

STATE OF CONNECTICUT PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Request for Proposals (RFP) For
For Historical and Present-day
Use of Cannabis Study
Solicitation

RFP Name: SEC Cannabis Study

Issued By:

The Social Equity Council (SEC)

SEPTEMBER 17, 2021

The Request for Proposal is available in electronic format on the
State Contracting Portal by filtering by Organization for SEC:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/BidBoard>

or from the Council 's Official Contact:

Name: insert
Address: insert
Phone: insert
Fax: insert
E-Mail: insert

The RFP is also available on the DECD and SEC Council website at ct.gov/DECD ct.gov/cannabis.

RESPONSES MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN
OCTOBER 4, 2021
At 5PM EST

The Social Equity Council is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

The Social Equity Council reserves the right to reject any and all submissions or cancel this procurement at any time if deemed in the best interest of the State of Connecticut (State).

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

■ A. INTRODUCTION

1. **RFP Name and Number.** Provide an identifying name and number for this RFP. The name and number will be used on the packaging if applicable and cover sheet of proposals submitted in response to this RFP.
2. **RFP Summary.** The State of Connecticut, represented by the Social Equity Council (SEC), is soliciting proposals from qualified independent organizations and individuals to conduct a study on the historical and modern-day consequences of cannabis prohibition with the purpose of aiding in recommendations for an equitable and lawful adult-use cannabis business sector in this state.
3. **RFP Purpose.** The State of Connecticut has legalized adult-use cannabis but acknowledges that decades of criminalization of the substance have had detrimental impacts on certain communities in the state. The legislation establishes the formation of the Social Equity Council, a Council which will oversee the verification of equity cannabis applicants, create new programs to support cannabis businesses and businesses in other industries, and manage the more general community investments derived from the cannabis tax revenue. The Social Equity Council ultimately will identify the best ways to support the aforementioned communities in gaining access to the financial benefits of the new cannabis market, with a lens to the negative impact the war on drugs has had on such communities in the past.
4. **Commodity Codes.** The services that the Agency (SEC) wishes to procure through this RFP are as follows:
 - 93000000: Politics and Civic Affairs Services
 - 86000000: Education and Training Services
 - 85000000: Healthcare Services
 - 80000000: Management and Business Professionals and Administrative Services

■ B. INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Official Contact.** The Agency has designated the individual below as the Official Contact for purposes of this RFP. The Official Contact is the **only authorized contact** for this procurement and, as such, handles all related communications on behalf of the Agency. Proposers, prospective proposers, and other interested parties are advised that any communication with any other Agency employee(s) (including appointed officials) or personnel under contract to the Agency about this RFP is strictly prohibited. Proposers or prospective proposers who violate this instruction may risk disqualification from further consideration.

Name: insert Ginne-Rae Clay
Address: insert 450 Columbus Blvd, Hartford, CT ZIP
Phone: insert
E-Mail: insert ginne-rae.clay@ct.gov

Please ensure that e-mail screening software (if used) recognizes and accepts e-mails from the Official Contact.

2. Registering with State Contracting Portal. Respondents must register with the State of CT contracting portal at <https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/Registration> if not already registered. Respondents shall submit the following information pertaining to this application to this portal (on their supplier profile), which will be checked by the Agency contact.

- Secretary of State recognition – Click on appropriate response
- Non-profit status, if applicable
- Notification to Bidders, Parts I-V
- Campaign Contribution Certification (OPM Ethics Form 1):
<https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Fin-PSA/Forms/Ethics-Forms>

3. RFP Information. The RFP, amendments to the RFP, and other information associated with this procurement are available in electronic format from the Official Contact or from the Internet at the following locations:

- Agency's RFP Web Page
[insert URL](#)
- State Contracting Portal (go to CTsource bid board, filter by Office of Policy and Management
<https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/BidBoard>

It is strongly recommended that any proposer or prospective proposer interested in this procurement check the Bid Board for any solicitation changes. Interested proposers may receive additional e-mails from CTsource announcing addendums that are posted on the portal. This service is provided as a courtesy to assist in monitoring activities associated with State procurements, including this RFP.

4. Procurement Schedule. See below. Dates after the due date for proposals ("Proposals Due") are non-binding target dates only (*). The Agency may amend the schedule as needed. Any change to non-target dates will be made by means of an amendment to this RFP and will be posted on the State Contracting Portal and, if available, the Agency's RFP Web Page.

- RFP Released: 9/17/2021
- Deadline for Questions: 9/27/2021
- Answers Released: Rolling basis
- Proposals Due: 10/4/2021

5. Contract Awards. The award of any contract pursuant to this RFP is dependent upon the availability of funding to the Agency. The Agency anticipates the following:

- Number of Awards: 1
- Contract Cost: Confidential
- Contract Term: November 1st, 2021 – March 31st, 2021

6. Letter of Intent. A Letter of Intent (LOI) is not required by this RFP.

7. Inquiry Procedures. All questions regarding this RFP or the Agency's procurement process must be directed, in writing, electronically, (e-mail) to the Official Contact before the deadline specified in the Procurement Schedule. The early submission of questions is encouraged. Questions will not be accepted or answered verbally –

neither in person nor over the telephone. All questions received before the deadline(s) will be answered. However, the Agency will not answer questions when the source is unknown (i.e., nuisance or anonymous questions). Questions deemed unrelated to the RFP or the procurement process will not be answered. At its discretion, the Agency may or may not respond to questions received after the deadline. If this RFP requires a Letter of Intent, the Agency reserves the right to answer questions only from those who have submitted such a letter. The Agency may combine similar questions and give only one answer. All questions and answers will be compiled into a written amendment to this RFP. If any answer to any question constitutes a material change to the RFP, the question and answer will be placed at the beginning of the amendment and duly noted as such.

