

**Request for Proposal
Questions and Responses**

**Consultant Qualified Vendor Pool
Communications, Research & Evaluation, Strategy & Planning and Grant Writing**

Proposal Due Date: 9/30/2026

Questions and responses are grouped below by theme for ease of reference. Every question and response from the original Q&A is retained; original question numbering is preserved.

VENDOR ELIGIBILITY, LOCATION & REMOTE WORK

Q5: For consultants selected under the Grant Writing Track, may all project activities, meetings, and deliverables be performed remotely, or should consultants anticipate any required in-person attendance in Boston?

A: The RFP does not specifically require a general in-person, or local presence. Delivery expectations will be determined by the needs of each project specific scope of work. Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred, but the RFP does not limit eligibility to only Massachusetts based vendors.

Q22: Are consultants in the Strategy and Planning Track permitted to perform services remotely, or is there an expectation that consultants be located in or routinely available on-site in the Boston area?

A: The RFP does not specifically require a general in-person, or local presence. Delivery expectations will be determined by the needs of each project specific scope of work. Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred, but the RFP does not limit eligibility to only Massachusetts based vendors.

Q37: Will project services be remote, hybrid, or in person, and will the delivery method be determined for each project?

A: The RFP does not specifically require a general in-person, or local presence. Delivery expectations will be determined by the needs of each project specific scope of work. Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred, but the RFP does not limit eligibility to only Massachusetts based vendors.

Q39: may an out-of-state firm perform all services remotely and deliver every work product electronically, with any printing or physical distribution handled by BPHC?

A: The RFP does not specifically require a general in-person, or local presence. Delivery expectations will be determined by the needs of each project specific scope of work. Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred, but the RFP does not limit eligibility to only Massachusetts based vendors.

Q42: Please also confirm whether an out-of-state firm may participate through remote delivery when appropriate, with on-site support determined for individual projects.

A: The RFP does not specifically require a general in-person, or local presence. Delivery expectations will be determined by the needs of each project specific scope of work. Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred, but the RFP does not limit eligibility to only Massachusetts based vendors.

Q47: Location / in-person expectations: Does BPHC require Communications Track vendors to maintain an office in Boston or Massachusetts, or may services be delivered primarily remotely when the project scope permits?

A: The RFP does not specifically require a general in-person, or local presence. Delivery expectations will be determined by the needs of each project specific scope of work. Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred, but the RFP does not limit eligibility to only Massachusetts based vendors.

Q48: If in-person participation is expected, would those requirements be defined at the project-specific scope-of-work stage?

A: The RFP does not specifically require a general in-person, or local presence. Delivery expectations will be determined by the needs of each project specific scope of work. Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred, but the RFP does not limit eligibility to only Massachusetts based vendors.

Q67: Is the pool open to out-of-state firms?

A: The RFP does not establish a general in-person, Boston-office, or local-presence requirement. Delivery expectations will be determined by the needs of each project specific scope of work. Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred, but the RFP does not limit eligibility to Massachusetts-based vendors.

Q75: Are U.S. vendors located outside Massachusetts eligible for the pool, with services performed remotely when a project-specific scope does not require onsite work?

A: The RFP does not establish a general in-person, Boston-office, or local-presence requirement. Delivery expectations will be determined by the needs of each project specific scope of work. Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred, but the RFP does not limit eligibility to Massachusetts-based vendors.

Q107: Are consulting assignments under the pool expected to require regular in-person presence in Boston, or may individual engagements be performed remotely or through a hybrid model depending on the project?

A: The RFP does not establish a general in-person, Boston-office, or local-presence requirement. Delivery expectations will be determined by the needs of each project-specific scope of work. Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred, but the RFP does not limit eligibility to Massachusetts-based vendors.

Q135: The Vendor Qualifications section lists "Knowledge of Boston communities and populations preferred." Could you please confirm whether consultants based outside the Boston metropolitan area are eligible to apply, and whether services under these tracks may be delivered remotely?

A: The RFP does not establish a general in-person, Boston-office, or local-presence requirement. Delivery expectations will be determined by the needs of each project specific scope of work. Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred, but the RFP does not limit eligibility to Massachusetts-based vendors.

Q153: For stakeholder engagement or community consultations, does BPHC anticipate in-person facilitation, or are virtual formats acceptable?

A: The RFP does not establish a general in person, Boston office, or local presence requirement. Delivery expectations will be determined by the needs of each project specific scope of work. Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred, but the RFP does not limit eligibility to Massachusetts based vendors.

SERVICE TRACKS & MULTI-TRACK APPLICATIONS

Q12: The RFP establishes four service tracks, but the Background section states that organizations may apply to "one, two, or all three tracks." Please confirm that respondents may apply to all four tracks, including Grant Writing.

A: There are four service tracks: Communications; Research, Evaluation, and Assessment; Strategy and Planning; and Grant Writing. Applicants may apply to one, multiple, or all four tracks based on their expertise.

Q24: The RFP identifies four service tracks but states that organizations may apply to "one, two, or all three tracks." Could you please confirm that applicants may apply to multiple tracks, including both Strategy and Planning and Research, Evaluation, and Assessment?

A: There are four service tracks: Communications; Research, Evaluation, and Assessment; Strategy and Planning; and Grant Writing. Applicants may apply to one, multiple, or all four tracks based on their expertise.

Q35: The RFP lists four service tracks but states that organizations may apply to "one, two, or all three tracks." Can BPHC confirm whether applicants may apply to any or all of the four tracks?

A: There are four service tracks: Communications; Research, Evaluation, and Assessment; Strategy and Planning; and Grant Writing. Applicants may apply to one, multiple, or all four tracks based on their expertise.

Q63: The RFP states organizations may apply to "one, two, or all three tracks," while four distinct tracks are described (Communications; Research, Evaluation, and Assessment; Strategy and Planning; and Grant Writing). Can BPHC confirm that a bidder can respond to any or all of the four tracks?

A: There are four service tracks: Communications; Research, Evaluation, and Assessment; Strategy and Planning; and Grant Writing. Applicants may apply to one, multiple, or all four tracks based on their expertise.

Q88: The RFP references four service tracks (Communications, Research, Evaluation and Assessment, Strategy and Planning, and Grant Writing) but also states that organizations may apply to "one, two, or all three tracks." Please clarify the number of available tracks and whether applicants may apply to any combination of the four tracks.

A: There are four service tracks: Communications; Research, Evaluation, and Assessment; Strategy and Planning; and Grant Writing. Applicants may apply to one, multiple, or all four tracks based on their expertise.

Q134: The Scope of Services section describes four service tracks — Communications; Research, Evaluation, and Assessment; Strategy and Planning; and Grant Writing — and the Track-Specific Questions section includes questions for all four. However, the Background section states that "Organizations may apply to one, two, or all three tracks." Could you please confirm whether a vendor may apply to all four tracks, including Grant Writing?

A: There are four service tracks: Communications; Research, Evaluation, and Assessment; Strategy and Planning; and Grant Writing. Applicants may apply to one, multiple, or all four tracks based on their expertise.

Q175: Can firms qualify for a single service track, or must respondents demonstrate capability across all four tracks?

A: There are four service tracks: Communications; Research, Evaluation, and Assessment; Strategy and Planning; and Grant Writing. Applicants may apply to one, multiple, or all four tracks based on their expertise.

Q177: is a firm allowed to apply for the Communications track only, or does BPHC expect coverage across multiple tracks?

