

**Answers to all Questions submitted to the Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange D/B/A Access Health CT, Request for Proposals (RFP) for Reputation Enhancement/Public Relations And Crisis Communication Support**

**Posted September 9, 2016**

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1. Under FOIA we would like to request a copy of the current contract as we feel it will aid us in determining whether we would make a suitable fit for this opportunity.

You can find the current vendor contract at this link:

<http://www.ct.gov/hix/lib/hix/GlobalStrategyGroupLLC.pdf>

2. What is the annual budget for the Reputation Enhancement/Public Relations and Crisis Communication support services?

The AHCT budget for these services will be finalized when the contract is awarded. Your company should propose a reasonable cost for providing the services listed in the RFP.

3. Are these services currently being provided by Global Strategy Group LLC?

Yes, most of the services requested in the current RFP are being provided by Global Strategy Group LLC.

If not, who is currently providing these services?

Translation services are currently being provided by Interpreters and Translators, Inc. This company has been our partner for many years and they have translated most of our press releases, web content etc.

4. Why is this contract being put up for review at this time?

AHCT has a Board-approved procurement policy that requires it to solicit proposals at least once every three years for professional services required by AHCT. The Board-approved procurement policy is available at:

[http://www.ct.gov/hix/lib/hix/policy\\_contracting\\_for\\_personal\\_services\\_\(short\\_form\\_alternative\)\\_00035474-4.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/hix/lib/hix/policy_contracting_for_personal_services_(short_form_alternative)_00035474-4.pdf)

5. How many crisis situations has Access Health CT encountered in the last 12 months? Please describe an example of a situation that occurred (if appropriate).

AHCT has not had any crisis situations in the last 12 months, but you can find examples on our website as to some of the issues we do deal with on an ongoing basis:

<http://learn.accesshealthct.com/press-releases/>

6. Are you looking for traditional out-of-pocket expenses such as clipping/monitoring services to be included in the retainer or is the retainer for agency fees only?

The cost proposal should be a fixed cost that includes all expenses and no out of pocket expenses or additional costs.

7. Can an agency sub contract to fulfill the government relations requirements under the RFP?

The selected agency may use subcontractors to fulfill requirements under the contract. However, AHCT has to approve all subcontractors. For example, if your organization has to sub-contract translation services, AHCT needs to approve such vendor. Additionally, any approved subcontractors must be bound to the same contractual terms as the selected agency.

8. Does Access Health CT currently retain a public relations firm?

Yes

If so, will the incumbent firm be participating in the search?

The firm will not be participating in the search; however, it can bid again.

9. Is this a required search under your state requirements?

AHCT is not subject to the State of Connecticut contract and procurement requirements. AHCT has a Board-approved procurement policy that requires it to solicit proposals at least once every three years for professional services required by AHCT. The Board-approved procurement policy is available at:

[http://www.ct.gov/hix/lib/hix/policy\\_contracting\\_for\\_personal\\_services\\_\(short\\_form\\_alternative\)\\_00035474-4\).pdf](http://www.ct.gov/hix/lib/hix/policy_contracting_for_personal_services_(short_form_alternative)_00035474-4).pdf)

10. In responding to your crises scenarios, may we make suggested policy responses which would, obviously, drive the communications recommendations we would make?

Yes, absolutely. Please answer the questions in the RFP as you would if you were the vendor we are working with.

11. Do you have a budget for translation services?

The AHCT budget for these services will be finalized when the contract is awarded. Your company should propose a reasonable cost for providing the services listed in the RFP.

12. If affidavits have been executed with the state within the past year, do you require newly executed affidavits?

Yes – new affidavits must be submitted with the RFP Response or at contract execution, as applicable. More information about the required affidavits (Forms) is outlined in the RFP.

13. Do you have a budget and a strategy for paid social media advertising?

The budget and strategy for paid social media advertising is outside the scope of this RFP, however, you may provide a Rate Card that describes the hourly rates for any additional services your agency offers that fall outside the current project scope.

14. Scenario 3 refers to a “Director.” Can you clarify if this would be one of your Board of Directors or an employee with a Director title?

In scenario three described in the RFP, the “Director” refers to an AHCT employee with a Director’s title, such as the Director of Marketing or Legal.