The agency will release the answers to questions on the date(s) established in the Procurement Schedule. The Agency will publish any and all amendments to this RFP on the State Contracting Portal and, if available, on the Agency's RFP Web Page.

- 8. Proposal Due Date and Time.** The Official Contact is the **only authorized recipient** of proposals submitted in response to this RFP. Proposals must be received by the Official Contact on or before the due date and time: October 4, 2021.

Proposals received after the due date and time will be ineligible and will not be evaluated. The Agency will send an official letter alerting late respondents of ineligibility.

An acceptable submission must include the following:

- One (1) conforming electronic copy of the original proposal.

The proposal must be complete, properly formatted and outlined, and ready for evaluation by the Screening Committee.

The electronic copy of the proposal must be emailed to official agency contact for this procurement. The subject line of the email must read: SEC Cannabis Study. Required forms and appendices may be scanned and submitted as PDFs at the end of the main proposal document. Please ensure the entire email submission is less than 25MB as this reflects The Agency's server limitations. Respondents should work to ensure there are not additional IT limitations from the provider side.

II. PURPOSE OF RFP AND SCOPE OF SERVICES

■ A. COUNCIL OVERVIEW

The State of Connecticut has established the Social Equity Council to promote and encourage full participation in the cannabis industry by people who have been disproportionately harmed by cannabis prohibition and enforcement. The Council will oversee the verification of equity applicants, create new programs to support cannabis businesses and businesses in other industries, and manage the more general community investments derived from the cannabis tax revenue. The Council will reflect the racial, gender and geographic diversity of the state, and will include experts in social justice, civil rights, economic development, and workforce development, as well as members of communities disproportionately impacted by cannabis prohibition and enforcement.

■ B. SERVICE OVERVIEW

The newly created Cannabis Social Equity Council (SEC) requires an understanding of the historic and present-day impact of the criminalization and stigmatization of cannabis use, with a particular focus on the racial disparities and discrimination. To develop this understanding, the SEC is soliciting a Historical and Present-day Use of Cannabis Study topics by an organization with expertise in cannabis policy.

The goals of the study solicited by this RFP are as follows: to ensure that the nascent cannabis industry is equitably reflecting the population of Connecticut, to ensure that revenues from this new industry are benefiting communities that have been negatively impacted by the criminalization of cannabis, to ensure that the criteria established for social equity applicants are correct and aiding impacted communities, and to provide workforce development opportunities and training to aid people from these communities in gaining employment, access to capital, and support starting in starting businesses. Please read Senate [Bill 1201](#) § 22 for full context on the SEC and the proposed study.

The findings produced by this study will inform the SEC's approach to administration of outreach, verification, and support services for social equity applicants. As defined by Senate Bill 1201 § 22, a "social equity applicant" is a business that has applied for a license for a cannabis establishment where the applying business is at least 65% owned and controlled by an individual (or individuals) who:

- Had an average household income of less than 300% of the state medium household income over the three tax years immediately preceding the application, AND
- Was a resident of a disproportionately impacted area for no less than five out of the ten years preceding the application date, OR
- Was a resident of a disproportionality impacted area for no less than nine years prior to turning eighteen.

In the final report to be produced as a result of this study, the selected contractor should include discussion of this target population and selection criteria, including suggestions for outreach and engagement of social equity applicants and disproportionately impacted communities.

■ C. SCOPE OF SERVICE DESCRIPTION

1. Organizational Expectations

SEC's preference is for an organization with previous familiarity with Connecticut and/or based in Connecticut, but this is not a requirement. Organizations should speak to any experience working in Connecticut or states of similar size and demographics and describe

how the proposed study will address the unique needs presented by the state's history, communities, and policy environment.

2. Service Expectations

Core Components of Service: While SEC is open to the format the proposer puts forth, at a minimum the SEC Cannabis Study must produce both a detailed and condensed analysis of the factors at play with both strong internal and external validity, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative information about the consequences of cannabis prohibition on the state. The selected party will be required to submit all raw data to the state at the conclusion of the study.

Vision for a Successful Service: In order to achieve the goals and responsibilities listed in the Council and Service Overview sections above, the SEC requires a comprehensive report containing, at a minimum:

- An overview of information on historical and present-day impact of cannabis criminalization, split out by regions of the state and social demographics.
- A historical summary of the socio-political implications of cannabis criminalization, particularly on the intersections with race.
- Information about other states' cannabis licensing and social equity programs and the impact on minority communities, to allow a comparative analysis/benchmark of Connecticut's program.
- Recommendations, incorporating this historical information, for identifying key opportunities for remediation and support for people impacted by criminalization.
- Information on the efficacy and impact of programs and strategies implemented in other states, and the feasibility of importing successful models.
- An understanding of patterns of racial discrimination and racial disparities in access to entrepreneurship, employment and other economic benefits arising in the existing lawful palliative use cannabis sector.

Major Deliverables: The SEC is tasked with releasing recommendations based on the Historic and Present-day Use of Cannabis Study by January 1, 2022. Respondents are encouraged to propose a timeline to deliver the final report by January 1st, 2022, but are also encouraged to provide a timeline and quote in which preliminary findings would be delivered to the SEC on January 1, 2022, and a full report would be delivered on July 1 2022.

3. Budget Expectations,

The current budgetary allocation for this study is \$175,000.

■ D. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The following performance metrics highlight key priorities that will be analyzed with contractors collaboratively during the life of the contract. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather an indication of significant performance metrics of interest to the Council. The Council looks forward to working with contractors to define additional important performance metrics.

- Completion time and schedule of deliverables
- Number and legitimacy of sources utilized
- Number of jurisdictions incorporated into analysis
- Number of Social Equity Council Board Members interviewed
- Other specific metrics to be determined by the SEC Director

Contractors are welcome to propose additional key metrics in their submissions.

