

**State of Illinois
COVID-19 Infection Prevention Consultants
Request for Proposal**

Due 09/30/2021, 5:00 p.m., CST

Background

The State of Illinois continues to experience an unprecedented outbreak of COVID-19. While positivity rates have declined from peak periods, the relaxation of mitigation measures increases opportunities for community spread. Additionally, evidence is lacking regarding the effectiveness of currently available vaccines against newly identified corona virus variants. As such, testing for COVID-19 remains a key strategy for supporting the health of Illinois residents.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) requires the services of a vendor to provide a minimum of 4.0 FTE of Infection Prevention Consultant time for the Statewide response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. COVID-19 cases are continuing to occur in long-term care facilities and other congregate settings, and there continues to be a vital need for infection prevention and control expertise in the state. Illinois is in the midst of another surge in COVID-19 cases due to the emergence of more virulent variants. This makes the need for individuals with expertise in infection prevention not just critical, but urgent. Infection Prevention Consultants are needed to provide guidance and consultation to IDPH, the 97 Local Health Departments (LHDs) in the State, nursing home associations, 1,600 licensed Long-Term Care (LTC) facilities in the State, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA), and other congregate settings and State partners that may experience a COVID-19 outbreak. The Infection Prevention Consultants will coordinate with the three existing IDPH infection prevention staff to ensure a State-wide COVID-19 response. The Infection Prevention Consultants must hold a certification in infection prevention and control from the Certification Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc. (CBIC) or equivalent, and other minimum qualifications defined below.

The State will evaluate the proposals received by the deadline stated below and select a vendor to provide Infection Prevention Consultant services. Evaluation of proposals shall include review of mandatory and desirable requirements. Respondents who do not meet the mandatory requirements will not be considered for evaluation. In determining how well vendors meet the desirable requirements, IDPH will rank proposals without consideration of price, from best to least qualified using a point ranking system as an aid in conducting the evaluation. Vendors who receive fewer than the minimum required points will not be considered for award.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is being issued under the Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation and is therefore exempt from the provisions of the Illinois Procurement Code.

Pricing for services shall be firm fixed rate for the initial term and any term extensions. Rates shall be inclusive of all vendor expenses incurred by the vendor to provide services. All expenses such as travel, equipment, supplies, etc. must be covered by the vendor. All rates are in US dollars.

The proposal must include the vendor’s current insurance coverage plan applicable to the proposed operations and continuing operational management of all proposed deliverables during the contract term. Such insurance coverage must meet the State’s standard contract terms (see Attachment A).

The initial term of the contract will be twelve (12 months from the date of contract execution. The term may be extended at the State’s discretion.

Any vendor requiring clarification of any section of this RFP or wishing to comment on any requirement of the RFP must submit specific questions in writing no later than the deadline for questions indicated in the “Key Dates” section of this RFP. Questions may be emailed to the point of contact for this RFP and listed below. Questions or comments not raised in writing on or before the deadline to submit questions are thereafter waived. At the close of the question period a copy of all questions or comments and the State's responses will be posted on the State’s web site shown below. Every effort will be made to post this information as soon as possible after the question period ends, contingent on the number and complexity of the questions.

Key Dates

9/13/2021	RFP Released
9/16/2021	All questions from prospective vendors due via email to sean.m.mcauliff@illinois.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. CST
9/20/2021	Answers to questions from prospective vendors released via IDPH COVID-19 website link below: https://www.dph.illinois.gov/rfp/covid19-infection-prevention-consultants-rfp
9/30/2021	Submissions due via email to sean.m.mcauliff@illinois.gov not later than 5:00 p.m. CST
10/4/2021 (estimated)	Contract award
10/5/2021 (estimated)	Start date

Directions

The State is seeking proposals from interested vendors with proven experience and established capacity to provide Infection Prevention Consultants that hold a certification in infection prevention and control from the Certification Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc. (CBIC) or equivalent, and other minimum qualifications defined below, to assist the various entities referenced above. The proposal must be submitted as two separate documents. The first document will include the vendor’s response as to how it will deliver the services required and cannot include any pricing information. The all-inclusive pricing information must be presented on the attached budget template (see Attachment B). Each document will be evaluated separately. Proposals should include:

- Name of vendor, vendor’s address, and contact person, including work phone, cell phone, and email address.
- Operational Plan (not to exceed 10 pages total) that describes the vendor’s proposal as described in the Scope of Work.

