

RFP #17-020: Summer Food Service Program Campaign
Q&A

Program Questions:

- 1. In terms of deliverables, how strictly must the contractor adhere to the media buys and placement of ads?**

The vendor awarded the contract will provide the print and media advertisement deliverables in the approximate annual composition and quantity and in accordance with the implementation dates stated in Section 1.2.2. of this RFP for year 1, at a minimum, of the contract. The vendor will utilize evaluation survey results to guide campaign planning during contract renewal years, particularly when constructing the project work plan and budget to reflect a deliverable composition that is deemed to be most effective. Promotional deliverable types are limited to those stated in the RFP; other promotional deliverable types will not be considered.

- 2. Has formative research already been conducted? If so, by whom? Will their research be provided to the contractor?**

Formal formative research to determine the effectiveness of promotional advertisements for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) has not been conducted. Previous efforts, which included advertisement on transportation (public buses and trains) only, coincided with consistent growth in program participation over the past five years. The inclusion of billboard and digital advertisements were based upon concerted efforts to reach populations in rural communities not well served by public transportation, as well as anecdotal information about successful strategies used to reach this target audience in other states.

- 3. Is there an incumbent? If so, who?**

NYSED has contracted with several vendors to provide program promotion on public buses and trains throughout New York State. NYSED is currently contracting with Lamar Transit Advertisement and Outfront Media Group, LLC for Summer 2016.

- 4. How much flexibility does the contractor have to change the sample creative approach they submit? What should and should not be completed during the revision period?**

The sample creative approach submitted with the bidder's proposal accounts for up to fifteen (15) points out of seventy (70) possible points for the technical evaluation. It is anticipated that the sample design will serve as the foundation for all of the artwork and advertisements used for the campaign. As indicated in the RFP, the vendor awarded the contract will submit draft artwork and advertisements (based upon the sample design submitted with the proposal) for NYSED approval by May 1, 2017. While the vendor may make minor improvements to the proposed artwork, it is expected that the draft artwork will remain substantially similar. No changes to approved project artwork or advertisements are permitted without prior approval from NYSED.

- 5. In the past, has the entire marketing effort been executed by a single agency, or spread out across multiple vendors?**

NYSED's previous marketing efforts have been limited to advertisement on public buses and trains via separate contracts with two vendors. It is important to note that previous marketing efforts did not include billboard, radio, or digital advertisement.

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6. Is the current incumbent (or incumbents) still in the running for 2017? Can you provide the names?

Please see the answer to Program Question #3. This RFP represents an opportunity for all interested parties to provide a proposal that will be evaluated using the criteria established in the RFP. This is an open, best value competition that will be conducted fairly and in accordance with NYS procurement laws and guidelines.

7. How strict are the percentages provided for the cost of deliverables (bus, subway/train, billboard, other)? What if we believe there is a more effective and efficient way to deliver a message and it does not fit this weighting of percentages?

The approximate annual deliverable composition percentages listed in Table 2 – Deliverables of the RFP are intended to provide bidders with a general idea of NYSED’s expectations regarding the composition of the budget and approximate deliverable quantities. NYSED expects bidders to propose work plans and budgets that reflect these approximations to the extent feasible. During contract renewal years, evaluation survey results will be used to determine deliverable composition percentages that reflect deliverable effectiveness.

8. Why is radio is the only medium held to a PSA status? Can it also be purchased? (Since small community radio stations most likely will not provide PSA documentation, unless there is a paid schedule as well.)

The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) website provides a variety of creative ideas and resources to promote the SFSP. USDA provides a total of four recorded Public Service Announcements (PSAs) in both English and Spanish and recommends the use of these PSAs as a low/no-cost strategy to increase awareness of the program in communities. NYSED acknowledges that there may be some costs to the vendor related to the implementation of this deliverable; however, this cost is expected to be minimal.

9. When would you consider a media schedule completed (i.e. after the insertion schedule is negotiated and placed or after the spots have aired/run)?

A breakdown indicating when each advertisement deliverable is considered complete is provided below:

- Bus, Train, and Billboard Advertisements: Each of these deliverables is considered complete following all activities required to implement the deliverables in their entirety, including the reservation of advertisement space, printing of advertisement panels, and display/ posting. Each deliverable is considered complete following the last scheduled date of display/posting within each deliverable type (Bus, Train, and Billboard).
- Digital Media Advertisements: This deliverable is considered complete following all activities required to implement this deliverable in its entirety, including the reservation and purchase of digital advertisement space and the display of advertisements. The deliverable is considered complete following the last scheduled date of display/posting within each deliverable type.
- PSA Advertisements: This deliverable is considered complete following (1) vendor correspondence with a minimum of three radio stations that broadcast to residents in each selected county and (2) receipt of agreement to air a SFSP PSA a minimum of three times from at least one radio station that reaches residents in each selected county.

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Fiscal Questions:

- 1. The RFP states under 1.6 Payment: "Payment to the vendor will only be made in accordance with timely quarterly reports with an accompanying voucher. Vouchers submitted for payment must include a list of completed deliverables and costs consistent with the approved work plan and budget contained in the executed contract." Does this mean that NYSED will only accept agency invoices quarterly and remittances to the agency will only be made quarterly and only after deliverables and quarterly reports are completed? Or, assuming quarterly reports are submitted and accepted as agreed, can the agency invoice as deliverables are completed and be paid timely to the invoice dates?**

NYSED has revised RFP Section 1.6, Payment, to allow the vendor to submit vouchers for payment as deliverables are completed, rather than submitting vouchers with the quarterly progress report. The voucher must be accompanied by sufficient evidence of the completed deliverables. The RFP does still require quarterly reports. Please review the revised RFP.

- 2. Payments are said to be made upon receipt of quarterly reports. That would seem to say invoices will only be processed every three months, meaning that some bills will not be paid for a minimum of 90 days, plus whatever time it takes to process the invoices. What is the expected time to process invoices once they have been received? And, is it your expectation that the selected firm will sometimes not receive payment for 90 days or more?**

Please see the answer to Fiscal Question #1. Payment is made within 30 days of NYSED's receipt of all information required for payment, in the approved format.