

**State of Illinois**  
**COVID Test Results Notification Call Center**  
**Request for Proposal**  
**Due 03/23/2021, 5:00 p.m., CST**

**Background**

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

Reporting of COVID-19 test results to residents in a timely manner is necessary to achieve the maximum benefit from the State's COVID-19 testing and contact tracing programs. Therefore, the State of Illinois seeks proposals from private sector vendors whose headquarters and operational units are based within the United States for COVID-19 test results reporting services via an established automated call center for tests processed by the State of Illinois or its designees. The vendor also will mail test results to test recipients upon request or when necessary and provide summary reports to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). The call volume for tests results to be handled by the vendor is anticipated to be approximately 3,000 to 6,000 test results per day. The vendor should be able to easily scale up to a call volume of 10,000 test results per day. The attached Appendix A provides historical call volumes.

Any equipment, supplies, staffing, technology systems or other resources used or acquired by the vendor in the performance of this initiative during the term of the contract will be at the vendor's expense and shall remain the property of the vendor. The State of Illinois will not be responsible for the purchase or maintenance of any equipment, staffing, supplies, or technology for COVID-19 test reporting services.

Pricing for services shall be firm fixed rate for the initial term and any term extensions. Rates shall be inclusive of all vendor expenses incurred by the vendor to provide services. No expenses such as travel, equipment, supplies, etc. are allowed. All rates are in US dollars.

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

The initial term of the contract will to be nine (9) months from the date of contract execution. The term may be extended at the State's discretion.

The State will evaluate the proposals and make one award that provides for timely reporting of test results to test recipients throughout the State. An award will be made to a vendor that can fulfill all of the services requested. Partial awards will not be considered. However, the vendor may engage subcontractors to perform part of the services. If subcontractors will be engaged, the vendor must

include a complete list of all subcontractors intended to be used, their addresses, and a description of the work each subcontractor will be performing in the proposal.

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

### Key Dates

3/12/2021	RFP Released
3/16/2021	All questions from prospective vendors due via email to <a href="mailto:Dawn.Crowhurst@illinois.gov">Dawn.Crowhurst@illinois.gov</a> not later than 12:00 pm (CST)
3/18/2021	Answers to questions from prospective vendors released via IDPH COVID-19 website link below: <a href="http://www.dph.illinois.gov/rfp/covid19-test-results-notice">http://www.dph.illinois.gov/rfp/covid19-test-results-notice</a>
3/23/2021	Submissions due via email to <a href="mailto:Dawn.Crowhurst@illinois.gov">Dawn.Crowhurst@illinois.gov</a> not later than 5:00 pm CST
3/30/2021 (estimated)	Contract award
4/5/2021 (estimated)	Start date in preparation of accepting test results on 4/12/2021.

### Directions

The State is seeking proposals from interested vendors with proven experience and established capacity for the provision of healthcare call center services, particularly those with experience providing test results. Vendors must have their headquarters and operational units based within the United States.

The proposal must be submitted as two separate documents. The first document will include the vendor's response as to how it will deliver the services required and cannot include any pricing information. The all inclusive pricing information must be presented on the attached budget template (see Attachment B). Each document will be evaluated separately. Proposals should include:

- Name of vendor, vendor's address, and contact person, including work phone, cell phone, and email address.
- Operational Plan (not to exceed 10 pages total) that describes the vendor's proposal as described in the Scope of Work.
- Timeline that includes dates allowing for notifying residents of test results beginning 4/12/2021.
- Plan for data collection, tracking, and submission of necessary data and reports to the State. All data must be exportable to Excel or otherwise transferrable to the State in an agreed upon format upon contract termination.

- Plan for provision of language access services and services for individuals who are non-native English speaking or are deaf or hard of hearing and who will perform these services.
- References, which shall include the names and contact information for three entities for whom the vendor has provided similar services described in the proposal.
- Proposed pricing (submitted in as a separate, clearly labeled attachment from the rest of the proposal).

Proposals must be submitted via email not later than 5:00 pm, Central Standard Time on 3/23/2021 to:

Dawn Crowhurst  
 Illinois Department of Public Health  
 Office of Health Protection  
 DawnDawn.Crowhurst@illinois.gov

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

### **Scope of Work**

- A) **Overview.** Vendor will operate an established automated outbound call center to notify residents of COVID-19 test results and mail written test results in accordance with this scope of work and based upon the vendor's receipt of information from Illinois Department of Public Health, its laboratory partners, or other mutually agreed upon sources and processes.
- B) **Notifications.** The vendor will operate an established automated call center meeting the following specifications:
- a. Receive test results from IDPH or its laboratory partners.
  - b. Integrate with IDPH online portal and EPIC via Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) or Health Level 7 (HL7).
  - c. Integrate with laboratory partners via HL7 and have the capability to add and/or remove laboratory partners as directed by IDPH.
  - d. Provide notification of test results through a combination of automated and manual outbound calls with direct connect or callback option.
  - e. Make multiple calls to the test recipients until the vendor successfully delivers the test results:
    - i. For negative test results, one to three automated calls (as directed by the State) to test recipients. The first two calls are to be made within 24 hours of vendor's receipt of test results. A third call is to be made within 48 hours of vendor's receipt of test results
    - ii. For positive, inhibitory, error and indeterminate results, three automated calls to test recipients. Two calls are to be made within 24 hours of vendor's receipt of test results. A third automated call is to be made within 48 hours of vendor's receipt of test results. A fourth manual call on the third day and the fifth manual call on the fourth day after the vendor receives the test result.