- Timeline that includes date.
- Plan for hiring a minimum of 4.0 FTE Infection Prevention Consultants who shall perform infection prevention and control assessments, and provide training, guidance and support to ensure that Illinois congregate settings such as healthcare, long-term care and correctional facilities, are optimally prepared to prevent and respond to outbreaks of COVID-19.
- Implementation plan for using the Infection Prevention Consultants for assessing and tracking general infection prevention and control procedures and compliance at identified Illinois congregate settings. The plan must describe how the Infection Prevention Consultants will serve as a resource for technical assistance, education, and mentoring in best infection prevention practices.
- References, which shall include the names and contact information for three entities for whom the vendor has provided similar services described in the proposal.
- Proposed pricing (submitted in as a separate, clearly labeled attachment from the rest of the proposal).

Proposals must be submitted via email not later than 5:00 p.m., Central Standard Time on 9/30/2021 to:

Sean McAuliff
 Illinois Department of Public Health
 Office of Disease Control
 Sean.m.mcauliff@illinois.gov

The State reserves the right to award to the vendor that has the best overall proposal within the State’s timelines and to issue supplemental solicitations as warranted.

The Chart below provides shows the relative scoring weights of the main components of the RFP:

Technical Elements	660 points
Pricing Proposal	140 points

Pricing Formula is as follows: Maximum Price Points X (Lowest Price/Vendor’s Price) = Total Price Points

Scope of Work

- 1. GOAL:** To establish a statewide minimum staffing of 4.0 FTE Infection Prevention Consultants to provide guidance and consultation to IDPH, the 97 local health departments, nursing home associations, 1,600 licensed long-term care facilities in the State, Illinois Department of Corrections, Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs, and any other congregate care settings that may experience a COVID-19 outbreak and other State partners.
- 2. SUPPLIES AND/OR SERVICES REQUIRED:**
 - a. Vendor must provide and manage the activities of a minimum of 4.0 FTE of Infection Prevention Consultants who shall work state-wide to ensure that congregate settings are optimally prepared to prevent and respond to potential outbreaks of COVID-19.

- b. Vendor must establish and implement a plan using the Infection Prevention Consultants for assessing and tracking COVID-19 infection prevention and control procedures and practices at identified Illinois congregate settings and for Infection Prevention Consultants to serve as a resource for technical assistance, education, and mentoring in best infection prevention practices. The plan must include quantifiable and measurable goals for infection prevention tracking/assessment activities, and strategies for responding quickly to COVID-19 outbreaks. Documentation of the plan must be provided.
- c. Vendor must establish and provide a quality control process that includes at a minimum, quality criteria, assessment methods, monitoring and outcome results. Documentation of quality control processes must be provided.
- d. Vendor must provide Infection Prevention Consultants who provide the following infection prevention guidance and consultation services at a minimum:
 - i. Monitor COVID-19 cases occurring in long-term care facilities within assigned regions, using the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) targeted facility list.
 - ii. Monitor COVID-19 cases occurring in sister State Agency facilities: IDOC, IDVA, IDHS.
 - iii. Collaborate with the local health department, the designated IDPH physician lead for congregate settings, and other IDPH staff to respond to cases and outbreaks of COVID-19 occurring in congregate settings.
 - iv. Record all outbreak investigations and outcomes within one week of event completion within the secure IDPH healthcare associated infection (HAI) reporting system
 - v. Participate in each of the conference calls described below, responding to questions regarding COVID-19 and providing guidance for key partners and stakeholders. These calls typically last one hour, and one or two Infection Prevention Consultants will participate in each call
 - 1. Local health department weekly informational webinars
 - 2. Nursing Home Association weekly calls
 - 3. State Ombudsman calls (periodic)
 - 4. Senior Advocacy (AARP, Alzheimer's Association) weekly calls
 - 5. UIC/RUSH/SIU Infectious Disease Physician Consultants weekly calls
 - 6. Chicago and Cook County Dept of Public Health ID/IP bi-weekly calls
 - 7. Participate in weekly infection prevention calls with sister State Agencies – IDHS, IDOC, IDVA and other calls as needed to perform key duties.

- e. Vendor must provide Infection Prevention Consultants who provide and participate in regular trainings and communication with the staff and administrators of congregate settings, State and Federal staff, including at a minimum:
 - i. Provide a weekly informational webinar for long-term care administrators and clinical staff on up-to-date relevant prevention guidance and pandemic responses.
 - ii. Participate in CDC long-term care calls and share call information with IDPH for responses in congregate settings.
 - iii. Send inquiries to CDC, and participate in conference calls, for clarification regarding difficult situations when needed.