A: There are four service tracks: Communications; Research, Evaluation, and Assessment; Strategy and Planning; and Grant Writing. Applicants may apply to one, multiple, or all four tracks based on their expertise.

PROPOSAL FORMAT, SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS & PAGE LIMITS

Q3: For two tracks, should the shared organizational sections appear once, followed by separate five-page track responses?

A: Applicants applying to multiple tracks may submit one consolidated proposal. Shared organizational sections should be provided once, with a separate track-specific response for each track pursued. Each track-specific response is limited to five pages.

Q13: For a firm applying to multiple tracks, should we submit one proposal containing multiple track sections, or a separate proposal for each track?

A: Applicants applying to multiple tracks may submit one consolidated proposal. Shared organizational sections should be provided once, with a separate track-specific response for each track pursued. Each track-specific response is limited to five pages.

Q26: If prior-employment project examples contain government, proprietary, or otherwise non-public information, is a narrative description of the work acceptable in lieu of attaching the original work product?

A: A narrative description of the work is acceptable.

Q55: Team and Staffing Structure: For a sole proprietor who expects to perform the consulting services independently, is it acceptable for the proposed team and staffing structure section to identify the individual consultant as the sole project lead/consultant, or does BPHC expect applicants to propose a multi-person team?

A: Yes. The RFP seeks qualified “organizations and consultants” and does not require a multi-person firm. An individual or sole practitioner may apply, provided all applicable qualifications and contracting requirements are met. The staffing section may identify the individual as the sole lead/consultant and should explain capacity to perform the proposed work.

Q66: If an organization applies to more than one track, should the proposal be submitted as a single combined document with all the requirements and an additional 5-page track-specific section for each track pursued or should each track be submitted as a separate, standalone proposal? If the latter, should the submissions be sent in one or multiple emails?

A: Applicants applying to multiple tracks may submit one consolidated proposal. Shared organizational sections should be provided once, with a separate track-specific response for each track pursued. Each track-specific response is limited to five pages.

Q78: Is the 2 page limit for staffing for all tracks or 2 pages PER track?

A: The proposed team and staffing structure section is limited to two pages for the proposal. It should identify key personnel, roles and responsibilities, relevant qualifications, availability/capacity, and how the team will manage and deliver work. For a multi-track proposal, the same section may describe staffing across the tracks pursued.

Q81: Can we include a cover page? Cover letter? Table of contents?

A: The RFP establishes page limits for the required substantive sections and states that examples provided as attachments or hyperlinks do not count toward the track-specific page limit. Applicants should keep supplemental material concise and should not use it to circumvent the stated page limits.

Q87: Can we submit resumes or a bio sheet? If yes, is there a page limit to resumes?

A: The RFP requires a proposed team and staffing structure of no more than two pages but does not specifically require full CVs or establish a separate resume page limit. Concise resumes or bios may be included as supplemental material if useful, but proposers should ensure the required proposal sections remain within the stated limits.

Q90: The Proposal Submission Requirements state that track-specific responses are limited to five pages per track, with each track containing multiple sub-questions. Please confirm whether the five-page limit applies collectively to all questions within a track response.

A: Yes. The five-page limit applies to the complete response for each track, covering all sub-questions within that track.

Q92: Please clarify which materials, if any, are excluded from page limitations, including cover pages, tables of contents, organizational charts, resumes/bios, and other attachments, ages, tables of contents, and section dividers count toward page limits?

A: The RFP requires a proposed team and staffing structure of no more than two pages but does not specifically require full CVs or establish a separate resume page limit. Concise resumes or bios may be included as supplemental material if useful, but proposers should ensure the required proposal sections remain within the stated limits.

Q103: The Proposal Submission Requirements specify 12-point Calibri font. May charts, tables, figures, and graphics use a 10pt font?

A: The RFP requires 12-point Calibri font for proposal submissions and does not provide an exception for charts, tables, figures, or graphics. Proposers should use 12-point Calibri throughout required proposal content. 10pt font can be used for May charts, tables, figures, and graphics.

Q129: Could BPHC provide guidance on the level of detail that should be included in the proposed team and staffing structure section of the proposal?

A: The proposed team and staffing structure section is limited to two pages for the proposal. It should identify key personnel, roles and responsibilities, relevant qualifications, availability/capacity, and how the team will manage and deliver work. For a multi-track proposal, the same section may describe staffing across the tracks pursued.

Q130: Should vendors include full CVs for proposed staff?

A: The RFP requires a proposed team and staffing structure of no more than two pages but does not specifically require full CVs or establish a separate resume page limit. Concise resumes or bios may be included as supplemental material if useful, but proposers should ensure the required proposal sections remain within the stated limits.

Q131: Is there a limit on the number of examples or attachments included as part of the track-specific responses?

A: The RFP does not set a numerical limit on examples or attachments. Examples may be provided by hyperlink or attachment and do not count toward the track-specific page limit. Applicants should include only materials that are directly relevant and reasonably necessary to demonstrate qualifications.

Q162: The RFP notes that examples may be provided via hyperlink and do not count toward page limits. Can hyperlinks be included directly within the narrative, or must they be placed in an appendix?

A: Yes. The RFP expressly permits hyperlinks for examples. Hyperlinks may be included in the relevant narrative. Examples may also be included as attachments and will not count toward the track-specific page limit. Each track-specific response is limited to five pages.

Q164: Should all proposal components be submitted as a single consolidated PDF, or does BPHC prefer separate PDFs for each required section?

A: The RFP requires proposal materials to be submitted as PDF documents by email but does not mandate whether every section must be combined into one PDF or separated. A single, clearly organized consolidated PDF is acceptable, with supplemental examples/attachments provided separately when appropriate.

VENDOR QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE, STAFFING & REFERENCES

Q23: For newly established consulting firms, may the relevant experience and track-specific project examples include comparable work performed by the firm's principal consultant in prior employment, provided the proposal clearly identifies that the work predates the consulting firm?

A: Yes. Relevant experience of proposed key personnel may be used to demonstrate qualifications when it is clearly and accurately attributed to the individual and the organization under which the work was performed. Applicants should not present prior-employment work as work performed by the current firm.

Q41: For an emerging firm, may relevant project examples and professional references reflect work performed by proposed key personnel before the firm's formation, provided that the prior employer, individual responsibilities, and outcomes are clearly attributed rather than represented as HIP corporate experience?

A: The RFP does not provide a specific requirement or commitment on this point. BPHC will address this, as applicable, during proposal evaluation, contracting, or development of a project-specific scope of work. Proposers should respond based on the requirements expressly stated in the RFP.

Q54: If so, may an individual consultant submit under their legal name rather than an incorporated business entity?

A: Yes. The RFP seeks qualified "organizations and consultants" and does not require a multi-person firm. An individual or sole practitioner may apply, provided all applicable qualifications and contracting requirements are met. The staffing section may identify the individual as the sole lead/consultant and should explain capacity to perform the proposed work.

Q57: Prior Experience and Project Examples: For an individual consultant/sole proprietor, may relevant experience and project examples include work the consultant personally performed through a former consulting business or in prior professional roles, provided the proposal clearly identifies the consultant's role and the entity through which the work was performed?

A: Yes. Relevant experience of proposed key personnel may be used to demonstrate qualifications when it is clearly and accurately attributed to the individual and the organization under which the work was performed. Applicants should not present prior-employment work as work performed by the current firm.

Q59: May a firm's proposed lead demonstrate that experience through work performed in an earlier employment role, provided the proposal clearly identifies the employer and does not present the work as a contract held by the applicant firm?

