

New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH)

Request for Proposal: A Research Study on Racial and Ethnic Disparities on Sexual and Reproductive Health of African American Women

P.L.1991, c.401 (C.26:2-160 et seq.)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) seeks research vendors {contractors} to conduct a study about Racial and Ethnic Disparities on Sexual and Reproductive Health of African American Women. This study, as legislated by bill NJ A707 (www.billtrack50.com/billdetail/1170952), seeks to identify findings and recommendations that can improve the sexual and reproductive health of African American women in New Jersey.

1.1 INFORMATION FOR BIDDERS

Proposals Due: Wednesday, February 8, 2023, by 4 PM EST

Question & Answer Period: Friday, January 27, 2023, by 4 PM EST

All Bidders must submit Quotes to centralprocurement@doh.nj.gov

Initiative Term: TBD. Approximately nine (9) to twelve (12) months, to commence upon approval from Using Agency Contract Manager (SCM) or designee. This timeline may be subject to change.

If you are not interested in bidding, please send an email indicating that you will not bid.

All Vendors {Contractors} are encouraged to check NJDOH Bidding & Opportunities webpage for updates regarding this opportunity. <https://www.nj.gov/health/mgmt/bids.shtml>

2.0 BACKGROUND

According to the Guttmacher–Lancet Commission, sexual and reproductive health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to all aspects of sexuality and reproduction, not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity (*Starrs, 2018*). Despite New Jersey’s ranking as the 8th healthiest state overall and higher per capita income than the US, the Black population in NJ lag in many areas that contribute to sexual and reproductive health.

Currently, New Jersey is ranked 47th in the nation for maternal deaths and has one of the widest racial disparities for both maternal and infant mortality. Childbirth has increasingly become one of the riskiest experiences for Black women in the Garden State, with Black women dying from pregnancy-related causes at **7.6 times** the rate of White women (*Hogan, 2021*).

Preventative Healthcare

The disparities carryover into a myriad of other health conditions that affect the sexual and reproductive health of African American women. While Black women have an 8% lower risk of a cancer diagnosis than white women, studies show they have a 12% higher risk of cancer death. Specifically, Black women have a breast cancer death rate that is **41%** higher than white women (*American Cancer Society, 2022*). In terms of cervical cancer, while self-reported up-to-date cervical cancer screening prevalence is similar between Black women and White women, Black women appear to be less likely to receive recommended follow-up after a positive cervical cancer screening test (*American Cancer Society, 2022*).

For nationally reportable sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS, chlamydia and gonorrhea, Black women are also disproportionately affected. Black women continue to have a much higher rate of HIV diagnoses than Hispanic or white women [in New Jersey]. In 2013, Black women represented **58%** of all new HIV/AIDS cases among women (*New Jersey Department of Health, 2015*). Among those living with HIV/AIDS in 2017, African Americans accounted for **60.3%** of HIV/AIDS cases among women (*New Jersey Department of Health, 2017*). Nationwide, the rate of reported chlamydia cases among Black females was **5 times** the rate among White females. The rate of reported gonorrhea cases among Black females aged 20–24 years was **6.9 times** the rate among White females in the same age group and **8.8 times** the rate among White females for those aged 15–19 years (*CDC, 2020*). Hepatitis C is also more prevalent amongst the Black population. In New Jersey, non-Hispanic black persons have a hepatitis C prevalence of 1.66%, with all other races averaging about 0.53%. This means that non-Hispanic blacks experience hepatitis C at a rate of 3.15 more than any other race (*Bradley, 2020*).

These disparities are compounded by inadequate access to care among Black NJ residents. They are more likely to be employed in jobs without health care coverage or more likely to have coverage through public programs which limit the number of providers they have access to, including providers that manage their sexual and reproductive health. A 2021 Report found that **7.5%** of Black NJ residents were uninsured, compared to 3.3% of White NJ residents. Black NJ residents also had the highest rate of insurance coverage through public programs, at almost **40%** (*New Jersey Policy Perspective, 2021*).