- f. Vendor must provide Infection Prevention Consultants who collaborate with and provide support to congregate settings, and State and Federal staff in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, including at a minimum:
 - i. Meet at least weekly, more often as needed, with the designated IDPH physician lead to review congregate setting COVID-19 response work.
 - ii. Provide support and guidance to the IDPH Office of Health Care Regulation (OHCR), leadership and surveyors.
 - iii. Collaborate with the physician lead for the congregate setting COVID-19 response to write COVID-19 guidance for LTC settings.
 - iv. Collaborate with the IDPH physician lead for the congregate setting COVID-19 response, OHCR, and Division of Administrative Rules and Procedures to write emergency rules and permanent rules for long-term care facilities.
 - v. Participate in the IDPH LTC Advisory Board meetings
 - vi. Provide ongoing support and guidance for sister State agencies on an as-needed basis in the following areas. There will be active monitoring of COVID-19 cases in sister State Agency facilities, assistance with outbreak prevention and control, and frequent communication with the medical and infection prevention staff at these agencies:
 - 1. Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs – participating in weekly Infection Prevention meetings
 - 2. Illinois Department of Human Services – including Community Integrated Living Arrangements (CILAs) and Community Day Service (CDS) facilities – participating in weekly infection prevention meetings or more frequently as needed.
 - 3. Illinois Department of Corrections – participating in weekly infection prevention meetings or more frequently as needed.

- vii.** Respond daily to the IDPH LTC mailbox and other inquiries, answering questions relevant to infection prevention expertise from LTC facilities and the public. This is a shared responsibility with IDPH staff.
- viii.** Perform remote or onsite assessments or surveys in response to COVID-19 outbreaks in facilities as needed. Each Infection Prevention Consultant will typically visit 3 to 5 facilities each month. Normally the facilities will be within the assigned region, but there may occasionally be times when a visit is needed to another region of the state.
- ix.** Develop and implement reports in formats approved by IDPH according to the schedule and submission requirements under milestones.

3. MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES (M&D):

- a. All deliverables will be submitted in a format approved by IDPH.
- b. All deliverables shall be completed in the stated time frames unless otherwise approved by IDPH. All reports shall be submitted to the designated IDPH physician lead. At a minimum the deliverables shall include:
 - i.** Ad Hoc Reports – Shall be submitted to the department within a minimum of 72 hours from the IDPH request unless otherwise approved by IDPH.
 - ii.** Interaction Documentation Log – Within 72 hours of interaction with the various entities the IP consultant must document the interaction in a standardized electronic form in the secure Health Care Associated Infections (HAI) reporting system as specified by IDPH.
 - iii.** Weekly Reports – Each Infection Preventionist Consultant shall complete a weekly activity report. This report shall include at a minimum the hours worked with each entity, major items addressed, and concerns or issues to be resolved. The report should detail any issues and concerns with an activity or entity. The vendor shall consolidate the individual reports into a single weekly report.
 - iv.** Monthly Reports – Each IP Consultant shall complete a monthly activity report that provides a summary of the work provided by the consultant for each month. The vendor shall consolidate the reports into a single monthly report.
 - v.** All assessments and surveys requested by IDPH shall be conducted by the Infection Prevention Consultants within three (3) business days of the IDPH request
 - vi.** Annual Report – Vendor shall complete an annual report detailing the activities, benchmark and key performance indicator (KPI) accomplishments. The annual report shall be due no later than 30 days prior to the end of the contract year.

- vii. Final Summary Report – Vendor shall complete a final activity report within an agreed upon time frame by IDPH and Vendor that provides a summary of the work provided by the consultants.

4. VENDOR/ STAFF SPECIFICATIONS:

- a. Vendor shall have at least five years of experience in the hiring and management of Infection Prevention Consultants.
- b. Vendor must be incorporated as a business in the United States for at least five (5) years, and have experience working with either state or Federal government agencies in similar consultation services on disease prevention and pandemic response.
- c. Vendor must have the capacity to place Infection Prevention Consultants in the regional assignments based on the needs of the State and as defined below. The assignments are subject to change. The current regions and settings and topic areas include the following:
 - i. Regions
 1. Chicago, DuPage and Lake
 2. DeKalb, Evanston, Grundy, Kane, McHenry, Oak Park and Skokie
 3. Cook, Kankakee, Kendall, and Stickney
 4. Champaign
 5. Edwardsville
 6. Marion
 7. Peoria
 8. Rockford
- d. Vendor must submit an Infection Prevention Consultant staffing plan indicating the estimated number of positions and key qualifications and include at a minimum the following:
 - i. Vendor must provide a project manager with Project Management Institute (PMI) Project Manager Professional (PMP) certification to manage the Infection Prevention Consultant project and serve as a contact for the vendor with the State.
 - ii. Vendor must provide documentation of an adequate number of Infection Prevention Consultants to cover the required regions and settings. A minimum of 4.0 FTE must be maintained to ensure adequate services. Individuals may work less than 1.0 FTE, but no less than 0.5 FTE
 - iii. All Infection Prevention Consultants must hold a certification in infection prevention and control from the Certification Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc. (CBIC) or equivalent.
 - iv. All Infection Prevention Consultants must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 prior to beginning work on behalf of IDPH.