■ E. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT/DATA REPORTING

As part of the State's commitment to becoming more outcomes-oriented, SEC seeks to actively and regularly collaborate with providers/vendors to enhance contract management, improve results, and adjust service delivery and policy based on learning what works. Reliable and relevant data is necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate results and performance, and drive service improvements. As such, SEC reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from providers/vendors.

Contractor will report findings and have monthly check-ins with the Executive Director of the Social Equity Council. Data tracking will be required to be shared during the process, and a single report at the end of the process that includes all raw data collected/analyzed will be expected. Additional meetings will be scheduled as necessary. Preliminary takeaways and data should be shared at the end of November, to give the State the opportunity to request more information on certain topics, allowing the contractor several weeks to modify the final report by the January 1, 2022 deadline.

III. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION OVERVIEW

■ A. SUBMISSION FORMAT INFORMATION

1. **Required Outline.** All proposals must follow the required outline presented in Section IV – Proposal Outline. Proposals that fail to follow the required outline will be deemed non-responsive and not evaluated.
2. **Cover Sheet.** The Cover Sheet is Page 1 of the proposal. The proposer must develop a Cover Sheet that includes the information below. *Legal Name* is defined as the name of the provider, vendor, CT State agency, or municipality requesting the proposal. *Contact Person* is defined as the individual who can provide additional information about the proposal or who has immediate responsibility for the proposal. *Authorized Official* is defined as the individual empowered to submit a binding offer on behalf of the proposer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFP and any amendments or attachments hereto.
 - RFP Name or Number:
 - Legal Name:
 - FEIN:
 - Street Address:
 - Town/City/State/Zip:
 - Contact Person:
 - Title:
 - Phone Number:

- E-Mail Address:
- Authorized Official:
- Title:
- Signature:

- 3. Table of Contents.** All proposals must include a Table of Contents that conforms with the required proposal outline.
- 4. Executive Summary.** Proposals must include a high-level summary, not exceeding 2 pages, of the main proposal and cost proposal. The summary must also include the organization's eligibility and qualifications to respond to this RFP.
- 5. Attachments.** Attachments other than the required Appendices or Forms identified in the RFP are not permitted and will not be evaluated. Further, the required Appendices or Forms must not be altered or used to extend, enhance, or replace any component required by this RFP. Failure to abide by these instructions will result in disqualification.
- 6. Style Requirements.** *If an electronic submission, include the following language: THIS IS AN ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION. (on the subject line)*

Submitted proposals must conform to the following specifications:

- Page Limit: 30 pages
 - Font Size: 12
 - Font Type: Times New Roman
 - Margins: Standard
 - Line Spacing: 1.15
- 7. Pagination.** The proposer's name must be displayed in the header of each page. All pages, including the required Appendices and Forms, must be numbered in the footer.
 - 8. Declaration of Confidential Information.** Proposers are advised that all materials associated with this procurement are subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Privacy Act, and all rules, regulations and interpretations resulting from them. If a proposer deems that certain information required by this RFP is confidential, the proposer must label such information as CONFIDENTIAL prior to submission. In the proposal submission, the proposer must reference where the information labeled CONFIDENTIAL is located in the proposal. *EXAMPLE: Section G.1.a.* For each subsection so referenced, the proposer must provide a convincing explanation and rationale sufficient to justify an exemption of the information from release under the FOIA. The explanation and rationale must be stated in terms of (a) the prospective harm to the competitive position of the proposer that would result if the identified information were to be released and (b) the reasons why the information is legally exempt from release pursuant to C.G.S. § 1-210(b).
 - 9. Conflict of Interest - Disclosure Statement.** Proposers must include a disclosure statement concerning any current business relationships (within the last three (3) years) that pose a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85. A conflict of interest exists when a relationship exists between the proposer and a public official (including an elected official) or State employee that may interfere with fair competition or may be adverse to the interests of the State. The existence of a

conflict of interest is not, in and of itself, evidence of wrongdoing. A conflict of interest may, however, become a legal matter if a proposer tries to influence, or succeeds in influencing, the outcome of an official decision for their personal or corporate benefit. The Council will determine whether any disclosed conflict of interest poses a substantial advantage to the proposer over the competition, decreases the overall competitiveness of this procurement, or is not in the best interests of the State. In the absence of any conflict of interest, a proposer must affirm such in the disclosure statement. *Example: "[name of proposer] has no current business relationship (within the last three (3) years) that poses a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85."*

■ B. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

- 1. Evaluation Process.** It is the intent of the Council to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP. When evaluating proposals, negotiating with successful proposers, and awarding contracts, the Council will conform with its written procedures for POS and PSA procurements (pursuant to C.G.S. § 4-217) and the State's Code of Ethics (pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 1-84 and 1-85). Final funding allocation decisions will be determined during contract negotiation.
- 2. Evaluation Review Committee.** The Council will designate a Review Committee to evaluate proposals submitted in response to this RFP. The Review Committee will be composed of individuals, Council members, Council staff or other designees as deemed appropriate. The contents of all submitted proposals, including any confidential information, will be shared with the Review Committee. Only proposals found to be responsive (that is, complying with all instructions and requirements described herein) will be reviewed, rated, and scored. Proposals that fail to comply with all instructions will be rejected without further consideration. The Review Committee shall evaluate all proposals that meet the minimum submission requirements by score and rank ordered and make recommendations for awards. The Social Equity Council Executive Director will make the final selection. Attempts by any proposer (or representative of any proposer) to contact or influence any member of the Review Committee may result in disqualification of the proposer.
- 3. Minimum Submission Requirements.** To be eligible for evaluation, proposals must (1) be received on or before the due date and time; (2) meet the Proposal Format requirements; (3) meet the Eligibility and Qualification requirements to respond to the procurement, (4) follow the required Proposal Outline; and (5) be complete. Proposals that fail to follow instructions or satisfy these minimum submission requirements will not be reviewed further. The Agency will reject any proposal that deviates significantly from the requirements of this RFP.
- 4. Evaluation Criteria (and Weights).** Proposals meeting the Minimum Submission Requirements will be evaluated according to the established criteria. The criteria are the objective standards that the Review Committee will use to evaluate the technical merits of the proposals. Only the criteria listed below will be used to evaluate proposals. The weights are disclosed below.
 - Organizational Profile 10%
 - Scope of Services 25%
 - Work Plan 20%
 - Budget and Budget Narrative 10%
 - Cultural Competence 15%