A: Yes. Relevant experience of proposed key personnel may be used to demonstrate qualifications when it is clearly and accurately attributed to the individual and the organization under which the work was performed. Applicants should not present prior-employment work as work performed by the current firm.

Q77: Per the RFP, two professional references are required. Do the two references cover all tracks or does BPHC require 2 references PER track?

A: BPHC requires 2 references for each proposal package submitted.

Q80: What will be requested of/what will contact be like for listed references? Will they receive a phone call, email with questions, survey to complete, etc.?

A: The RFP requires two professional references but does not specify the method, questions or timing by which BPHC may contact them. BPHC may contact references as needed during proposal review

Q104: For purposes of demonstrating relevant experience and past performance, may a proposer include qualifying work performed by the firm's principal prior to the establishment of the current consulting firm, provided the individual's role and the organization under which the work was performed are clearly identified?

A: Yes. Relevant experience of proposed key personnel may be used to demonstrate qualifications when it is clearly and accurately attributed to the individual and the organization under which the work was performed. Applicants should not present prior-employment work as work performed by the current firm.

Q117: Are two references required for the entire proposal or for each selected track?

A: Two professional references are required for the proposal. The RFP does not require two separate references for each track, so one set of two references may support a multi-track proposal.

Q119: Are two references required for the entire proposal or for each selected track?

A: Two professional references are required for the proposal. The RFP does not require two separate references for each track, so one set of two references may support a multi-track proposal.

PRICING, RATES & CONTRACT STRUCTURE

Q8: What pricing structure does BPHC prefer for the one-page pricing submission: hourly rates, fixed-fee ranges by project type, retainer, or another structure?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. There is no specific pricing structure.

Q14: Do the organizational overview, relevant experience, diversity equity and inclusion, proposed team, and pricing sections appear once per proposal, or are they repeated for each track applied to?

A: The RFP requires a one-page response describing the proposer's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion and emphasizes culturally responsive work and knowledge of Boston communities. BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information.

Q15: Given that budgets are negotiated per project after selection, what pricing information does BPHC want at this stage? Hourly rates by staff category, a blended rate, or representative project budgets?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. There is no specific pricing structure.

Q25: For the one-page pricing section, does BPHC have a preferred pricing format, such as hourly rates, daily rates, fixed-fee ranges, or a combination of these?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. There is no specific pricing structure.

Q32: How will the pricing submitted with this RFP be used?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates.

Q33: Will proposed rates remain in effect for the vendor-pool term, or may pricing be negotiated for each project-specific scope?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers

may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates.

Q52: Pricing: Because project-specific scopes, budgets and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, does BPHC prefer the one-page pricing submission to consist primarily of labor categories and hourly rates, or should proposers also provide sample project pricing or other fee structures?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. There is no specific pricing structure.

Q60: For the required pricing page, is an hourly rate schedule by service sufficient, with project-specific budgets negotiated later as described in the RFP?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. There is no specific pricing structure.

Q69: Pricing. The solicitation does not specify pricing submission requirements. What pricing information should respondents provide?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. There is no specific pricing structure.

Q70: Given that this procurement is intended to establish a vendor pool with no guaranteed funding, would it be sufficient to submit labor categories and corresponding hourly rates?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. There is no specific pricing structure.

Q79: What specific information does BPHC want included in the 1-page section for pricing information?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. Final pricing and contract structure will be established for each project-specific engagement.

Q91: Please clarify the expected format and level of detail for the one-page Pricing Information section. In addition, should pricing reflect current rates only, or should vendors account for the potential five-year duration of the consultant pool?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. Final pricing and contract structure will be established for each project-specific engagement.

Q93: For organizations applying to more than one track, should all materials be submitted as a single proposal package? If so, should the organizational overview, qualifications, DEI response, staffing structure, pricing information, and references be provided once or repeated for each track response?

A: Applicants applying to multiple tracks may submit one consolidated proposal. Shared organizational sections should be provided once, with a separate track-specific response for each track pursued. Each track-specific response is limited to five pages.

Q95: For project-specific engagements, does BPHC anticipate utilizing fixed-price, time-and-materials, labor-hour, or other contract structures?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. Final pricing and contract structure will be established for each project-specific engagement.

Q112: Once the pool is established, how will projects be assigned? For example, will all qualified vendors be given the opportunity to compete for each specific project by providing qualifications, approach, and pricing?

A: BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. It does not require a mini-bid, rotation, or competition among every vendor for each assignment. The specific selection approach may vary by project and applicable procurement requirements.

Q113: What types of contracts do you anticipate entering into for specific projects? (fixed price, time-and-materials, etc.)

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. Final pricing and contract structure will be established for each project-specific engagement.

Q114: Will pricing and other information submitted as part of this proposal be released as public record, or will bidders have the opportunity to designate sensitive portions of their proposals as "confidential"?

A: Potential vendors should not submit confidential information. All submissions are subject to the public records law.

Q116: The RFP requires applicants to provide one page of pricing information but does not specify the required format, cost components, or anticipated contract type. Please clarify the contract type for this effort (e.g., time-and-materials, firm-fixed-price, or another structure) and provide additional guidance regarding the pricing section, including the preferred pricing format, required cost components, whether rates may escalate during the potential five-year term, and whether proposed rates will serve as ceiling rates for future work orders.

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. Final pricing and contract structure will be established for each project-specific engagement.

Q118: Should proposers include the required one-page pricing information in the same PDF as the technical proposal, or submit it as a separate attachment?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. It can be included in the proposal.

Q120: Should proposers include the required one-page pricing information in the same PDF as the technical proposal, or submit it as a separate attachment?

A: Yes. Proposers can include the required one-page pricing information in the same PDF. However, the proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. Final pricing and contract structure will be established for each project-specific engagement.

Q121: What pricing format should proposers use for the pricing section?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. Final pricing and contract structure will be established for each project-specific engagement.

Q127: Would BPHC please clarify what type of information they are looking for in the Pricing Information section?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. Final pricing and contract structure will be established for each project-specific engagement.

Q128: Would a table showing staff names, titles, and rates be sufficient?

A: Yes. This is acceptable for this RFP. However, the proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. Final pricing and contract structure will be established for each project-specific engagement.

Q137: Specifically, for the Strategy and Planning Track, should respondents provide hourly rates by role, a range of rates, representative project pricing, or another pricing structure? We understand from the RFP that project-specific scopes of work, budgets, timelines, and deliverables may be negotiated as needs arise, and we would like to ensure our pricing submission is presented in the format most useful to BPHC.

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. Final pricing and contract structure will be established for each project-specific engagement.

Q139: For pricing information, should vendors provide standard hourly/daily rates, fixed-fee examples, or both?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. Final pricing and contract structure will be established for each project-specific engagement.

Q140: Are BPHC's project-specific budgets expected to be developed after vendors are selected and final scope of work is identified?

A: The RFP does not provide a specific requirement or commitment on this point. BPHC will address this, as applicable, during proposal evaluation, contracting, or development of a project-specific scope of work. Proposers should respond based on the requirements expressly stated in the RFP.

Q163: Does BPHC prefer hourly rates, project-based pricing, or tiered pricing structures?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. Final pricing and contract structure will be established for each project-specific engagement.

Q179: For the one-page pricing information requested in the proposal, does BPHC have a preferred format—for example, hourly rates by role, daily/project rates, or representative project pricing?