With these factors in mind, this proposal seeks to identify an experienced, culturally competent research vendor that can work alongside the New Jersey Department of Health to comprehensively review these factors and put forth recommendations for legislative or other actions that should be taken to address these issues systematically.

The purpose of the study is to accomplish the following:

1. Identify Statewide and regional trends, patterns, and racial and ethnic disparities in adverse health outcomes, and medical, non-medical, and system-related factors that may affect the sexual and reproductive health of African American women.
2. Review the extent to which the effects of racial and ethnic disparities on the sexual and reproductive health of African American women in a geographic area indicate the need to increase access to health care services among racial and ethnic populations in that area.
3. Identify ways to reduce or eliminate racial and ethnic disparities that affect the sexual and reproductive health of African American women.

The goal of the study is to put forth recommendations that accomplish the following:

1. Improve the sexual and reproductive health of African American women in this State
2. Reduce or eliminate racial and ethnic disparities that affect the sexual and reproductive health of African American women
3. Increase access to high-quality healthcare services among African American women in the following priority areas:
 - Childbirth
 - Breast, cervical, and ovarian cancer screening

- HIV/AIDS
- Hepatitis C
- Other sexually transmitted diseases

3.0 SCOPE OF WORK

The Vendor {Contractor} shall complete the following tasks, responsibilities, activities, and project deliverables from the contract award sign date through the contract end date.

3.1 Vendor Responsibilities/Project Deliverables

The vendor must provide experienced, diverse, and culturally sensitive research staff to conduct the following required activities:

1. Develop and share the organization’s overall research plan for NJDOH review prior to the start of the study.
2. Identify roles and responsibilities of the organization’s research team such as the leadership of the project; data collection and analysis; preparation of draft and final reports; and communication with NJDOH/any partners throughout the process.
3. Gather and analyze data from NJDOH to reflect priority areas (childbirth; breast, cervical, and ovarian cancer screening; HIV/AIDS; Hepatitis C; other sexually transmitted diseases) and other relevant areas.
4. Store gathered data securely and ensure a smooth transfer to NJDOH upon completion of the study and final report.
5. Meet with and seek the advice of persons (professionals & community scholars) specializing in the fields of women's health, minority health advocacy, or other related fields.
6. Maintain regular communication with PMO and provide ongoing reporting through reporting tools constructed specifically for study deliverables. Vendor {Contractor} must report issues as they arise with NJDOH PMO to ensure rapid resolution and to avoid disruption or delay in providing the final report.
7. Report key performance indicators to NJDOH to enable monitoring of progress. Required metrics include:
 - Number of NJDOH data sets (quantitative & qualitative) accessed
 - Number of persons (advocates & community scholars) engaged about priority areas and related fields
 - Number of engagement tools (calls, surveys, etc.)
8. Prepare a written final report by TBD date containing the study's findings and recommendations for legislative or other actions that should be taken.
9. Create a Strategic Action Plan with a concise and detailed evaluation component that outlines how NJDOH will assess which recommendations will be implemented and its impact on the target audience.

3.2 Proposed Structure

Staff Type	Number of Organization Members
Research Project Manager	1
Fiscal Lead	1 (may be same as Project Manager)
Research Staff	1-2
Total	+/- 4

3.3 Project Deliverables and Timeframes

Vendor {Contractor} must provide the project deliverables and timelines for sexual and reproductive health with a written report. The timelines for completion of work will be discussed and identified with the selected Vendor upon award.