- Data and Technology 15%
- Staffing Plan 5%

Evaluation Criterion Title	Percentage of Total	What would a top score look like?
Organizational Profile	10%	Would provide a general overview of the organization including its history and prior experience and how they are qualified.
Scope of Services	25%	Would provide a proposal touching on all desired aspects of study with a focus on expediency, depth, and data-orientation.
Work Plan	20%	Would provide a clear, detailed outline of how a comprehensive report may be completed in a short period of time.
Budget and Budget Narrative	10%	Would include a pricing option for a full report by mid-December and another option for a high-level report by mid-December with early takeaways, along with a comprehensive report by July 1, 2022.
Cultural Competence	15%	Would include examples of the ability to interact and effectively communicate with people of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds
Data and Technology	15%	Would include process to use data sources, programs, and technology to complete the study; use of reliable and relevant data necessary to ensure compliance
Staffing Plan	5%	Would include staff, resumes, titles, % of time dedicated to this study

Note:

As part of its evaluation of the Staffing Plan, the Review Committee will review the proposer's demonstrated commitment to affirmative action, as required by the Regulations of CT State Agencies § 46A-68j-30(10).

- 5. Proposer Selection.** Upon completing its evaluation of proposals, the Review Committee will submit the rankings of all proposals to the SEC Executive Director. The final selection of a successful proposer is at the discretion of the SEC Executive Director. Any proposer selected will be so notified and awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with the SEC Executive Director. Such negotiations may, but will not automatically, result in a contract. Any resulting contract will be posted on the State Contracting Portal. All unsuccessful proposers will be notified by e-mail or U.S. mail, at the Council's discretion, about the outcome of the evaluation and proposer selection process. The Council reserves the right to decline to award contracts for activities in which the SEC Executive Director considers there are not adequate respondents.
- 6. Debriefing.** Within ten (10) days of receiving notification from the Council, unsuccessful proposers may contact the Official Contact and request information about the evaluation and proposer selection process. The e-mail sent date or the postmark date on the notification envelope will be considered "day one" of the ten (10) days. If unsuccessful proposers still have questions after receiving this information, they may contact the Official Contact and request a meeting with the

SEC Chairperson to discuss the evaluation process and their proposals. If held, the debriefing meeting will not include any comparisons of unsuccessful proposals with other proposals. The Agency may schedule and hold the debriefing meeting within fifteen (15) days of the request. The Agency will not change, alter, or modify the outcome of the evaluation or selection process as a result of any debriefing meeting.

- 7. Appeal Process.** Proposers may appeal any aspect the Council's competitive procurement, including the evaluation and proposer selection process. Any such appeal must be submitted to the SEC Executive Director. A proposer may file an appeal at any time after the proposal due date, but not later than thirty (30) days after an agency notifies unsuccessful proposers about the outcome of the evaluation and proposer selection process. The e-mail sent date or the postmark date on the notification envelope will be considered "day one" of the thirty (30) days. The filing of an appeal shall not be deemed sufficient reason for the Council to delay, suspend, cancel, or terminate the procurement process or execution of a contract. More detailed information about filing an appeal may be obtained from the Official Contact.
- 8. Contract Execution.** Any contract developed and executed as a result of this RFP is subject to the SEC's contracting procedures, which may include approval by the Office of the Attorney General. Fully executed and approved contracts will be posted on State Contracting Portal and the SEC website.

IV. REQUIRED PROPOSAL SUBMISSION OUTLINE AND REQUIREMENTS

- A. Cover Sheet**
- B. Table of Contents**
- C. Executive Summary**
- D. Main Proposal**
- E. Attachments** (clearly referenced to summary and main proposal where applicable)
- F. Declaration of Confidential Information**

G. Conflict of Interest - Disclosure Statement

H. Statement of Assurances

A: Cover Sheet

The Respondent must use a Cover Sheet capturing the following information:

- RFP Name or Number:
- Legal Name:
- FEIN (not required for currently contracted providers/vendors):
- Street Address:
- Town/City/State/Zip:
- Contact Person:
- Title:
- Phone Number:
- E-Mail Address:
- Authorized Official:
- Title:
- Signature:

Legal Name is defined as the name of provider, vendor, CT State agency, or municipality submitting the proposal. *Contact Person* is defined as the individual who can provide additional information about the proposal or who has immediate responsibility for the proposal. *Authorized Official* is defined as the individual empowered to submit a binding offer on behalf of the proposer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFP and any amendments or attachments hereto.

B: Table of Contents

Respondents must include a Table of Contents that lists sections and subsections with page numbers that follow the organization outline and sequence for this proposal.

C: Proposer Executive Summary

The page limitation for this section is 2 pages briefly describing how the Respondent meets the eligibility and qualification criteria outlined in the Proposal Overview and a brief overview of why the Respondent should be selected for the activities highlighted in the scope of services.

D: Main Proposal Submission Requirements to Submit a Responsive Proposal:

*****Please note the maximum total page length for this section is 30 pages** (all appendices and other attachments should be referred to in section D and then placed in section E. The Agency Review Committee will not read answers longer than 30 pages in this section.

4.1. Organizational Profile

4.10. Provide a general overview of your organization including its history and prior experiences engaging with relevant key stakeholders. Why is your organization uniquely qualified to take on this scope of work?

4.11. Describe the extent of your organization's experience in conducting similar projects or delivering similar reports for public agencies. What has that experience taught you that you would bring to bear in this project?