- v. All Infection Prevention Consultants must agree to abide by IDPH, CDC and CMS guidance with regards to required COVID-19 testing and the use of personal protective equipment.
 - vi. At least two Infection Prevention Consultants must have a minimum of 5 years or more experience as a certified infection prevention control consultant in a healthcare setting.
 - vii. All Infection Prevention Consultants must have a minimum of two (2) years' experience as a certified infection prevention control consultant in a healthcare setting.
 - viii. All Infection Prevention Consultants must have experience in communicable disease outbreak investigation.
- e. Vendor must meet the following Infection Prevention Consultant change requirements:
- i. If an individual proposed in the Infection Prevention Consultant Plan becomes unavailable during the selection process, the vendor will notify the State within 24 hours and provide the name of the proposed substitute and their résumé for approval within one week.
 - ii. For any key personnel not currently employed by the vendor, a letter of intent signed by the proposed individual indicating their intent to be participate in the contract and be included as a subcontractor, as applicable, must be included in the contract should the vendor be awarded the contract.
 - iii. All requests for substitutions/additions must include a detailed explanation of the circumstances necessitating the proposed substitution or addition, a complete résumé for the proposed substitute or addition including skills, experience, education, training, and security level. As determined by the State, all proposed substitutes/additions must have qualifications that meet or exceed the qualifications of the person to be replaced.

Additional Requirements

- A) There is a Business Enterprise Program (BEP) target of 4% for this solicitation. Vendor submissions should include all BEP target information through a Utilization Plan (see Attachment C). Failure to submit a Utilization Plan may render the offer non-responsive. Businesses included in Utilization Plans as meeting BEP requirements as prime vendors or subcontractors must be certified by the Department of Central Management Services as BEP vendors. Vendors may visit <https://cms.diversitycompliance.com> to search for certified BEP vendors. The NIGP codes used to calculate the Business Enterprise Goal, and a list of vendors associated with those codes, are attached to this solicitation as Attachment D. This is not an all-encompassing list of vendors that may be used as subcontractors to fulfill this goal. If the vendor has a potential subcontracting opportunity for goods or services that would be considered applicable to this contract, the vendor may use that subcontractor to fulfill the BEP goal, assuming that subcontractor is BEP certified with the State of Illinois.

- B) Prevailing Wage Rates shall apply, if applicable.
- C) Vendor’s proposed pricing shall be inclusive of all costs. Expenses are not allowed.

The chart below describes the elements of responsiveness that IDPH will evaluate in the vendor proposals.

Proposal Specification Checklist Table:

Please indicate, utilizing the table below, the section and page number where the requested information is in your proposal. Respondent must complete this Proposal Specification Checklist Table provided as Attachment EE to identify how their proposal meets the requirements of the solicitation.

<u>Mandatory Criteria</u>	<u>Vendor’s Proposal Page Reference</u>
Vendor must have been incorporated as a business in the United States for at least five (5) years, and have experience working with either state or Federal government agencies in similar consultation services on infection prevention and pandemic response.	Section Page(s)
Vendor must have an Infection Prevention Consultant staffing plan indicating the estimated number of positions and key qualifications	Section Page(s)
Vendor must have a plan for assessing and tracking COVID-19 infection prevention and control procedures and practices at congregate settings The plan must include quantifiable and measurable goals for infection prevention tracking/assessment activities, and strategies for quickly responding to outbreaks of COVID-19.	Section Page(s)
Vendor must have a quality control process that includes at a minimum, quality criteria, assessment methods, monitoring and outcome results.	Section Page(s)
Vendor must have experience providing Infection Prevention Consultants who provide COVID-19 infection prevention guidance, training and consultation services in a variety of congregate settings	Section Page(s)
Vendor must submit a plan to meet BEP requirement.	Section Page(s)
Evaluation Criteria -	Vendors Proposal Page Reference
Describe your experience managing the infection prevention workload and activities performed by Infection Prevention Consultants for congregate settings during the past 5 years. Evaluation Criteria -	Section Page(s)
Provide a sample staffing plan outline for Infection Prevention	Section

consultant services.	Page(s)
Describe your experience working with state or Federal government agencies to provide similar consultation services.	Section Page(s)
Provide an example of quantifiable and measurable goals used in prior similar services. Evaluation Criteria -	Section Page(s)
Provide an outline of your quality control process with sample assessment tools.	Section Page(s)
Provide samples of communication strategies with Infection Prevention consultants including any guidance or protocols used.	Section Page(s)
Provide a sample of an infection prevention assessment or reports.	Section Page(s)