

**\*\*\*\*\*THIS IS NOT A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL\*\*\*\*\***



**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

**DIVISION OF HEALTH PROMOTION and CHRONIC DISEASE  
PREVENTION**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION  
for  
SNAP-Ed Texting Campaign**

**\*\*\*\*\*THIS IS NOT A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL\*\*\*\*\***

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## **SECTION 1: PURPOSE, BACKGROUND, AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

### **1.1 Purpose.**

The Iowa Department of Public Health, hereafter known as the Department, is seeking information from interested parties who are interested in providing Texting Campaign Services for SNAP-Ed program in Iowa.

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to allow all interested parties to provide the department with information to assist the department in preparation of a Request for Proposals (RFP).

The Department is interested in information about an organization's texting platform that can host and manage a statewide nutrition and physical activity campaign for individuals with low income. The Department is interested in learning how an organization would implement a pilot project in one county initially, and then scale up to a multi-county or statewide program for Iowa's two SNAP-Ed implementing agencies: Iowa Department of Public Health and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

### **1.2 Background Information for the Project.**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education ([SNAP-Ed](#)) is an evidence-based, USDA funded program that teaches people using SNAP or eligible for SNAP about good nutrition and physical activity. Interventions include direct education programs; policy, systems and environmental change projects; and social marketing campaigns.

Funding for SNAP-Ed is distributed by USDA to all fifty states. Each state's funding structure is different. In Iowa, the Department of Human Services (DHS) is the state agency that receives the funding from USDA, and then distributes it to two implementing agencies: Iowa Department of Public Health (Department) and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach (ISUEO).

At the Department, the Bureau of Nutrition and Physical Activity implements SNAP-Ed. The Bureau resides within the Division of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention and has implemented SNAP-Ed programming for over 20 years. The Department administers two direct education programs: Pick a better snack™ and Fresh Conversations (<https://idph.iowa.gov/inn>). The Department's programs serve elementary students and their caregivers, as well as older adults aged 60+ years.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach (ISUEO) has implemented SNAP-Ed programming for 25 years, prioritizing parents and other adults with the following elements:

- Buy. Eat. Live Healthy and Plan Shop Save and Cook direct education programs
- Healthy food access initiatives in partnership with food pantries
- Support of SNAP and WIC redemption at farmers markets
- Online content via <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/>

The primary audience of SNAP-Ed are individuals who are at or below 185% of the federal poverty level (FPL). SNAP-Ed is guided by an [evaluation framework](#) made up of [indicators](#) that measure the formation, implementation, and outcomes of all SNAP-Ed programs and projects. To ensure that implementing agencies are reaching the intended audience and providing effective interventions, routine reporting and evaluations are performed.

### 1.3 Relevant Dates

Event	Date
Issue RFI	November 15, 2021
RFI Responses Due	December 15, 2021 by 4:00 pm local Iowa Time
Issue RFP	TBD
RFP Decision to Award Contract	TBD
Contractor Begins Implementation	TBD

### 1.4 Submission of Response

This request requires any interested party wishing to submit information to respond to this Request for Information (RFI) by 4:00 p.m., **local Iowa time**, on **December 15, 2021**.

The interested party's response must be e-mailed to the Department's contact email address listed in section 1.5 below. Responses will not be accepted over the telephone, hand-delivered, faxed or mailed. However, the Department reserves the right to make telephone contacts or follow up on information submitted in any manner deemed appropriate by the Department.

### 1.5 Contact Information

The contact at the Department for technical questions and submission of responses will be:

<b>Name of The Department Contact:</b>	<b>Suzy Wilson</b>
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<b>Department Address:</b>	<b>SNAP-Ed IDPH 321 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street Des Moines, IA 50319</b>
<b>Email Address:</b>	<b>suzy.wilson@idph.iowa.gov</b>

## **1.6 Administrative Matters**

1.6.1 This RFI is designed to provide interested parties with the information necessary for the preparation of an appropriate response. It is not intended to be comprehensive, and each interest party is responsible for determining all factors necessary for submission of a comprehensive response.

1.6.2 The Department reserves the right to modify this RFI at any time.

1.6.3 Responses should be based on the material contained in this RFI or any other relevant information the interested party thinks is appropriate.

1.6.4 By submitting a response each interested party agrees that it will not bring any claim or have any cause of action against the Department, the State of Iowa, or any employee of the Department or the State, based on any misunderstanding concerning the information provided or concerning the Department's failure, negligent or otherwise, to provide the interested party with pertinent information as intended by this RFI.

## **1.7 Review and Rejection of RFI Responses**

1.7.1 The Department reserves the right to reject any and all responses, in whole and in part, received in response to this RFI at any time.

1.7.2 An RFI response may be rejected outright and not reviewed for failure of the interested party to deliver the response by the due date. Therefore interested parties are asked to make every effort to meet the RFI timelines and to include the requested information.

1.7.3 An RFI response will not be subject to a RFP type of evaluation but only a review of information in the RFI.

## **1.8 Public Records and Requests for Confidentiality**

1.8.1 The release of information by the Department to the public is subject to Iowa Code Chapter 22 and other applicable provisions of law relating to the

release of records in the possession of a State agency. Interested parties are encouraged to familiarize themselves with these provisions prior to submitting a RFI response. All information submitted by an interested party may be treated as public information by the Department unless the interested party properly requests that information be treated as confidential at the time of submitting the response.

1.8.2 Any requests for confidential treatment of information must be included in a cover letter with the interested party's RFI response and must enumerate the specific grounds in Iowa Code Chapter 22 or other legal reasons which support treatment of the material as confidential and must indicate why disclosure is not in the best interests of the public. The request must also include the name, address and telephone number of the person authorized by the interested party to respond to any inquiries by the Department concerning the confidential status of the materials.

