
- c. Experience working in collaboration with a range of communications staff and public health leaders in multi-partner/coalition context

- d. Identify lead communications professional for the project and any additional relevant members of the team, collaborators, or planned partners/subcontractors with role and key competencies for each person
 - e. List of three references with their relationship to the bidder and contact information
 - f. Typical availability
2. **Price Proposal** – A description of the bidder’s hourly rate, including discounts
 3. **Work Samples** – Two or three samples, or descriptions of relevant work if materials are confidential (these may be additional pages beyond the 10-page proposal limit)
 4. **Contact Information** – A statement of main point of contact

C. Submission of Proposals & Closing Time

Please submit proposals to: Bekki Lee-Wendt, bleewendt@phi.org

Proposals are due by: **Thursday, April 30, 2026
5:00 p.m. – Pacific Time**