4.12. Describe any experiences you've had in developing reports under a constrained timeline. How will you bring those learnings to this project?

4.2. Scope of Services

4.20. Provide a detailed description of your organization's ability, approach, and methodology for this project or service in line with the RFP objectives and key elements outlined in the scope of work. How will you incorporate the perspectives of Social Equity Council members in your ultimate report? How will you incorporate both historical and present-day contexts?

4.21. What is the implementation timeline for your project or service, including key milestones related to the scope of work? Include estimates of the timeframe estimated to complete each task.

4.22. Expectations of government: What responsibilities do you expect the Social Equity Council to provide in order for this service to be successful?

4.23. Partnerships: In what ways will you partner or coordinate with other entities to best accomplish the goals for this project or service? Please give specific examples.

4.3. Work Plan:

4.31. How will you complete a comprehensive report in a short period of time?

4.32. Please outline details of your work plan, including but not limited to proposed start date, timeline and schedule, tasks and deliverables, methodologies, and measurable objectives.

4.4. Budget and Budget Narrative

4.41. Complete a price schedule, budget, or cost proposal in its entirety that will enable the effective delivery of the proposed project or services (we recommend you propose two budgets: one to provide the full project deliverable by January 1, 2022, one to provide a report preview by January 1 and a full report by July 1).

- a. Describe all direct and indirect costs associated with the service or project
- b. Describe any key cost variables for the service or project such as volume, frequency, duration or length.

4.42. Narrative and justification: Present a detailed, line-item cost narrative that explains the basis and rationale for the costs proposed.

- c. Why do you consider your costs to be reasonable, given the nature of your proposed project or service?
- d. Describe any key budgeting decisions you faced, assumptions, or calculation approaches used to develop the cost proposal.

4.43. Discounts: What discount percentage can the organization offer if payment is made 20 days after the organization's invoice is submitted?

4.5. Cultural Competence:

4.51. What experience do you have interacting effectively and communicating with people of different cultures and soci-economic backgrounds?

4.52. Please provide an example of your work with communities of color.

4.6. Data and Technology

4.61. Describe your proposed method of project management for this project or service.

4.62. Performance improvement approach: How does your organization incorporate continuous quality improvement and performance measurement into the work you do today? How do you assess client satisfaction? How do you plan to incorporate this into the proposed project or service, to improve practice and meet goals?

4.63. Performance improvement examples: Describe 1-2 times your organization made an operational or programmatic change based on data collected. For each example, briefly describe (a) how the problem was identified, (b) what steps your organization took to make the improvement, and (c) impact of those changes.

4.64. In addition to any metrics identified in the RFP, describe the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), performance metrics, and/or compliance metrics you have used or plan to use to track the delivery and success of this project or service.

4.65. Describe your ability to track and report on these metrics, including what systems, processes, and/or tools will be used.

- a. How will the data be collected, stored, and shared?
- b. How frequently will metrics be tabulated?
- c. Describe the staff and roles that will be responsible for this work.

4.66. How will you communicate with the Social Equity Council in a responsive and proactive manner? Consider being responsive to questions and requests, and elevating concerns or issues.

4.7. Staffing Plan

4.71. Team overview: Describe the team that would work on this project. Include a list of key team members and their general availability while on this project. Make the case for why they will be great partners on this project. Please provide bios, resumes or whatever you think best highlights the strength of the team that would be working on this project.

4.72. General capacity: Please describe your organization’s capacity to take on additional work if you are awarded this contract. How would you create additional capacity, if needed? How would you quickly pivot directions, should feedback from the Social Equity Council require a change in direction?

E: Attachments

Attachments other than the required attachments identified are not permitted and will not be evaluated. See the Proposal Checklist in Appendix D_ for a list of relevant attachments. Further, the required attachments must not be altered or used to extend, enhance, or replace any component required by this RFP. Failure to abide by these instructions may result in disqualification.

- a. Memorandum of Agreement
- b. Résumés of Key Personnel

F: Declaration of Confidential Information

If a proposer deems that certain information required by this RFP is confidential, the proposer must label such information as CONFIDENTIAL prior to submission. The proposer must reference where the information labeled CONFIDENTIAL is located in the proposal. *EXAMPLE: Section G.1.a.* For each subsection so referenced, the proposer must provide a convincing explanation and rationale sufficient to justify an exemption of the information from release under the FOIA. The explanation and rationale must be stated in terms of (a) the prospective harm to the competitive position of the proposer that would result if the identified information were to be released and (b) the reasons why the information is legally exempt from release pursuant to C.G.S. § 1-210(b).

G: Conflict of Interest – Disclosure Statement

Proposers must include a disclosure statement concerning any current business relationships (within the last three (3) years) that pose a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85. A conflict of interest exists when a relationship exists between the proposer and a public official (including an elected official) or State employee that may interfere with fair competition or may be adverse to the interests of the State. The existence of a conflict of interest is not, in and of itself, evidence of wrongdoing. A conflict of interest may, however, become a legal matter if a proposer tries to influence, or succeeds in influencing, the outcome of an official decision for their personal or corporate benefit. In the absence of any conflict of interest, a proposer must affirm such in the disclosure statement. *Example: "[name of proposer] has no current business relationship (within the last three (3) years) that poses a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85."*

H: Statement of Assurances

Place after Conflict of Interest-Disclosure Statement. Sign and return Appendix .

V. MANDATORY PROVISIONS

■ A. STANDARD CONTRACT PROVISIONS

Agencies may include any standard PSA contract provisions that are valuable to communicate in advance to the provider/vendor community. This may include a sample agency PSA, an agency specific PSA contract template, or a reference to the [Comptroller's Office PSA Terms and Conditions](#), which includes generic state contract requirements.