A: The proposal must include no more than one page of pricing information. Because the RFP states that project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables will be negotiated as needs arise, proposers may provide a clear schedule of standard hourly rates by staff/labor category and may also include other applicable fee structures or representative project rates. Final pricing and contract structure will be established for each project-specific engagement.

EVALUATION, SCORING & SELECTION CRITERIA

Q10: Are Certified Underrepresented Business Enterprise designations used solely for outreach and encouragement, or do they receive evaluation preference or scoring consideration?

A: Yes. BPHCs Certified Underrepresented Business Enterprise (CUBE) designations do receive scoring consideration.

Q11: If preference or scoring is provided, are federal WOSB/EDWOSB certifications or comparable out-of-state MWBE certifications recognized?

A: Comparable out-of-state MWBE certifications are recognized.

Q18: Will proposals be scored against a published rubric? If so, can you share the criteria and the weighting across sections and tracks?

A: The RFP does not publish a weighted scoring rubric or assign numerical weights to proposal sections. Proposals will be reviewed for responsiveness to the stated submission requirements, vendor qualifications, track-specific expertise, relevant experience, capacity, and overall fit with BPHC needs.

Q31: If BPHC uses a competitive process for individual projects, how will vendors be selected? Will selection be based on qualifications, approach, availability, price, past performance, subject-matter expertise, or a combination of these factors?

A: BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. Proposals will be reviewed for responsiveness to the stated submission requirements, vendor qualifications, track-specific expertise, relevant experience, capacity, and overall fit with BPHC needs.

Q62: Are national certifications, such as WBENC WBE, NGLCC LGBTBE, and other diverse-business certifications, recognized for purposes of BPHC's CUBE/diverse-vendor consideration?

A: The RFP strongly encourages submissions from Certified Underrepresented Business Enterprises (CUBE), including minority owned, women owned, veteran owned, disability owned, LGBTQ+-owned businesses, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses.

Q68: What do you look for in a respondent who has clinical depth but is new to Boston?

A: Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is identified as preferred, not mandatory. Applicants should demonstrate relevant local knowledge, experience, partnerships, or a credible approach to learning from and engaging Boston communities.

Q74: Evaluation Criteria. Could the Commission provide the proposal evaluation criteria and the relative weight assigned to each criterion, including whether the technical proposal will be weighted more heavily than price?

A: The RFP does not publish a weighted scoring rubric or assign numerical weights to proposal sections. Proposals will be reviewed for responsiveness to the stated submission requirements,

vendor qualifications, track-specific expertise, relevant experience, capacity, and overall fit with BPHC needs.

Q74: For a recently formed consulting LLC, may the proposal rely on relevant professional experience, references, and work samples of its founder/principal that predate formation of the company, or must the required experience/examples have been performed under the current entity?

A: Yes. Relevant experience of proposed key personnel may be used to demonstrate qualifications when it is clearly and accurately attributed to the individual and the organization under which the work was performed. Applicants should not present prior-employment work as work performed by the current firm.

Q89: What evaluation criteria will be used to assess proposals for inclusion in the qualified vendor pool, and are weighted evaluation factors available?

A: The RFP does not publish a weighted scoring rubric or assign numerical weights to proposal sections. Proposals will be reviewed for responsiveness to the stated submission requirements, vendor qualifications, track-specific expertise, relevant experience, capacity, and overall fit with BPHC needs.

Q96: The RFP notes that knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred and encourages participation from local businesses. Please clarify how applicants should demonstrate this preference and whether local partnerships may be considered when evaluating relevant experience and qualifications.

A: Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is identified as preferred, not mandatory. Applicants should demonstrate relevant local knowledge, experience, partnerships, or a credible approach to learning from and engaging Boston communities. The RFP does not assign a specific numerical weight to this preference.

Q132: Could BPHC please share the scoring criteria for proposals?

A: The RFP does not publish a weighted scoring rubric or assign numerical weights to proposal sections. Proposals will be reviewed for responsiveness to the stated submission requirements, vendor qualifications, track-specific expertise, relevant experience, capacity, and overall fit with BPHC needs.

Q133: How will AI be used in the process of reviewing or scoring proposals, if at all? If AI will be used, will AI be able to read tables and graphics?

A: AI will not be used for reviewing or scoring proposals. Proposals will be reviewed by teams of qualified BPHC staff for responsiveness to the stated submission requirements, vendor qualifications, track-specific expertise, relevant experience, capacity, and overall fit with BPHC needs.

Q138: How does the LGBTQ+-owned business status affect scoring?

A: LGBTQ+ owned businesses can be recognized as part of BPHCs Certified Underrepresented Business Enterprise (CUBE) designations and do receive scoring consideration.

Q156: How will BPHC assess the vendor's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion beyond the required one-page narrative?

A: The RFP requires a one-page response describing the proposer's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion and emphasizes culturally responsive work and knowledge of Boston communities. BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables.

Q157: Are there specific communities or demographic groups BPHC expects vendors to prioritize in communications, evaluation, or planning work?

A: The RFP requires a one-page response describing the proposer's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion and emphasizes culturally responsive work and knowledge of Boston communities. It does not prescribe a separate scoring framework, a mandatory named equity methodology, or a fixed list of priority communities for all projects, project specific priorities will be defined as needs arise.

Q158: Does BPHC require or prefer specific equity-centered frameworks (e.g., trauma-informed practices, anti-racism approaches, community-based participatory methods)?

A: The RFP requires a one-page response describing the proposer's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion and emphasizes culturally responsive work and knowledge of Boston communities. It does not prescribe a separate scoring framework, a mandatory named equity methodology, or a fixed list of priority communities for all projects; project-specific priorities will be defined as needs arise.

VENDOR POOL OPERATIONS & ASSIGNMENT OF WORK

Q1: Are services under the vendor pool eligible to be performed remotely? Specifically, for the Strategy and Planning and Grant Writing tracks, are there any anticipated in-person or local presence requirements?

A: The RFP does not specifically require a general in-person, or local presence. Delivery expectations will be determined by the needs of each project specific scope of work. Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred, but the RFP does not limit eligibility to only Massachusetts based vendors.

Q7: May consultants decline individual project assignments based on capacity, schedule, or scope without affecting their status in the qualified vendor pool?

A: The RFP does not require a qualified vendor to accept every potential assignment. BPHC programs will contact selected vendors as needs arise and negotiate project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables. Status in the qualified vendor pool would not be affected if consultants choose to decline project assignments.

Q16: Is there a cap on the number of vendors admitted to the pool, either overall or per track?

A: The RFP does not establish a cap or target number of vendors for the pool or for any individual track. BPHC may award to more than one vendor and will qualify vendors based on the RFP requirements and BPHC's needs.

Q17: Once the pool is established, how will BPHC route opportunities? Will all pool vendors in a track be notified of a scope, or will program staff select vendors directly?

A: BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables.

Q29: How will project opportunities be assigned once the qualified vendor pool is established? Will BPHC issue an RFQ, mini-bid, or project-specific scope to all pre-qualified vendors in the applicable track, or may a program select and negotiate directly with one vendor?

A: BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. It does not require a mini-bid, rotation, or competition among every vendor for each assignment.

Q30: How will project opportunities be assigned once the qualified vendor pool is established? Will BPHC issue an RFQ, mini-bid, or project-specific scope to all pre-qualified vendors in the applicable track, or may a program select and negotiate directly with one vendor?

A: BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. It does not require a mini-bid, rotation, or competition among every vendor for each assignment.

Q36: Could BPHC clarify the preferred online portal or electronic system for submitting and tracking service requests?

