1. **QUESTION:** My firm is interested in this opportunity. Who is eligible?

   **ANSWER:** Eligible applicants are full-service communications, advertising, and public affairs agencies, private and nonprofit consulting firms, and other entities (with partners/sub-contractors, if applicable) qualified to propose by demonstrated capacity to accomplish the goals of the campaign and capability to execute the scope of work.

2. **QUESTION:** My firm is interested in applying but we are not a full-service firm. Can we apply?

   **ANSWER:** A single full-service firm with or without established sub-contractor partners or a coalition may submit an application. Either way, agencies will be expected to work closely with sub-contractors and other partners with a demonstrated commitment to priority audiences and/or deepening their network to strengthen collaboration.

3. **QUESTION:** Will you accept a proposal from a coalition of partners?

   **ANSWER:** Yes, we welcome partnerships. One organization would need to be the lead applicant, with roles for other organizations/agencies clearly defined in the proposal. Additionally, we encourage new partnerships between a full-service firm and sub-contractors who have deep reach and ties to the priority audiences and/or ethnic media experts.
4. **QUESTION:** Are proposers required to have partners help implement the scope of work?

**ANSWER:** Partnerships are strongly encouraged, especially with community-based organizations and ethnic media experts. Applicants are not required to include specific sub-contractors in their proposal, but it is preferred if they are. Applicants who do not include sub-contractors in their proposal should be prepared to share their process and plans for incorporating partnership into the execution of the campaign.

5. **QUESTION:** Why do you need references from us?

**ANSWER:** Because the campaign will focus on populations that are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, we want to make sure that applicants have a demonstrated capacity to accomplish the goals of the campaign and capability to execute the scope of work, as well as excellence in project management and output.

6. **QUESTION:** How many references should we include with our submitted proposal?

**ANSWER:** Please submit two to three references for your organization. You do not need to include references for sub-contractors or partners.

7. **QUESTION:** Is it recommended that applicants already have relationships and reach into the priority audiences?

**ANSWER:** Yes, we recommend organizations that apply have demonstrated experience and history in working with the priority audiences and capacity to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services and information.

8. **QUESTION:** Who will the chosen firm work with?

**ANSWER:** The firm will report directly to The Center at Sierra Health Foundation and work in partnership with The State of California, The Center and stakeholders, sub-contractors and vendors.
9. QUESTION: Who are the priority audiences?

ANSWER: The campaign will prioritize needs of those whom current public health data show to be disproportionately impacted by the virus, including but not limited to, Latinx and Black individuals and families, immigrants, young “invincibles,” essential workers, employers, multigenerational households, elderly, and immunocompromised individuals. Public health data will also help inform target areas. Target communities, populations and languages will continue to evolve and be determined based on ongoing data review and scientific research. We are also prioritizing in-language messaging, including English, Spanish, Chinese (traditional and simplified), Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, and Arabic, with the possibility of more.

10. QUESTION: What is the budget?

ANSWER: The duration of the contract is from mid-August 2020 through July 2021. The total budget should not exceed $85 million. Based on the Scope of Work, the budget should take into consideration all anticipated costs, including the following priorities*:

- Paid Media
- Research
- Creative content and production
- Staff and personnel costs
- Subcontractors, including ethnic media, should be reflected in the budget

*Other categories may be added based on strategy

11. QUESTION: What is the evaluation and selection criteria?

ANSWER: Criteria are listed in Section III of the RFP.

12. QUESTION: How many awards do you anticipate awarding?

ANSWER: We will make one award.

13. QUESTION: Who will make the award decision?

ANSWER: A review committee made up of community experts in health and racial equity and large-scale public health campaigns will make the final selection.
14. QUESTION: How will the award be decided?
   ANSWER: Program staff and the review committee will adhere strictly to the criteria outlined in the RFP Evaluation and Selection Process Section.

15. QUESTION: Is there a page limit?
   ANSWER: Yes, there is a page limit for each required section. The narrative sections may not exceed 14 pages total. For details, please refer to Section XI of the RFP.