Activity	Timeline
1. Develop and Provide a Research Plan– depicting start to finish Vendor goals, achievement tasks, and anticipated outcomes	To be included in Vendor Proposal
2. Meeting with DOH to review Research Plan and identify SOW completion dates	TBD
3. Collaborate with NJDOH to identify meeting agenda and participate, as needed, meeting with DOBI, Treasury, and DHS to identify/consider additional factors of information.	TBD
The Sexual Health and Reproductive Study must include:	
4. Part 1. - <u>IDENTIFICATION</u> - summarize findings of any Statewide and regional trends, patterns, and racial and ethnic disparities in adverse health outcomes, and medical, non-medical, and system-related factors	TBD
5. Part 2. – <u>ACCESS TO CARE</u> – Review the extent to which the effects of racial and ethnic disparities on the sexual and reproductive health of African American women have reduced access to health care services in the priority health areas	TBD
6. Part 3.- <u>PLAN OF ACTION</u> – assess if focusing on priority health areas outlined is adequate to reduce or eliminate racial and ethnic disparities on the sexual and reproductive health of African American women.	TBD
The Final Report must:	
7. Outline the findings and any recommendations for legislation, and administrative action.	TBD
8. Final Report Due Date to NJDOH	TBD

In addition to the activities listed above, the applicant must describe their organizational capacity to achieve the study objectives. When applicants are describing organizational capacity, consideration should be given to experience. Please discuss former or current projects.

4.0 EXPERIENCE

Vendor {Contractor} shall provide relevant experience on projects of similar size and scope successfully completed as evidence of vendor {contractor} ability to complete work similar to those required by this RFP. Vendor {Contractor} shall submit the resumes and licenses of staff that will participate in the Animal Support Initiative.

5.0 PRICING

Vendor {Contractor} must submit all-inclusive pricing to provide the requested deliverables.

Pricing shall be firm fixed pricing. Firm Fixed Price means a price that is all-inclusive of direct cost and indirect costs, including, but not limited to, direct labor costs, overhead, fee or profit, clerical support, equipment, materials, supplies, managerial (administrative) support, all documents, reports, forms, travel, reproduction, and any other costs.

The Vendor {Contractor} must demonstrate how it proposes to utilize the funds (proposed amount) as it carries out each objective; including a timeline of funding used based on the submitted work plan. The proposed amount must align with the Statement of Work and included in the proposal.

6.0 TECHNICAL PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Vendor {Contractor} shall submit a Technical Proposal, which describes its approach and plans for accomplishing the work outlined in the Scope of Work section, Deliverables, Experience, and Pricing, i.e., Sections 1 - 3. The Vendor {Contractor} must set forth its understanding of the requirements of this RFP and its approach to successfully complete the contract. The Bidder should include the level of detail it determines necessary to assist the evaluation committee in its review of the Bidder's Proposal. **All required forms must be completed and returned as part of the required proposal.**

7.0 EVALUATION

Personnel: The qualifications and experience of the vendor's {contractor's} management, fiscal lead, project manager, and handlers that will be assigned to the contract, including the candidates recommended for each of the positions/roles required.

Experience of firm: The Vendor {Contractor} must provide documentation of current projects/ successfully completing contracts of a similar size and scope in relation to the work required by this RFP.

Ability of firm to complete the Scope of Work based on its Technical Proposal: The overall ability of the bidder to undertake and successfully complete the technical requirements of the contract in a timely manner.

The intent of this RFP is to award a contract to that responsible Bidder whose proposal, conforming to this RFP is most advantageous to the State, price and other factors considered. The evaluation criteria categories may be used to develop more detailed evaluation criteria to be used in the evaluation process.

8.0 REQUIRED FORMS

8.1 FORMS, REGISTRATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS REQUIRED WITH PROPOSAL

All required forms are found at the following link:

<https://www.state.nj.us/treasury/purchase/forms.shtml>

All bid submissions must include completed mandatory compliance forms, which include:

- Ownership Disclosure
- Disclosure of Investigations and Other Actions Involving Contractor
- Disclosure of Investment Activities in Iran
- Chapter 51 Compliance, where applicable
- Chapter 271 form, where applicable
- MacBride Principles
- Source Disclosure
- Business Registration Certificate
- Affirmative Action Compliance
- Certification of Non-Involvement in Prohibited Activities in Russia or Belarus
- Evidence of Insurance
- State of New Jersey Standard Terms and Conditions
- Waivered Contracts Supplement to the State of New Jersey Standard Terms and Conditions

NJ Charities Proof of Registration and Compliance – **If Applicable**/ If Vendor {Contractor} Identifies as a Charity. Forms and instructions can be found at www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/charity/charfrm.htm.