A: The RFP states that an online portal or electronic system for submitting and tracking service requests is preferred, not required. BPHC is seeking an efficient method for managing requests and status information; the RFP does not prescribe a specific platform. Any proposed system should be described in the proposal, with final tools determined based on project and BPHC requirements.

Q38: May an independent sole-practitioner consultant without employees submit a proposal for this vendor pool? If so, should references in the RFP to an “organization,” “company,” and “team/staffing structure” be interpreted as applying to the individual consultant?

A: Yes. The RFP seeks qualified “organizations and consultants” and does not require a multi-person firm. An individual or sole practitioner may apply, provided all applicable qualifications and contracting requirements are met. The staffing section may identify the individual as the sole lead/consultant and should explain capacity to perform the proposed work.

Q53: Individual Consultants/Sole Proprietors: Are individual consultants operating as sole proprietors eligible to apply to the vendor pool?

A: Yes. The RFP seeks qualified “organizations and consultants” and does not require a multi-person firm. An individual or sole practitioner may apply, provided all applicable qualifications and contracting requirements are met. The staffing section may identify the individual as the sole lead/consultant and should explain capacity to perform the proposed work.

Q61: Must an out-of-state vendor complete any Massachusetts or City of Boston registration before admission to the qualified vendor pool?

A: The RFP does not establish a general in-person, Boston-office, or local-presence requirement. Delivery expectations will be determined by the needs of each project specific scope of work. Knowledge of Boston communities and populations is preferred, but the RFP does not limit eligibility to Massachusetts-based vendors.

Q64: The RFP states that BPHC programs will engage pool consultants on an as-needed basis, negotiating project-specific scopes, budgets, and deliverables directly. What is the vendor selection process for a specific engagement?

A: BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. It does not require a mini-bid, rotation, or competition among every vendor for each assignment. The specific selection approach may vary by project and applicable procurement requirements.

Q65: Is this RFP a new procurement, or does it replace or re-compete an existing BPHC consultant vendor pool? If one or more incumbent vendors currently provide services under any of the four tracks, can BPHC identify them?

A: This RFP is a procurement establishing a new pre-qualified consultant vendor pool. BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact

selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. Proposals will be reviewed for responsiveness to the stated submission requirements, vendor qualifications, track-specific expertise, relevant experience, capacity, and overall fit with BPHC needs.

Q71: Issuance of Service Requests. Once the pool is established, how will individual service requests be issued to pre-qualified vendors?

A: BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. It does not require a mini-bid, rotation, or competition among every vendor for each assignment. The specific selection approach may vary by project and applicable procurement requirements.

Q72: Specifically, will BPHC programs compete each request among all vendors qualified in the relevant track, select vendors directly at the program's discretion, rotate among pool members, or use some combination of these approaches?

A: BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. It does not require a mini-bid, rotation, or competition among every vendor for each assignment. The specific selection approach may vary by project and applicable procurement requirements.

Q73: If requests are competed, what materials will vendors typically be asked to provide, and what turnaround should vendors anticipate?

A: BPHC will address this, as applicable, during contracting, or development of a project-specific scope of work. Proposers should respond based on the requirements expressly stated in the RFP. The specific selection approach may vary by project and applicable procurement requirements.

Q82: How many vendors does BPHC anticipate selecting for each track?

A: The RFP does not establish a cap or target number of vendors for the pool or for any individual track. BPHC may award to more than one vendor and will qualify vendors based on the RFP requirements and BPHC's needs.

Q83: Historically, is there a typical range of project sizes and budgets anticipated under each track?

A: The RFP does not guarantee funding and does not provide minimum or typical project values, assignment volumes, durations, annual utilization, or budget ranges at this point. Engagements will be driven by BPHC program needs over the vendor-pool term.

Q94: Following the establishment of the qualified vendor pool, what process will BPHC use to select vendors for specific projects or scopes of work? For example, will work be competed among pool members, or will BPHC select vendors directly for project-specific engagements?

A: BPHC will address this, as applicable, during proposal evaluation, contracting, or development of a project-specific scope of work. Proposers should respond based on the requirements expressly

stated in the RFP. BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables

Q97: The Vendor Qualifications section notes that an online portal or electronic system for submitting and tracking service requests is preferred. Please clarify the intended purpose of this system and whether BPHC expects vendors to provide such functionality.

A: The RFP states that an online portal or electronic system for submitting and tracking service requests is preferred, not required. BPHC is seeking an efficient method for managing requests and status information; the RFP does not prescribe a specific platform. Any proposed system should be described in the proposal, with final tools determined based on project and BPHC requirements.

Q100: Does BPHC have an anticipated target number or range of vendors to be included in the qualified pool for each service track?

A: The RFP does not establish a cap or target number of vendors for the pool or for any individual track. BPHC may award to more than one vendor and will qualify vendors based on the RFP requirements and BPHC's needs.

Q108: Is this a rebid of an existing contract or contracts, or is this a new pool that's being created?

A: This RFP is a procurement establishing a pre-qualified consultant vendor pool. BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. Proposals will be reviewed for responsiveness to the stated submission requirements, vendor qualifications, track-specific expertise, relevant experience, capacity, and overall fit with BPHC needs.

Q109: If it's an existing contract, would you mind sharing the list of vendors who are in the current pool?

A: This is new procurement. BPHC will not publish a list of vendors in the current pool at this time.

Q110: How many vendors does the City anticipate selecting for inclusion in the pool?

A: The RFP does not establish a cap or target number of vendors for the pool or for any individual track. BPHC may award to more than one vendor and will qualify vendors based on the RFP requirements and BPHC's needs.

Q111: How many discrete projects would you estimate that the City is likely to pursue with this pool of vendors over the next five years, and what would be a typical dollar value or range for these projects?

A: The RFP does not guarantee funding and does not provide minimum or typical project values, assignment volumes, durations, annual utilization, or budget ranges. Engagements will be driven by BPHC program needs over the vendor-pool term.

Q115: Can we clarify the meaning of this statement in the RFP: "An online portal or electronic system for submitting and tracking service requests is preferred". We know the proposal should be

submitted via email, but we are not clear what online or electronic portal BPHC is referring to in this statement on page 5 of the RFP.

A: The RFP states that an online portal or electronic system for submitting and tracking service requests is preferred, not required. BPHC is seeking an efficient method for managing requests and status information; the RFP does not prescribe a specific platform. Any proposed system should be described in the proposal, with final tools determined based on project and BPHC requirements.

Q122: Can BPHC provide historical or anticipated information about the number of assignments, typical project duration, and approximate budget range for projects under each track?

A: The RFP does not guarantee funding and does not provide minimum or typical project values, assignment volumes, durations, annual utilization, or budget ranges. Engagements will be driven by BPHC program needs over the vendor-pool term. BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. It does not require a mini-bid, rotation, or competition among every vendor for each assignment. The specific selection approach may vary by project and applicable procurement requirements.

Q123: Are there any incumbent vendors currently providing the services covered by this RFP? If so, who are they?

A: This is a new procurement. BPHC will not publish a list of vendors in the current pool at this time.

Q125: Will vendors be required to complete any Boston Jobs, Living Wage, and Prevailing Wage Ordinance forms upon selection for the vendor pool? If yes, could BPHC please specify which forms vendors will need to complete?

A: The RFP does not specify the completion of any of these forms upon selection for the vendor pool. Any vendor must comply with applicable BPHC policies, confidentiality, data-security, intellectual-property, and contractual requirements, and the vendor remains responsible for the accuracy and quality of all deliverables.