16. QUESTION: What are the key dates we should be tracking?
   ANSWER: Key dates are identified in the RFP on page 12.
   ● APPLICATION DEADLINE: August 13, 2020, at 5 p.m. (Pacific Time)
   ● REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS: August 14-21, 2020
   ● INTERVIEWS WITH FINALIST CANDIDATES: August 24, 2020
   ● CONTRACT FINALIZED: Week of August 24, 2020
   ● CONTRACT START DATE: August 31, 2020

17. QUESTION: If we have questions, who can answer them for us?
   ANSWER: Questions can be emailed to Samantha Garcia, Communications Officer with The Center at Sierra Health Foundation. She can be reached at sgarcia@sierrahealth.org. Because we want to make sure that we are able to provide you with a timely response so you can complete your proposal, we will only accept email questions and inquiries until Wednesday, August 12, 2020 at 5 p.m. (Pacific Time).

18. QUESTION: How do I submit my proposal?
   ANSWER: Proposal Submission will only be accepted by email.

   Email Address: centergrants@shfc.org
   Subject: COVID-19 Public Awareness Campaign Proposal Submission
19. QUESTION: If we are selected as a finalist, how should we prepare for the interview?

   ANSWER: Please make sure your project team and, if applicable, key subcontractors are available on August 24, 2020. Should you be invited for an interview with the Review Committee, we will provide you instructions on how to prepare.

20. QUESTION: Why is there such a short response time to develop and submit a proposal?

   ANSWER: The proposal has a shorter response time because of the dangerous spread of COVID-19 and the urgent need to begin the second phase of the public awareness campaign to advance public education. This short time period will be taken into consideration upon evaluation of proposals and determination of the award.

21. QUESTION: When will the contract begin?

   ANSWER: The contract is currently scheduled to begin August 31. However, The Center has discretion to change the start date based on programmatic needs and the changing nature of the pandemic.

22. QUESTION: Who is The Center at Sierra Health Foundation (The Center) and why are they managing this campaign?

   ANSWER: The Center was founded by Sierra Health Foundation in 2012 as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. With offices in Sacramento and Fresno, The Center pursues the promise of health and racial equity and racial justice in communities across California. Leveraging leadership, operational and funding support from Sierra Health Foundation and its partners, The Center establishes investment partnerships with public and private funders; community members; community organizations; national, state, and local government agencies; nonprofits and businesses. The Center was chosen as the campaign management entity because of their demonstrated experience working with, convening, and prioritizing communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and existing inequities.
23. QUESTION: Is anyone available to speak about this funding opportunity or the project?

ANSWER: Yes, we would be more than happy to speak about this opportunity. Please send an email to Samantha Garcia, Communications Officer with The Center at Sierra Health Foundation, at sgarcia@sierrahealth.org.

24. QUESTION: What are the parameters for the $5M media plan (including outreach strategies and tactics) since $5M is only a fraction of the budget? Could the plan be focused a limited time period?

ANSWER: The $5m media plan is a sample of how you might organize a campaign, so a limited period is a potential option for demonstrating the type of campaign you might run with a smaller budget that could be scaled.

25. QUESTION: Is the main message to essential workers and their employees the same as the overall message: to follow public health safety measures to keep them and others safe?

ANSWER: Messaging will be determined by research, data, and recommendations from experts in the field, so it may differ between audiences. Information may also include raising awareness about resources available if someone becomes ill due to COVID-19.

26. QUESTION: The RFP mentions 2 weeks of transition and pretesting creative; what is the desired target date to be in-market?

ANSWER: The desired target date will be determined in coordination with the selected vendor but given the urgency of the pandemic, new content may need to be developed without pretesting to fill a gap in messaging. In addition, existing creative may be leveraged to avoid a gap in communications.

27. QUESTION: Would it be possible to submit bios instead of resumes?

ANSWER: Staff bios are an appropriate alternative to resumes if they contain relevant experience and information about the role the staff member would play in this campaign.
28. QUESTION: Would the brand be The Center at Sierra Health Foundation or the State of California? For example, who would we say this message is brought to you by?