Contractors are under a continuing obligation to report updates to the information contained in its required forms.

Unless otherwise specified, forms must contain an original, physical signature, or electronic signature. Winning Bidder(s) must register with NJSTART as a Contractor for the State of NJ.

www.njstart.gov

8.2 MACBRIDE PRINCIPLES CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:34-12.2, a Bidder is required to certify that it either has no ongoing business activities in Northern Ireland and does not maintain a physical presence therein or that it will take lawful steps in good faith to conduct any business operations it has in Northern Ireland in accordance with the MacBride principles of nondiscrimination in employment as set forth in N.J.S.A. 52:18A-89.5 and in conformance with the United Kingdom's Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act of 1989 and permit independent monitoring of their compliance with those principles.

8.3 OWNERSHIP DISCLOSURE FORM

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:25-24.2, in the event the Bidder is a corporation, partnership, or limited liability company, the Bidder must disclose all 10% or greater owners by (a) completing and submitting the Ownership Disclosure Form with the Proposal; (b) if the Bidder has submitted a signed and accurate Ownership Disclosure Form dated and received no more than six (6) months prior to the Proposal submission deadline for this procurement, the State may rely upon that form; however, if there has been a change in ownership within the last six (6) months, a new Ownership Disclosure Form must be completed, signed and submitted with the Proposal; or, (c) a Bidder with any direct or indirect parent entity which is publicly traded may submit the name and address of each publicly traded entity and the name and address of each person that holds a 10 percent or greater beneficial interest in the publicly traded entity as of the last annual filing with the federal Securities and Exchange Commission or the foreign equivalent, and, if there is any person that holds a 10 percent or greater beneficial interest, also shall submit links to the websites containing the last annual filings with the federal Securities and Exchange Commission or the foreign equivalent and the relevant page numbers of the filings that contain the information on each person that holds a 10 percent or greater beneficial interest. N.J.S.A. 52:25-24.2.

8.4 DISCLOSURE OF INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES IN IRAN

The Bidder should submit Disclosure of Investment Activities in Iran form to certify that, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:32-58, neither the Bidder, nor one (1) of its parents, subsidiaries, and/or affiliates (as defined in N.J.S.A. 52:32-56(e)(3)), is listed on the Department of the Treasury's List of Persons or Entities Engaging in Prohibited Investment Activities in Iran and that neither the Bidder, nor one (1) of its parents, subsidiaries, and/or affiliates, is involved in any of the investment activities set forth in N.J.S.A. 52:32-56(f). If the Bidder is unable to so certify, the Bidder shall provide a detailed and precise description of such activities as directed on the form. If a Bidder does not submit the form with the Quote, the Bidder must comply within seven (7) business days of the State's request or the State may deem the Quote non-responsive.

8.5 BUSINESS REGISTRATION

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 52:32-44(b), a Bidder and its named Subcontractors must have a valid Business Registration Certificate ("BRC") issued by the Department of the Treasury, Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services prior to the award of a contract. To facilitate the Proposal evaluation and contract award process, the Bidder should submit a copy of its valid BRC and those of any named Subcontractors with its Proposal. See Section 2.1 of the State Standard Terms and Conditions.

Any Bidder, inclusive of any named Subcontractors, not having a valid business registration at the time of the Proposal opening, or whose BRC was revoked prior to the submission of the Proposal, should proceed immediately to register its business or seek reinstatement of a revoked BRC.