■ B. ASSURANCES

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly gives the following assurances:

- 1. Collusion.** The proposer represents and warrants that the proposer did not participate in any part of the RFP development process and had no knowledge of the specific contents of the RFP prior to its issuance. The proposer further represents and warrants that no agent, representative, or employee of the State participated directly in the preparation of the proposer's proposal. The proposer also represents and warrants that the submitted proposal is in all respects fair and is made without collusion or fraud.
- 2. State Officials and Employees.** The proposer certifies that no elected or appointed official or employee of the State has or will benefit financially or materially from any contract resulting from this RFP. The Agency may terminate a resulting contract if it is determined that gratuities of any kind were either offered or received by any of the officials or employees from the proposer, contractor, or its agents or employees.
- 3. Competitors.** The proposer assures that the submitted proposal is not made in connection with any competing organization or competitor submitting a separate proposal in response to this RFP. No attempt has been made, or will be made, by the proposer to induce any other organization or competitor to submit, or not submit, a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition. The proposer further assures that the proposed costs have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement with any other organization or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition. Nor has the proposer knowingly disclosed the proposed costs on a prior basis, either directly or indirectly, to any other organization or competitor.
- 4. Validity of Proposal.** The proposer certifies that the proposal represents a valid and binding offer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFP and any amendments or attachments hereto. The proposal shall remain valid for a period of 180 days after the submission due date and may be extended beyond that time by mutual agreement. At its sole discretion, the Agency may include the proposal, by reference or otherwise, into any contract with the successful proposer.
- 5. Press Releases.** The proposer agrees to obtain prior written consent and approval of the Agency for press releases that relate in any manner to this RFP or any resultant contract.

■ C. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly agrees to comply with the following terms and conditions:

- 1. Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action.** The State is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action employer and does not discriminate in its hiring, employment, or business practices. The State is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services, or activities.
- 2. Preparation Expenses.** Neither the State nor the Agency shall assume any liability for expenses incurred by a proposer in preparing, submitting, or clarifying any proposal submitted in response to this RFP.
- 3. Exclusion of Taxes.** The Agency is exempt from the payment of excise and sales taxes imposed by the federal government and the State. Proposers are liable for any other applicable taxes.
- 4. Proposed Costs.** No cost submissions that are contingent upon a State action will be accepted. All proposed costs must be fixed through the entire term of the contract.
- 5. Changes to Proposal.** No additions or changes to the original proposal will be allowed after submission. While changes are not permitted, the Agency may request and authorize proposers to submit written clarification of their proposals, in a manner or format prescribed by the Agency, and at the proposer's expense.
- 6. Supplemental Information.** Supplemental information will not be considered after the deadline submission of proposals, unless specifically requested by the Agency. The Agency may ask a proposer to give demonstrations, interviews, oral presentations or further explanations to clarify information contained in a proposal. Any such demonstration, interview, or oral presentation will be at a time selected and in a place provided by the Agency. At its sole discretion, the Agency may limit the number of proposers invited to make such a demonstration, interview, or oral presentation and may limit the number of attendees per proposer.
- 7. Presentation of Supporting Evidence.** If requested by the Council, a proposer must be prepared to present evidence of experience, ability, data reporting capabilities, financial standing, or other information necessary to satisfactorily meet the requirements set forth or implied in this RFP. The Council may make onsite visits to an operational facility or facilities of a proposer to evaluate further the proposer's capability to perform the duties required by this RFP. At its discretion, the Council may also check or contact any reference provided by the proposer.
- 8. RFP Is Not An Offer.** Neither this RFP nor any subsequent discussions shall give rise to any commitment on the part of the State or the Council or confer any rights on any proposer unless and until a contract is fully executed by the necessary parties. The contract document will represent the entire agreement between the proposer and the Council and will supersede all prior negotiations, representations or agreements, alleged or made, between the parties. The State shall assume no liability for costs incurred by the proposer or for payment of services under the terms of the contract until the successful proposer is notified that the contract has been accepted and approved by the Agency and, if required, by the Attorney General's Office.

■ D. RIGHTS RESERVED TO THE STATE

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly accepts that the following rights are reserved to the State:

- 1. Timing Sequence.** The timing and sequence of events associated with this RFP shall ultimately be determined by the Council.
- 2. Amending or Canceling RFP.** The Council reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP on any date and at any time, if the Council deems it to be necessary, appropriate, or otherwise in the best interests of the State.
- 3. No Acceptable Proposals.** In the event that no acceptable proposals are submitted in response to this RFP, the Council may reopen the procurement process, if it is determined to be in the best interests of the State.
- 4. Award and Rejection of Proposals.** The Council reserves the right to award in part, to reject all proposals in whole or in part, for misrepresentation or if the proposal limits or modifies any of the terms, conditions, or specifications of this RFP. The Council may waive minor technical defects, irregularities, or omissions, if in its judgment the best interests of the State will be served. The Council reserves the right to reject the proposal of any proposer who submits a proposal after the submission date and time.
- 5. Sole Property of the State.** All proposals submitted in response to this RFP are to be the sole property of the State. Any product, whether acceptable or unacceptable, developed under a contract awarded as a result of this RFP shall be the sole property of the State, unless stated otherwise in this RFP or subsequent contract. The right to publish, distribute, or disseminate any and all information or reports, or part thereof, shall accrue to the State without recourse.
- 6. Contract Negotiation.** The Council reserves the right to negotiate or contract for all or any portion of the services contained in this RFP. The Council further reserves the right to contract with one or more proposer for such services. After reviewing the scored criteria, the Council may seek Best and Final Offers (BFO) on cost from proposers. The Council may set parameters on any BFOs received.
- 7. Clerical Errors in Award.** The Council reserves the right to correct inaccurate awards resulting from its clerical errors. This may include, in extreme circumstances, revoking the awarding of a contract already made to a proposer and subsequently awarding the contract to another proposer. Such action on the part of the State shall not constitute a breach of contract on the part of the State since the contract with the initial proposer is deemed to be void *ab initio* and of no effect as if no contract ever existed between the State and the proposer.
- 8. Key Personnel.** When the Council is the sole funder of a purchased service, the Council reserves the right to approve any additions, deletions, or changes in key personnel, with the exception of key personnel who have terminated employment. The Council also reserves the right to approve replacements for key personnel who have terminated employment. The Council further reserves the right to require the removal and replacement of any of the proposer's key personnel who do not perform adequately, regardless of whether they were previously approved by the Council.