ANSWER: Assets should include the Your Actions Save Lives and California Department of Public Health logos. In some situations, only the Your Actions Save Lives logo (primary campaign logo) will be used due to size and spacing of materials. Video and radio PSA’s should include a note that the message is provided by The Center at Sierra Health Foundation.

29. QUESTION: Is there a call to action beyond the specific behavioral actions associated with staying safe, such as to direct audiences to a website to get more information? Along those lines, how will success be measured in terms of KPIs?

ANSWER: The campaign should be focused on education about health and safety precautions, as well as resources to help address health and access disparities. More information about KPI’s can be found in Section V (Narrative Scope of Work Section) of the RFP.

30. QUESTION: In the proposer team section, the leadership team is comprised of people from multiple agencies. However, in the resume section, it asks for resumes from the prime only. Which resumes should we include?

ANSWER: If you are submitting a proposal as part of a collaborative or have your sub-contractor teams decided as part of your proposal, please include their resumes. Otherwise, if your partnerships are not yet determined, you may only submit your team’s resumes. Bios are an acceptable alternative, with the caveat stated in the attached questions and answers document.

31. QUESTION: Should proposals anticipate creating materials in all of the State’s 12-13 threshold languages?

ANSWER: Proposals should include plans for creating materials in at least English, Spanish, Chinese (traditional and simplified), Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Arabic, with the possibility of more.
32. QUESTION: Is there an expectation for the awarded agency to conduct outreach or create partnerships within the business community/employers?

ANSWER: Yes, to some extent partnerships will be important, as well as working collaboratively with the Labor and Workforce Development Agency to complement efforts.

33. QUESTION: Apart from references, is it possible to submit letters of support?

ANSWER: You may submit two to three letters of support in addition to references.

34. QUESTION: How much “value add” content do you expect in relation to an ad buy? Is there a percentage that you would like to hit?

ANSWER: Please include your expectation of what value add we may get during the campaign. There is not a particular value add percentage that must be achieved and proposal reviewers understand the percentage may change during the run of the campaign.

35. QUESTION: Has the State designated regions and or response teams to specifically deal with COVID-related issues? If so, should the communications campaign be structured to complement their work?

ANSWER: The State uses data to determine the regions and communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The communications campaign should focus on these populations, including geographic regions with high covid-19 cases or demonstrating an increasing trend.

36. QUESTION: Will the agency of record be expected to handle all of the State’s earned media efforts, or will they serve as more of a support for the State?

ANSWER: The awarded agency will coordinate with the state, including California Department of Public Health, who will primarily lead earned media efforts.

37. QUESTION: The link to the campaign’s current assets does not work; is there another way to see what’s already been done?
ANSWER: The link to the toolkit is toolkit.covid19.ca.gov and it is currently operational.

38. QUESTION: Do campaign assets need to live on a website linked to the State, or will it be possible to create a stand-alone COVID campaign site?

ANSWER: The campaign assets are currently housed at toolkit.covid19.ca.gov and therefore directly connected to the State’s COVID-19 response website. This is not a requirement and a separate stand-alone site could be recommended as part of the applicant’s proposal.

39. QUESTION: Has the State already created cohorts of community-based organizations that are assisting with COVID related outreach and engagement? If so are they organized by region?

ANSWER: The State is working with community-based organizations and partners to address the needs of communities and populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Engagement is conducted at regional levels, but is not solely done by region in order to address other dynamic factors.

40. QUESTION: COVID is clearly a statewide issue that is impacting certain regions and demographics more severely. Will The Center at Sierra Health Foundation be providing direction as to which groups require greater priority or focus? Will the expectation be to direct a higher level of time and resources towards those priority populations, or do we need to treat the entire state somewhat equally?

ANSWER: The campaign must be data and research driven and that includes analyzing data provided by the California Department of Public Health to determine target audiences and regions with higher cases of COVID-19 or demonstrating an increasing trend. A higher level of time and resources should be directed to priority populations as defined in the RFP, with the understanding that priority populations may shift during the run of the campaign.

41. QUESTION: Will the chosen communications firm have access to epidemiological and behavioral research/data compiled by the State?
ANSWER: Yes, the chosen firm will have access to de-identified and aggregate-level data in coordination with the California Department of Public Health.