1.8.3 Any documents submitted which contain confidential information must be marked on the outside as containing confidential information, and each page upon which confidential information appears must be marked as containing confidential information. The confidential information must be clearly identifiable to the reader wherever it appears. All copies of the proposal submitted, as well as the original proposal, must be marked in this manner.

1.8.4 In addition to marking the material as confidential material where it appears, the interested party must submit one copy of the RFI response from which the confidential information has been excised. The confidential material must be excised in such a way as to allow the public to determine the general nature of the material removed and to retain as much of the document as possible. These pages must be submitted with the cover letter and will be made available for public inspection.

1.8.5 The interested party's failure to request in the RFI response confidential treatment of material pursuant to this Section and the relevant laws and administrative rules will be deemed by the Department as a waiver of any right to confidentiality which the interested party may have had.

## **1.9 Copyrights**

By submitting a response the interested party agrees that the Department may copy the response for purposes of facilitating the internal review of the information or to respond to requests for public records. The interested party represents that such copying will not violate any copyrights in the materials submitted.

## **1.10 Restrictions on Gifts and Activities**

Iowa Code chapter 68B contains laws which restrict gifts which may be given or received by state employees and requires certain individuals to disclose information concerning their activities with state government. Interested parties are responsible for determining the applicability of this chapter to their activities and for complying with these requirements. In addition, Iowa Code chapter 722.1 provides that it is a felony offense to bribe a public official.

## **1.11 Cost to Interested Party**

The Department is not responsible for any costs incurred by an interested party which are related to the preparation or delivery of the response, any on-site inspection that may be required, or any other activities related to this RFI.

## **1.12 Responses Property of Department**

All printed information used in the interested party's response becomes the property of the Department. The Department will have the right to use ideas or adaptations of ideas that are presented in the responses.

## **1.13 Sources of Information Used by the Department in Addition to the Responses**

The Department reserves the right to contact interested parties after the submission of responses for the purpose of clarification and to ensure mutual understanding.

## **1.14 No Obligation to Issue Request for Proposal (RFP)**

The issuance of this RFI in no way constitutes a commitment by the Department to issue a RFP, or contract for the project described in this RFI.

## **1.15 Interested Party Responses Identifying Information**

1.15.1 State the name and principal place of business or residence of the interested party.

1.15.2 Identify the interested party's type of business organization/entity such as a corporation, partnership or educational institution.

1.15.3 State the interested party's state of incorporation, if applicable

1.15.4 State the name, address, email address, telephone number and FAX number of the interested party representative to contact regarding all technical matters concerning this RFI.

## **SECTION 2: INFORMATION SOUGHT**

The Department seeks information about the ability to conduct a pilot and subsequent rollout of a texting campaign within Iowa. The pilot texting campaign will target SNAP eligible participants in one county in Iowa, with the goal of expanding to reach the entire state. The messages will provide information, resources, and social marketing campaign content in order to improve nutrition and physical activity behaviors.

The organization shall provide information about their ability and capacity to:

- Place texting campaign participants into one large group as well as smaller sub groups.
  - For example: Participant A is a parent of two children in elementary school, and participant B is an adult aged 60. Both participants would receive messages about fall produce options. Participant A would receive additional messages about kid-friendly afterschool snacks while Participant B would receive a message on how to add more protein to their diet.
- Send texting campaign participants real time messages, but also have the ability to start participants at the beginning of a sequence of messages no matter when they signed up.
  - For example: Participant C joins in May and receives the welcome message followed shortly by the week 1 message. Participant D joins in June and receives the welcome message followed by the week 1 message. By the beginning of July, Participant C will receive the week 9 message while Participant D will receive the week 5 message. Both participants C and D would also be able to receive the same real time message.
- Create text messages with links, images, emojis, etc. that are racially, ethnically and culturally sensitive.
- Survey or poll participants with evaluation questions and view responses in aggregate.
- Allow texting campaign participants to respond to messages and the Department and ISUEO to send a follow-up response.

The Department is also requesting additional information about the organization's texting service which shall include:

- Participant enrollment (e.g., manual entry, opt-in strategies such as QR codes



and short codes; include how the Department would know where and how people opted in)

- Ability to scale up the number of participants throughout the year
- Ability to customize messages with recipient's name
- Ability to target messages to a specific geographical area
- Ability to send messages in other languages (please list available languages)
- Participant response options for evaluation questions
- The type of data collected, the Department's access to the data, and the ability to share access to the system with ISUEO (i.e., are multiple people from different agencies allowed access to all the system's information and features?)
- Visualization and generation of data reports (e.g., results of poll questions, participant reach and demographics)
- Capability of the texting platform to work with other technology or programs (e.g., Qualtrics)
- Guaranteed security/protection of participants information (e.g., will not receive ads or sell information)
- Customer service to the Department & ISUEO for training and support
- Organization's experience with SNAP-Ed texting campaigns in other states, if applicable
- Barriers and challenges to the Department or the participants that should be considered when conducting a mass texting initiative
- Timeline to implement a pilot project and full-scale project

Organization's cost and billing for the texting campaign:

- Cost for the texting service for the pilot and fully-implemented project with a breakdown and explanation of all charges (e.g., cost structure for messages, credit tier system, threshold of participants, etc.)
- Ability to bill two different agencies
- Costs for additional services, if applicable (e.g., customer service, training, access to data)
- Subcontractors used by the organization, if applicable, and the services they provide

Additionally, candidates must submit a video link to demonstrate how the system works. All information requested must be submitted according to Sections 1.4 and 1.5.

### **SECTION 3: OTHER FEATURES**

Is there any other feature, service or option you believe the Department should be aware of in preparation of an RFP? If so, please describe the feature, service product or option and explain how it would improve the program served as identified in this RFI.