Q126: RFP page 5 lists the contract term for the pre-qualified pool as “up to five years.” Could BPHC please clarify the expected start and end dates of the contract?

A: The anticipated pre-qualified vendor-pool period is five years, with an option to extend at BPHC’s discretion. The RFP does not provide fixed start and end dates of specific contracts; resulting contracts become effective after all necessary contract documentation is fully executed.

Q146: Can BPHC share anticipated project volume or typical frequency of vendor engagement across the Communications, Research/Evaluation, and Strategy & Planning tracks?

A: The RFP does not guarantee funding and does not provide minimum or typical project values, assignment volumes, durations, annual utilization, or budget ranges. Engagements will be driven by BPHC program needs over the vendor-pool term.

Q147: Are there typical budget ranges or project durations for engagements under each track?

A: The RFP does not guarantee funding and does not provide minimum or typical project values, assignment volumes, durations, annual utilization, or budget ranges. Engagements will be driven by BPHC program needs over the vendor-pool term.

Q148: Once the vendor pool is established, will BPHC issue competitive mini-bids for each project, or will bureaus directly select vendors from the pool?

A: The RFP states that BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. It does not require a mini-bid, rotation, or competition among every vendor for each assignment. The specific selection approach may vary by project and applicable procurement requirements.

Q149: Are there priority public health initiatives or bureaus expected to drive most vendor needs over the next 12–24 months?

A: The RFP does not identify a forecast of specific upcoming engagements. The Strategy and Planning Track may include strategic planning, organizational or programmatic assessments, implementation plans, performance measurement, stakeholder/community engagement, program design, policy development, cross-sector planning, and related reports or frameworks. BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. It does not require a mini-bid, rotation, or competition among every vendor for each assignment. The specific selection approach may vary by project and applicable procurement requirements.

Q150: What is the typical timeline for developing project-specific scopes of work once a vendor is contacted?

A: The RFP does not provide a specific requirement or commitment on this point. BPHC will address this, as applicable, during proposal evaluation, contracting, or development of a project-specific scope of work. Proposers should respond based on the requirements expressly stated in the RFP.

Q178: Approximately how many vendors does BPHC anticipate qualifying for the Communications Track?

A: The RFP does not establish a cap or target number of vendors for the pool or for any individual track. BPHC may award to more than one vendor and will qualify vendors based on the RFP requirements and BPHC's needs.

CONTRACTING, REGISTRATION, COMPLIANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Q2: Is active SAM entity registration required at the proposal stage, or is BPHC confirming

only that the proposer and its principals have no active federal exclusions?

A: The RFP requires BPHC to confirm through SAM that a vendor and its principals are not suspended, debarred, excluded, disqualified, or otherwise ineligible for covered federal transactions. An active SAM entity registration is not required at proposal submission. Having a UEI issued is preferred. Any additional registration requirement applicable to a specific award including an active SAM will be addressed during contracting.

Q4: Is the BPHC standard contract available for review before submission?

A: BPHC standard contract can be found online at www.boston.gov.

Q9: Will the BPHC Standard Contract (template) be made available for review prior to the proposal submission deadline?

A: BPHC standard contract can be found online at www.boston.gov.

Q20: Must System for Award Management registration be active at the time of proposal submission, or at the time of contract execution?

A: The RFP requires BPHC to confirm through SAM that a vendor and its principals are not suspended, debarred, excluded, disqualified, or otherwise ineligible for covered federal transactions. An active SAM entity registration is not required at proposal submission. Having a UEI issued is preferred. Any additional registration requirement applicable to a specific award including an active SAM will be addressed during contracting.

Q27: Are non-U.S. / international independent consultants eligible to submit for the pool if they can meet the substantive qualifications and contract requirements?

A: This RFP does not expressly restrict eligibility to U.S. based consultants. However, any selected vendor must be able to satisfy BPHC contracting, legal, tax, insurance, compliance, and payment requirements applicable to the engagement. Eligibility will be confirmed during contracting.

Q28: Is active SAM.gov registration required at proposal submission, or only if/when selected for a covered contract or subaward?

A: The RFP requires BPHC to confirm through SAM that a vendor and its principals are not suspended, debarred, excluded, disqualified, or otherwise ineligible for covered federal transactions. An active SAM entity registration is not required at proposal submission. Having a UEI issued is preferred. Any additional registration requirement applicable to a specific award including an active SAM will be addressed during contracting.

Q34: Will selected vendors receive one master agreement covering their approved service track(s), with project-specific scopes or work orders issued as needed, or will each project require a separate contract?

A: Each project would require a separate contract if all requirements were met for each track.

Q36: Is the vendor expected to maintain this system, and would platforms such as Microsoft 365/SharePoint, Microsoft Forms, Smartsheet, Monday.com, or similar tools meet this preference?

A: The RFP states that an online portal or electronic system for submitting and tracking service requests is preferred, not required. BPHC is seeking an efficient method for managing requests and status information; the RFP does not prescribe a specific platform. Any proposed system should be described in the proposal, with final tools determined based on project and BPHC requirements.

Q40: Can signatures, contracting, and required supporting documents also be completed entirely electronically, without an in-person or mailed step?

A: The RFP does not specifically require a general in-person, or local presence. Signatures, contracting and required supporting documents can be submitted electronically.

Q43: Finally, do the September 10 and September 30 deadlines mean 5:00 p.m. prevailing Boston local time? The RFP uses “EST.”

A: For purposes of this procurement, the stated 5:00 PM deadline will be treated as 5:00 PM Boston local time on the applicable due date.

Q56: SAM Registration: Does an applicant need to have an active System for Award Management (SAM) registration at the time of proposal submission, or is the SAM language in the RFP limited to BPHC's verification that a vendor and its principals are not suspended, debarred, or otherwise excluded from federal transactions?

A: The RFP requires BPHC to confirm through SAM that a vendor and its principals are not suspended, debarred, excluded, disqualified, or otherwise ineligible for covered federal transactions. An active SAM entity registration is not required at proposal submission. Having a UEI issued is preferred. Any additional registration requirement applicable to a specific award including an active SAM will be addressed during contracting.

Q102: Beyond the requirements identified in the RFP, are there any additional onboarding, registration, insurance, compliance, reporting, or contracting requirements that selected vendors should anticipate prior to receiving project-specific work assignments?

A: The RFP identifies SAM exclusion verification, and BPHC Standard Contract as applicable requirements. UEI number is preferred. If applicable, additional onboarding, registration, insurance, compliance, reporting, or contracting requirements will be addressed during contracting or in project-specific scopes.

Q124: RFP page 3 states, “BPHC Standard Contract: Awarded vendor(s) will be subject to the terms and conditions outlined in the contract, which define obligations and responsibilities.” Could BPHC please share a copy of the BPHC Standard Contract?

A: BPHC standard contract can be found online at www.boston.gov.

Q152: Does BPHC have preferred collaboration formats (e.g., standing meetings, asynchronous review cycles, shared platforms)?

A: The RFP does not suggest a standard collaboration format or platform. Meetings, review cycles, and shared tools will be established for each project based on the scope and BPHC program needs.

Q155: The RFP notes that an online portal is preferred. Is this a requirement for vendors, or simply an optional enhancement?

A: The RFP states that an online portal or electronic system for submitting and tracking service requests is preferred, not required. BPHC is seeking an efficient method for managing requests and status information; the RFP does not prescribe a specific platform. Any proposed system should be described in the proposal, with final tools determined based on project and BPHC requirements.