42. QUESTION: Do you require resumes to be in a traditional CV format, or may they be in a narrative-style format?

ANSWER: Narrative-style staff bios are an appropriate alternative to resumes if they contain relevant experience and information about the role the staff member would play in this campaign.

43. QUESTION: May we submit our proposal by sending by email a link to you to download it from an FTP site?

ANSWER: Yes, please provide a link to download if your proposal is too large to send. Please make it clear that the proposal documents will be found at the link.

44. QUESTION: Is there a required format for the response? Can imagery be included?

ANSWER: No specific formatting is required, as long as the proposal is readable and font size, margins, etc. are reasonable. Imagery can be included if they help demonstrate your past or proposed work. Please stay within page limits as designated in the RFP.

45. QUESTION: For the additional attachments (budget, resumes, case studies), do those need to be folded into one doc? Is there a file size limit?

ANSWER: Attachments can be separate, and there is no file size limit.

46. QUESTION: The RFP asks for an overall timeline – is a sample timeline sufficient for the proposal with complete timeline shared pending award?

ANSWER: A sample timeline is sufficient as long as it helps demonstrate the kind of campaign you would run including the kinds of activities you would include and how you might scale to fit the full timeframe.
47. **QUESTION:** Is there a page maximum for the overall proposal?

**ANSWER:** There is no total page maximum, as long as you stick to the page limits for individual sections where we have outlined page limits:

- Proposer’s capability section – 2 pages
- Narrative scope of work – 10 pages
- Proposed Project team – 2 pages
- 1-page resumes or bios for each essential team member
- Proposed budget narrative – 2 pages

48. **QUESTION:** Can we submit a cover page?

**ANSWER:** Yes, you may submit a one-page cover page, if desired, and this will not count toward the narrative response page limit.

49. **QUESTION:** Is the State currently utilizing the University of California to compile regional scientific data, or is there another statewide network that is working on that?

**ANSWER:** The State is working with local health jurisdictions, as well as the University of California health systems, to gather data.

50. **QUESTION:** How are you coordinating with the cities and counties on COVID messaging?

**ANSWER:** The State is engaging local stakeholders, including counties and cities, through local health jurisdictions and state task forces related to COVID-19 response.

51. **QUESTION:** Is there a transition or existing team we’ll be collaborating with? How should we be engaging with them?

**ANSWER:** Yes, there will be an existing team to collaborate with The Center and the State will help facilitate the transition to the new firm.
52. QUESTION: From the initial campaign to now, what has worked? What hasn’t?

   ANSWER: The chosen firm will have access to de-identified and aggregate-level data in coordination with the California Department of Public Health, as well as insights from the current campaign. The campaign should be focused on education about health and safety precautions, as well as resources to help address health and access disparities.

53. QUESTION: Do you have a preference of the mix between digital/traditional for the media channels?

   ANSWER: The proposal should include your recommendations based on your experience and current data. There is no set expectation for the proportion of each medium used.

54. QUESTION: Who do you see as the primary spokesperson for this campaign on the PR side?

   ANSWER: State leaders may be strategically called upon to serve as spokespersons for the campaign, but trusted community messengers should be considered an important part of the campaign.

55. QUESTION: Are you looking to just simply reimagine the current creative assets and "update" them, or are you looking for an entirely new looking and feeling campaign?

   ANSWER: The campaign should meet the current needs of Californians, including communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. As such, the second phase of the campaign should be creative and make best use of current data, practices and partnerships for deep reach in these communities. Your proposal should demonstrate your recommendations on whether updates or new direction is necessary to accomplish the goals of the campaign based on data and research. Given the urgency of the pandemic, new content may need to be developed without pretesting to fill a gap in messaging and/or existing creative may be leveraged to avoid a gap in communications.
56. QUESTION: Are there any governmental requirements such as using approved governmental rates for staffing or travel?

ANSWER: The RFP does not set forth rates for staffing or travel. However, the Center will require the selected contractor to obtain preauthorization for travel expenditures.

August 13, 2020