- iii. If the required number of call attempts specified above have been made without contact, the vendor may stop attempting to contact the test recipient via phone. Vendor must document the call attempt details, including date, time, and number(s) called.
  - f. Ensure that all call center agents utilize approved scripts and any FAQs, while requiring call communication materials and scripts (including automated and live agent communications) are approved by IDPH before implementation.
  - g. Provide a dedicated toll-free number for direct connect/callback to dedicated agents.
  - h. Mail test results to test recipients with positive test results who have not been successfully contacted by the vendor and other test recipients upon request of the test recipient using a letter template approved by IDPH. Cases may be closed following the mailing of the letter. Vendor must document name, address, and date for each letter sent.
- C) **Operations.** The vendor shall:
  - a. Provide services in both English and Spanish and provide language access services for other languages with evidence provided in response to RFP.
  - b. Provide access services for individuals who are deaf or hard or hearing with evidence provided in response to RFP.
  - c. Operate the call center 8:00 am to 8:00 pm CST, 7 days/week, except as otherwise agreed to by IDPH and vendor.
  - d. Not be required to utilize clinical staff.
  - e. Ensure that all call center agents have prior experience in handling high-demand or high-volume calls.
- D) **Quality and Data.** The vendor shall:
  - a. Achieve 80% of inbound calls answered within 30 seconds service level (<5% abandon rate) on a monthly average. Wait time for callers should be no more than an average of 3-5 minutes.
  - b. Provide daily reporting to IDPH on:
    - i. All calls and contacts broken out by test result categories, including verification that outbound efforts were completed in agreed upon time frames;
    - ii. Missing and/or unmatched test recipient files (reconciled against data provided by IDPH or designee, online portal, other agreed upon sources and processes, and the laboratories (“daily file”));
    - iii. Reconciliation of test recipient files against successful contacts and letters mailed; and
    - iv. Volume of letters mailed.

Any changes shall be implemented pursuant to a format and timeframe mutually agreed to by IDPH and vendor.

  - c. Ensure that State reported data does not mix with internal vendor data.
  - d. Provide any written reports on call volumes, data and other statistics as requested by IDPH.
  - e. Provide HIPAA verification (i.e., full name and two identifying pieces of information such as date of birth and address) on all call center agent communications.

- f. Call recording will not be required, but vendor may elect to record calls. Any recordings must be for quality control purposes only, with any legally required notice to the individual being recorded.

**Additional Requirements**

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

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

**Proposal Specification Checklist Table:**

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

<b><u>Mandatory Criteria</u></b>	<b><u>Vendor’s Proposal Page Reference</u></b>
Established call center experience in providing test results or other medical information via outbound calls and letters.	Section Page(s)
Established ability to receive results from laboratories via SFTP or HL7.	Section Page(s)
Established ability to integrate with online portals.	Section Page(s)
Established automated call system.	Section Page(s)
Established ability to provide services in English and Spanish.	Section

	Page(s)
Established ability to provide services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.	Section Page(s)
Submission of plan to meet BEP requirement.	Section Page(s)
<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Vendors Proposal Page Reference</b>
Plan, including timeline, to process 5,000 test results per day on 4/12/21 and ability to quickly scale to handle up to 10,000 test results per day.	Section Page(s)
Plan, including timeline, to receive test results from laboratories and portals.	Section Page(s)
Plan outlining training of call agents in use of approved script, including methods to monitor ongoing call quality.	Section Page(s)
Plan, including timeline, to provide a dedicated toll-free number for direct connect/callback to dedicated agents.	Section Page(s)
Ability to provide services from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm CST seven days a week.	Section Page(s)
Ability to meet requirement for 80% of inbound calls answered within 30 seconds, based on recent performance in delivery of similar call service.	Section Page(s)
Ability to meet requirement for <5% of abandoned calls, based on recent performance in delivery of similar call service.	Section Page(s)
Plan to ensure HIPAA verification on all agent communications, including plan for training of agents and methods for ensuring ongoing compliance with HIPAA verification requirement.	Section Page(s)
Plan to provide daily reporting to IDPH as described in Section D. Quality and Data, Item b.	Section Page(s)
Plan to document and verify that IDPH data does not mix with vendor data.	Section Page(s)
Plan to document and verify that legally required notice is provided prior to recording call for quality assurance purposes.	Section Page(S)