Q159: Does the Living Wage Ordinance apply to all vendor staff or only those whose time is billed directly to BPHC projects?

A: The Living Wage Ordinance applies to only staff whose time is billed directly to BPHC projects.

Q161: If applying to multiple tracks, may the same project example be referenced in more than one track-specific section?

A: Applicants applying to multiple tracks may submit one consolidated proposal. Shared organizational sections should be provided once, with a separate track-specific response for each track pursued. Each track-specific response is limited to five pages.

Q181: If narrower research-only vendors are eligible, are there minimum reference, certification, insurance, or Massachusetts-registration requirements that apply at the pool-admission stage?

A: The RFP identifies SAM exclusion verification, and BPHC Standard Contract as applicable requirements. A UEI number is preferred. If applicable, additional onboarding, registration, insurance, compliance, reporting, or contracting requirements will be addressed during contracting or in project-specific scopes. Two professional references are required for the proposal. The RFP does not require two separate references for each track, so one set of two references may support a multi-track proposal.

SUBCONTRACTORS, TEAMING & PARTNERS

Q19: The Vendor Qualifications section lists knowledge of Boston communities and populations as preferred. How is that weighted in evaluation, and does BPHC view a teaming arrangement with a Boston-based partner as satisfying that preference?

A: The RFP does not publish a weighted scoring rubric or assign numerical weights to proposal sections. Proposals will be reviewed for responsiveness to the stated submission requirements, vendor qualifications, track-specific expertise, relevant experience, capacity, and overall fit with BPHC needs.

Q50: Specialized subcontractors / project-specific teaming: May a pre-qualified Communications Track vendor engage specialized subcontractors or team members for particular assignments—such as digital production, design or audiovisual support—when those capabilities are required by an individual scope of work?

A: The RFP does not prohibit subcontracting, teaming, or joint approaches. Any proposed arrangement should clearly identify the prime/lead entity, the roles and qualifications of partners or subcontractors, and how work will be managed. Final subcontracting arrangements remain subject to BPHC approval and the applicable contract requirements.

Q51: If so, must those firms be identified in the initial proposal, or may they be proposed at the project-specific stage?

A: BPHC will address this, as applicable, during the contracting, or development of a project-specific scope of work. Proposers should respond based on the requirements expressly stated in the RFP.

Q101: If a proposal includes subcontractors or teaming partners, what information should be included regarding those entities? Additionally, may an organization submit its own proposal as a prime contractor while also participating as a subcontractor or teaming partner on another proposal?

A: The RFP does not prohibit subcontracting, teaming, or joint approaches. Any proposed arrangement should clearly identify the prime/lead entity, the roles and qualifications of partners or subcontractors, and how work will be managed. Final subcontracting arrangements remain subject to BPHC approval and the applicable contract requirements.

Q106: If a vendor is selected for the qualified pool, may it perform specialized services outside its core capabilities in partnership with subcontractors or other qualified professionals as part of a future project scope?

A: BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. It does not require a mini-bid, rotation, or competition among every vendor for each assignment. The specific selection approach may vary by project and applicable procurement requirements.

Q160: Does BPHC permit subcontracting or joint proposals between multiple organizations within the vendor pool?

A: The RFP does not prohibit subcontracting, teaming, or joint approaches. Any proposed arrangement should clearly identify the prime/lead entity, the roles and qualifications of partners or subcontractors, and how work will be managed. Final subcontracting arrangements remain subject to BPHC approval and the applicable contract requirements.

Q165: Will BPHC accept proposals submitted jointly by two organizations applying together for the same track(s)?

A: The RFP does not prohibit subcontracting, teaming, or joint approaches. Any proposed arrangement should clearly identify the prime/lead entity, the roles and qualifications of partners or subcontractors, and how work will be managed. Final subcontracting arrangements remain subject to BPHC approval and the applicable contract requirements.

TRACK-SPECIFIC: COMMUNICATIONS

Q44: Our work spans digital marketing, SEO, paid media, lead generation and web strategy, so the communications track caught my attention. Is Cruzian eligible to be considered for the communications portion of the pool?

A: Cruzian must meet all the eligibility requirements in the RFP to be considered. Vendors must comply with applicable BPHC policies, confidentiality, data-security, intellectual-property, and contractual requirements, and the vendor remains responsible for the accuracy and quality of all deliverables.

Q45: Cruzian works across digital marketing, campaign strategy, social content and audience engagement. Would a focused capabilities note for the Communications track be useful before we prepare a formal response?

A: No. A focused capability note submission is not required before vendors prepare a formal response.

Q46: Cruzian supports digital marketing, SEO, paid media, social media, websites and lead generation. Would it be helpful for us to review the Communications track requirements and submit qualifications for that pool?

A: Cruzian must meet all the eligibility requirements in the RFP to be considered. Vendors must comply with applicable BPHC policies, confidentiality, data-security, intellectual-property, and contractual requirements, and the vendor remains responsible for the accuracy and quality of all deliverables.

Q49: Range of services within the Communications Track: The Communications Track lists services that “may include, but are not limited to” strategy, culturally responsive messaging, campaigns, media relations, public information, content production and evaluation. May vendors qualify based on demonstrated strength in selected communications disciplines, or does BPHC expect every approved Communications Track vendor to provide the full range of listed services?

A: The listed services are illustrative and are introduced as services that “may include, but are not limited to.” Vendors may apply based on demonstrated expertise within the Communications Track and should clearly identify the specific services they are qualified to provide. BPHC does not require every vendor to perform every listed communications service.

Q58: The vendor qualifications allow experience supporting nonprofit initiatives, while Communications question (a) asks about public-health or government organizations. Can an applicant qualify through nonprofit communications experience without prior public-health or government clients?

A: Yes. The Vendor Qualifications require previous experience supporting public health, nonprofit, or government initiatives. Relevant nonprofit experience may satisfy this qualification. Applicants should still respond directly to the track-specific questions and demonstrate how their experience is applicable to BPHC’s public health work.

Q76: For Communications Track work, is responsible use of generative AI permitted as an internal research/drafting/editing productivity aid when its use complies with BPHC requirements, all deliverables are human-reviewed and quality-controlled, and the vendor remains fully accountable for the final work?

A: The RFP does not specify the use of artificial intelligence by either BPHC or vendors. Any vendor use of AI must comply with applicable BPHC policies, confidentiality, data-security, intellectual-property, and contractual requirements, and the vendor remains responsible for the accuracy and quality of all deliverables.

Q105: For the Communications track, are vendors expected to demonstrate capability in every service area listed under the track, including website design/development and production-related services, or may a vendor qualify based on demonstrated expertise in specific areas such as communications strategy, messaging, stakeholder engagement, public information, and related advisory services?

A: The listed services are illustrative and are introduced as services that “may include, but are not limited to.” Vendors may apply based on demonstrated expertise within the Communications Track and should clearly identify the specific services they are qualified to provide. BPHC does not require every vendor to perform every listed communications service.

Q166: Will BPHC provide brand guidelines or messaging frameworks for use in campaign development?

A: Yes, BPHC will provide brand guidelines and messaging frameworks,

Q167: Should vendors anticipate managing media buying, or is BPHC seeking creative/content development only?

A: The Communications Track includes development and implementation of campaigns across print, digital, social media, and audiovisual platforms, but the RFP does not specifically require media buying. Any paid-media responsibilities will be defined in the project-specific scope.

Q168: Are there preferred digital, social, or analytics platforms BPHC uses for communications campaigns?