15. For scenarios (a) and (b), have you previously experienced any issues or interruptions of service with these vendors?

Yes - there have been instances where AHCT's website has gone down for a period of time, but not for the amount of time set forth in scenario (a).

AHCT has never had an interruption in call center services as described in scenario (b).

16. How long is the time frame for this engagement?

3 years

17. How would you describe your needs after Open Enrollment?

AHCT is a company that is ever changing and evolving. The time in which we would need spent on this contract varies from day-to-day, hour-to-hour. AHCT expects the vendor awarded this contract to be available for 24/7 needs; some days that could be 12 hours a day, other days it may be 1 hour. AHCT expects weekly one-on-one in-person touch points with our CEO, Director of Marketing and Government and Public Relations Manager. AHCT is also moving into year-round outreach efforts, so AHCT's needs should be considered ongoing throughout the entire year.

18. What is your proposed investment for this engagement? How much was budgeted for these activities in the past?

The AHCT budget for these services will be finalized when the contract is awarded. Your company should propose a reasonable cost for providing the services listed in the RFP.

19. Who is the incumbent for this engagement?

Global Strategy Group, CT

20. Are you planning to actively target special enrollment populations throughout the year?

AHCT's marketing campaigns are now year-round where we include different messages to different target audiences. Many individuals enroll outside the open enrollment period via special enrollment or Medicaid eligibility determination.

21. What kind of rate increases are you anticipating for the plans offered on the Exchange?

The Connecticut Insurance Department sets insurance rates. The rates, once finalized, will be posted on AHCT's website.

22. To what extent is re-enrollment a priority, versus new enrollments?

Retaining our customer base is priority number one, but we are always marketing to new consumers. CT's uninsured rate is at 3.8% (lowest ever), so our campaigns are now 80% retention and 20% acquisition.

23. How many plans do you anticipate will be offered this year – and how much of a reduction does that represent from last year?

AHCT currently offers (for 2016) 23 plans within the Small Business Exchange and 40 different QHPs/MSPs within the Individual Exchange, with four carriers. At this time, AHCT does not have finalized information regarding the plans that will be offered for 2017.

24. How many people are signed up for plans that will no longer be available on the Exchange?

That number has not yet been determined.

25. Have you made any significant changes/improvements to your website that might result in IT issues?

AHCT is always updating and improving its website. There has been multiple updates made to the website over the past year and there will be updates made in the future. Our goal is to give our customers the best experience possible during open enrollment and the plan year.

26. Does AHCT have any crisis communications protocols, processes or templates currently in place?

In cooperation with our current vendor, AHCT has developed a crisis communication plan that it currently follows.

27. Would the selected PR contractor be expected to coordinate communications with HealthyCT, which recently suspended selling coverage through AHCT, or other former, current or prospective carriers?

No, the selected vendor will not have any communication on behalf of AHCT with any of the carriers or any State Agencies (including the Department of Social Services) while under contract with the AHCT. All communications with carriers and State Agencies flow through AHCT.

28. Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada)

AHCT encourages all interested companies to submit a proposal for Reputation Enhancement/Public Relations and Crisis Communication Support. If your company can fulfill the requirements in our Request for Proposal for Reputation Enhancement/Public Relations and Crisis Communication Support, we would encourage you to apply.

29. Whether we need to come over there for meetings?

Yes, there are meetings you will be required to attend in person, such as monthly board meetings, weekly CEO meetings, and other Marketing vendor partner meetings.

30. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (like, from India or Canada)

AHCT only requires that all tasks are completed on time according to Eastern Standard Time (EST) and on schedule. Although there are mandatory onsite meetings that take place weekly.

31. Can we submit the proposals via email?????

Instructions for submitting proposals are detailed in the RFP. Proposals will not be accepted by email.

32. We are experts at developing and scoping an appropriate crisis communications program for clients. We would like to pursue this portion of the RFP only, and/or speak with you directly about

our industry-leading capabilities and track record in crisis communications. Is there an opportunity to open a direct dialogue with you about your specific needs in this area?

At this time, AHCT requires all services described in the RFP to be provided by one organization. There is not an opportunity to segment requested services amongst several vendors.