The Bidder is cautioned that it may require a significant amount of time to secure the reinstatement of a revoked BRC. The process can require actions by both the Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services and the Division of Taxation. For this reason, a Bidder's early attention to this requirement is highly recommended. The Bidder and its named Subcontractors may register with the Division of Revenue and

Enterprise Services, obtain a copy of an existing BRC or obtain information necessary to seek reinstatement of a revoked BRC online at https://www1.state.nj.us/TYTR_BRC/jsp/BRCLoginJsp.jsp.

A Bidder otherwise identified by the DOH as a responsive and responsible Bidder, inclusive of any named Subcontractors, but that was not business registered at the time of submission of its Proposal must be so registered and in possession of a valid BRC by a deadline to be specified in writing by the DOH. A Bidder failing to comply with this requirement by the deadline specified by the Division will be deemed ineligible for contract award. Under any circumstance, the Division will rely upon information available from computerized systems maintained by the State as a basis to verify independently compliance with the requirement for business registration.

8.6 DISCLOSURE OF INVESTIGATIONS AND OTHER ACTIONS INVOLVING BIDDER FORM

The Bidder should submit the Disclosure of Investigations and Other Actions Involving Bidder Form, with its Proposal, to provide a detailed description of any investigation, litigation, including administrative complaints or other administrative proceedings, involving any public sector clients during the past five (5) years, including the nature and status of the investigation, and, for any litigation, the caption of the action, a brief description of the action, the date of inception, current status, and, if applicable, disposition. If a Bidder does not submit the form with the Proposal, the Bidder must comply within seven (7) business days of the State's request, or the State may deem the Proposal non-responsive.

8.7 SOURCE DISCLOSURE

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:34-13.2, prior to an award of a contract, the Bidder is required to submit a completed Source Disclosure Form. The Bidder's inclusion of the completed Source Disclosure Form with the Proposal is requested and advised.

8.8 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The intended Contractor must submit a copy of a New Jersey Certificate of Employee Information Report, or a copy of Federal Letter of Approval verifying it is operating under a federally approved or sanctioned Affirmative Action program. Awarded Contractors not in possession of either a New Jersey Certificate of Employee Information Report or a Federal Letter of Approval must complete the Affirmative Action Employee Information Report (AA-302) located on the web at <https://www.state.nj.us/treasury/purchase/forms.shtml>.

Bidders should verify its Affirmative Action Compliance status on the "Maintain Terms and Categories" Tab within its profile in NJSTART. In the event of an issue with a Contractor's Affirmative Action Compliance status, NJSTART provides a link to take corrective action.

8.9 INSURANCE CERTIFICATES

The Contractor shall provide the State with current certificates of insurance for all coverages required by the terms of this contract naming the State as an Additional Insured. See Section 4.2 of the State Standard Terms and Conditions accompanying this Request for Proposal. The Bidder should verify its Insurance Certification Compliance status on the “Maintain Terms and Categories” Tab within its profile in NJSTART.

8.10 Certification of Non-Involvement in Prohibited Activities in Russia or Belarus

On March 9, 2022, Governor Murphy signed P.L.2022, c.3, which prohibits certain government dealings with businesses engaged in prohibited activities in Russia or Belarus. The new law requires the Department of the Treasury to develop a list of persons and entities that engage in prohibited activities in Russia or Belarus and an accompanying form for use statewide.

Prior to entering into, renewing, amending, or extending a contract, the intended Contractor must certify that they are not engaged in prohibited activities in Russia or Belarus using the provided Certification Of Non-Involvement In Prohibited Activities In Russia Or Belarus Pursuant To P.L.2022, c.3.

8.11 NJ Charities Proof of Registration/ Compliance

NJ Charities Registration- If your organization is registered with the NJ Charities Registration then a “Letter of Compliance” from the Division of Consumer Affairs must be obtained. All registered charities must renew their registration yearly. For more information contact and forms can be found at www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/charity/charfrm.htm.

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