■ E. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the proposer implicitly agrees to comply with all applicable State and federal laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, the following:

- 1. Freedom of Information, C.G.S. § 1-210(b).** The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) generally requires the disclosure of documents in the possession of the State upon request of any citizen, unless the content of the document falls within certain categories of exemption, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-210(b). Proposers are generally advised not to include in their proposals any confidential information. If the proposer indicates that certain documentation, as required by this RFP, is submitted in confidence, the State will endeavor to keep said information confidential to the extent permitted by law. The State has no obligation to initiate, prosecute, or defend any legal proceeding or to seek a protective order or other similar relief to prevent disclosure of any information pursuant to a FOIA request. The proposer has the burden of establishing the availability of any FOIA exemption in any proceeding where it is an issue. While a proposer may claim an exemption to the State's FOIA, the final administrative authority to release or exempt any or all material so identified rests with the State. In no event shall the State or any of its employees have any liability for disclosure of documents or information in the possession of the State and which the State or its employees believe(s) to be required pursuant to the FOIA or other requirements of law.
- 2. Contract Compliance, C.G.S. § 4a-60 and Regulations of CT State Agencies § 46a-68j-21 thru 43, inclusive.** CT statute and regulations impose certain obligations on State agencies (as well as contractors and subcontractors doing business with the State) to ensure that State agencies do not enter into contracts with organizations or businesses that discriminate against protected class persons.
- 3. Consulting Agreements Representation, C.G.S. § 4a-81.** Pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 4a-81 the successful contracting party shall certify that it has not entered into any consulting agreements in connection with this Contract, except for the agreements listed below. "Consulting agreement" means any written or oral agreement to retain the services, for a fee, of a consultant for the purposes of (A) providing counsel to a contractor, vendor, consultant or other entity seeking to conduct, or conducting, business with the State, (B) contacting, whether in writing or orally, any executive, judicial, or administrative office of the State, including any department, institution, bureau, board, commission, authority, official or employee for the purpose of solicitation, dispute resolution, introduction, requests for information, or (C) any other similar activity related to such contracts. "Consulting agreement" does not include any agreements entered into with a consultant who is registered under the provisions of chapter 10 of the Connecticut General Statutes as of the date such contract is executed in accordance with the provisions of section 4a-81 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Such representation shall be sworn as true to the best knowledge and belief of the person signing the resulting contract and shall be subject to the penalties of false statement.
- 4. Campaign Contribution Restriction, C.G.S. § 9-612.** For all State contracts, defined in section 9-612 of the Connecticut General Statutes as having a value in a calendar year of \$50,000 or more, or a combination or series of such agreements or contracts having a value of \$100,000 or more, the authorized signatory to the resulting contract must represent that they have received the State Elections Enforcement Commission's notice advising state contractors of state campaign contribution and solicitation prohibitions, and will inform its principals of the contents of the notice, as set forth in "Notice to Executive Branch State Contractors and

Prospective State Contractors of Campaign Contribution and Solicitation Limitations.” Such notice is available at https://seec.ct.gov/Portal/data/forms/ContrForms/seec_form_11_notice_only.pdf

5. Gifts, C.G.S. § 4-252. Pursuant to section 4-252 of the Connecticut General Statutes and Acting Governor Susan Bysiewicz’s Executive Order No. 21-2, the Contractor, for itself and on behalf of all of its principals or key personnel who submitted a bid or proposal, represents:

(1) That no gifts were made by (A) the Contractor, (B) any principals and key personnel of the Contractor, who participate substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating State contracts, or (C) any agent of the Contractor or principals and key personnel, who participates substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating State contracts, to (i) any public official or State employee of the State agency or quasi- public agency soliciting bids or proposals for State contracts, who participates substantially in the preparation of bid solicitations or requests for proposals for State contracts or the negotiation or award of State contracts, or (ii) any public official or State employee of any other State agency, who has supervisory or appointing authority over such State agency or quasi-public agency;

(2) That no such principals and key personnel of the Contractor, or agent of the Contractor or of such principals and key personnel, knows of any action by the Contractor to circumvent such prohibition on gifts by providing for any other principals and key personnel, official, employee or agent of the Contractor to provide a gift to any such public official or State employee; and

(3) That the Contractor is submitting bids or proposals without fraud or collusion with any person.

Any bidder or proposer that does not agree to the representations required under this section shall be rejected and the State agency or quasi-public agency shall award the contract to the next highest ranked proposer or the next lowest responsible qualified bidder or seek new bids or proposals.

6. Iran Energy Investment Certification C.G.S. § 4-252(a). Pursuant to C.G.S. § 4-252(a), the successful contracting party shall certify the following: (a) that it has not made a direct investment of twenty million dollars or more in the energy sector of Iran on or after October 1, 2013, as described in Section 202 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act of 2010, and has not increased or renewed such investment on or after said date. (b) If the Contractor makes a good faith effort to determine whether it has made an investment described in subsection (a) of this section it shall not be subject to the penalties of false statement pursuant to section 4-252a of the Connecticut General Statutes. A "good faith effort" for purposes of this subsection includes a determination that the Contractor is not on the list of persons who engage in certain investment activities in Iran created by the Department of General Services of the State of California pursuant to Division 2, Chapter 2.7 of the California Public Contract Code. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to impair the ability of the State agency or quasi-public agency to pursue a breach of contract action for any violation of the provisions of the resulting contract.

7. Nondiscrimination Certification, C.G.S. § 4a-60 and 4a-60a. If a bidder is awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract, the proposer must provide the Council with *written representation* in the resulting contract that certifies the bidder

complies with the State's nondiscrimination agreements and warranties. This nondiscrimination certification is required for all State contracts – regardless of type, term, cost, or value. Municipalities and CT State agencies are exempt from this requirement. The authorized signatory of the contract shall demonstrate his or her understanding of this obligation by either (A) initialing the nondiscrimination affirmation provision in the body of the resulting contract, or (B) providing an affirmative response in the required online bid or response to a proposal question, if applicable, which asks if the contractor understands its obligations. If a bidder or vendor refuses to agree to this representation, such bidder or vendor shall be rejected and the State agency or quasi-public agency shall award the contract to the next highest ranked vendor or the next lowest responsible qualified bidder or seek new bids or proposals.

- 8. Access to Data for State Auditors.** The Contractor shall provide to SEC access to any data, as defined in C.G.S. § 4e-1, concerning the resulting contract that are in the possession or control of the Contractor upon demand and shall provide the data to SEC in a format prescribed by SEC and the State Auditors of Public Accounts at no additional cost.

VI. APPENDIX

A. ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS / DEFINITIONS

BFO	Best and Final Offer
C.G.S.	Connecticut General Statutes
CHRO	Commission on Human Rights and Opportunity (CT)
CT	Connecticut
DAS	Department of Administrative Services (CT)
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act (CT)

IRS	Internal Revenue Service (US)
LOI	Letter of Intent
OAG	Office of the Attorney General
OPM	Office of Policy and Management (CT)
OSC	Office of the State Comptroller (CT)
PSA	Personal Service Agreement
P.A.	Public Act (CT)
RFP	Request for Proposal
SEC	Social Equity Council
SEEC	State Elections Enforcement Commission (CT)
U.S.	United States

DECD Department of Economic and Community Development

- *contractor*: a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that enters into a POS contract with the Council as a result of this RFP.
- *proposer*: a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that has submitted a proposal to the Council in response to this RFP. This term may be used interchangeably with respondent throughout the RFP.
- *prospective proposer*: a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that may submit a proposal to the Council in response to this RFP, but has not yet done so
- *subcontractor*: an individual (other than an employee of the contractor) or business entity hired by a contractor to provide a specific service as part of a PSA with the Council as a result of this RFP

B. STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

Social Equity Council (CT)

The undersigned Respondent affirms and declares that:

1) General

- a. This proposal is executed and signed with full knowledge and acceptance of the RFP CONDITIONS stated in the RFP.

- b. The Respondent will deliver services to the Council the cost proposed in the RFP and within the timeframes therein.
- c. The Respondent will seek prior approval from the Council before making any changes to the location of services.
- d. Neither the Respondent of any official of the organization nor any subcontractor the Respondent of any official of the subcontractor organization has received any notices of debarment or suspension from contracting with the State of CT or the Federal Government.
- e. Neither the Respondent of any official of the organization nor any subcontractor to the Respondent of any official of the subcontractor's organization has received any notices of debarment or suspension from contracting with other states within the United States.

Legal Name of Organization:

Authorized Signatory

Date

C. PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

To assist respondents in managing proposal planning and document collation processes, this document summarizes key dates and proposal requirements for this RFP. Please note that this document does not supersede what is stated in the RFP. Please refer to the Proposal Submission Overview, Required Proposal Submission Outline, and Mandatory Provisions (Sections II, III, and IV of this RFP) for more comprehensive detail **This is a tool for proposers to use.** It is the responsibility of each respondent to ensure that all required documents, forms, and attachments, are submitted in a timely manner.

Key Dates

Procurement Timetable		
The Council reserves the right to modify these dates at its sole discretion.		
Item	Action	Date
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Registration with State Contracting Portal (if not already registered):

- Register at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/Registration>
- Submit required forms:
 - Campaign Contribution Certification (OPM Ethics Form 1):
<https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Fin-PSA/Forms/Ethics-Forms>

Proposal Content Checklist

- Cover Sheet** including required information:
 - RFP Name or Number
 - Legal Name
 - FEIN
 - Street Address
 - Town/City/State/Zip
 - Contact Person
 - Title
 - Phone Number
 - E-Mail Address
 - Authorized Official
 - Title
 - Signature
- Table of Contents**
- Executive Summary:** high-level summary of proposal and cost
- Main proposal body answering all questions with relevant attachments.**
Proposers should use their discretion to determine whether certain required information is sufficiently captured in the body of their proposal or requires additional attachments for clarification. Additional attachments may include (bullets below are examples only):
 - Staffing plan with FTE status
 - Agency and program organizational chart detailing reporting structure
 - Staff resumes and applicable licensures
 - Work plan describing organization's efforts, progress, or plans to diversify workforce
 - Detailed plan on cultural competence and humility in service delivery
 - Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding with service partners
 - Written financial policies and procedures
- IRS Determination Letter** (for nonprofit proposers)
- Two years of most recent annual audited financial statements; OR any financial statements prepared by a Certified Public Accountant** for proposers whose organizations have been incorporated for less than two years. *Agencies may swap in use of EARS system if applicable.*

- Proposed budget**, including budget narrative and cost schedules for planned subcontractors if applicable.
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement**
- Statement of Assurances**

Formatting Checklist

- Is the proposal formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 (letter-sized) paper?
- Is the main body of the proposal within the page limit?
- Is the proposal in 12-point, Times New Roman font?
- Does the proposal format follow normal (1 inch) margins and 1 ½ line spacing?
- Does the proposer's name appear in the header of each page?
- Does the proposal include page numbers in the footer?
- Are confidential labels applied to sensitive information (if applicable)?