A: No. There are no preferred platforms. Applicable vendors must comply with applicable BPHC policies, confidentiality, data-security, intellectual-property, and contractual requirements, and the vendor remains responsible for the accuracy and quality of all deliverables. BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables.

Q176: Is the Communications track open to firms proposing primarily within those digital disciplines, or does BPHC expect respondents to cover the full communications scope?

A: The listed services are illustrative and are introduced as services that “may include, but are not limited to.” Vendors may apply based on demonstrated expertise within the Communications Track and should clearly identify the specific services they are qualified to provide. BPHC does not require every vendor to perform every listed communications service.

TRACK-SPECIFIC: RESEARCH, EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT

Q98: For projects involving research, evaluation, assessment, or analytics, can BPHC provide additional information regarding the types of datasets that may be available to contractors or incorporated into project-specific scopes of work? Additionally, should vendors anticipate any specific data-sharing, confidentiality, security, or protected health information (PHI) requirements beyond those addressed in the resulting contract?

A: Vendors must comply with applicable BPHC policies, confidentiality, data-security, intellectual-property, and contractual requirements, and the vendor remains responsible for the accuracy and quality of all deliverables.

Q141: For surveys or other data collection activities, would we be working under BPHC's IRB or designate or could we go through our own institutional IRB?

A: The RFP does not assign responsibility for IRB review. For any project involving human subjects research, the appropriate IRB, review pathway, roles, and approvals will be determined in the project specific scope based on the nature of the work and applicable requirements. BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. It does not require a mini-bid, rotation, or competition among every vendor for each assignment. The specific selection approach may vary by project and applicable procurement requirements.

Q151: For evaluation or research projects, will BPHC provide access to historical program data, prior evaluations, or internal dashboards?

A: The RFP does not identify specific datasets or guarantee access to historical data or internal dashboards. Data access, confidentiality, security, PHI handling, and any data sharing requirements will be defined in the project-specific scope and resulting contract, as applicable.

Q169: Does BPHC prefer specific evaluation models (e.g., CDC Evaluation Framework, RE-AIM, Results-Based Accountability)?

A: No. There are no preferred specific evaluation models. Applicable vendors must comply with applicable BPHC policies, confidentiality, data-security, intellectual-property, and contractual requirements, and the vendor remains responsible for the accuracy and quality of all deliverables. BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables.

Q170: For evaluation activities involving human subjects, will BPHC manage IRB submissions, or is this the responsibility of the vendor?

A: The RFP does not assign responsibility for IRB review. For any project involving human-subjects research, the appropriate IRB, review pathway, roles, and approvals will be determined in the project-specific scope based on the nature of the work and applicable requirements.

Q171: Are there specific data security or confidentiality protocols vendors must follow when handling BPHC data?

A: The RFP does not identify specific datasets or guarantee access to historical data or internal dashboards. Data access, confidentiality, security, PHI handling, and any data-sharing requirements will be defined in the project-specific scope and resulting contract, as applicable.

Q180: For the Research, Evaluation & Assessment track, may a small consulting firm qualify specifically for desk research, market/landscape research, source-backed evidence synthesis, organization/stakeholder mapping, and structured research workbooks, or does eligibility require direct public-health program evaluation credentials and prior public-health evaluation engagements?

A: The Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Track includes research as well as evaluation. A vendor may demonstrate expertise in research activities relevant to the track but must also meet the general qualification of previous experience supporting public health, nonprofit, or government initiatives and respond to the track-specific questions applicable to its proposed services. The specific selection approach may vary by project and applicable procurement requirements.

TRACK-SPECIFIC: STRATEGY & PLANNING

Q21: For newer consulting firms applying to the Strategy and Planning Track, may relevant experience, strategic planning projects, and organizational assessments completed by the firm's principal/key personnel prior to formation of the firm be included to demonstrate the firm's qualifications and experience?

A: Yes. Relevant experience of proposed key personnel may be used to demonstrate qualifications when it is clearly and accurately attributed to the individual and the organization under which the work was performed.

Q84: What types of strategic planning engagements does BPHC anticipate most frequently? - Bureau-wide strategic plans?

- Program-specific implementation plans?
- Community health planning?
- Organizational assessments?

A: The RFP does not identify a forecast of specific upcoming engagements. The Strategy and Planning Track may include strategic planning, organizational or programmatic assessments, implementation plans, performance measurement, stakeholder/community engagement, program design, policy development, cross-sector planning, and related reports or frameworks. BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables

Q85: Are there any upcoming strategic initiatives or planning efforts that BPHC anticipates procuring through this pool?

A: The RFP does not identify a forecast of specific upcoming engagements. The Strategy and Planning Track may include strategic planning, organizational or programmatic assessments, implementation plans, performance measurement, stakeholder/community engagement, program design, policy development, cross-sector planning, and related reports or frameworks. BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables

Q142: Would planning activities be with local grantees/partners or focused on designing approaches for BPHC staff to use with those grantees/partners?

A: BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. It does not require a mini-bid, rotation, or competition among every vendor for each assignment. The specific selection approach may vary by project and applicable procurement requirements.

The Strategy and Planning Track includes stakeholder engagement, community consultations, cross-sector partnerships, and collaborative planning. Whether work is conducted directly with grantees/partners or supports BPHC staff, and the applicable review/approval process, will be defined in each project-specific scope.

Q143: If the work is directly with local grantees/partners, what is the usual BPHC review process for approving planning processes and/or local strategic plans?

A: BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. It does not require a mini-bid, rotation, or competition among every vendor for each assignment. The specific selection approach may vary by project and applicable procurement requirements.

The Strategy and Planning Track includes stakeholder engagement, community consultations, cross-sector partnerships, and collaborative planning. Whether work is conducted directly with grantees/partners or supports BPHC staff, and the applicable review/approval process, will be defined in each project-specific scope.

Q145: The RFP states that selected vendors must have previous experience supporting public health, nonprofit, or government initiatives. For the Strategy and Planning Track, is direct prior experience within one of those three sectors a mandatory eligibility requirement at the time of application, or may BPHC also consider comparable strategy, organizational assessment, stakeholder engagement, implementation planning, and performance-measurement experience from pharmaceutical, life sciences, medical-device, healthcare technology, and other regulated health-sector environments?

A: The RFP requires previous experience supporting public health, nonprofit, or government initiatives. Comparable regulated health sector experience may strengthen a proposal but does not replace the stated requirement. Applicants should clearly demonstrate qualifying experience in at least one of the listed sectors.

Q154: Are there existing templates for reports, communication materials, evaluation frameworks, or strategic planning deliverables that vendors are expected to use?

A: No. BPHC does not have any existing templates for reports to publish at this point.

Q172: Should strategic plans align with citywide public health priorities or bureau-specific frameworks?

A: Strategic planning may support individual programs, bureaus, cross-bureau initiatives, or broader BPHC priorities. The required alignment and participating groups will be defined in each project-specific scope.

Q173: Does BPHC anticipate planning processes that involve multiple bureaus simultaneously?

A: Strategic planning may support individual programs, bureaus, cross-bureau initiatives, or broader BPHC priorities. The required alignment and participating groups will be defined in each project-specific scope. BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables.

Q174: How does BPHC define successful implementation support after strategic plans are delivered?

A: The Strategy and Planning Track includes implementation plans, performance measurement frameworks, and support for implementation and monitoring after plans are developed. Success

measures will be defined for each engagement based on agreed deliverables, milestones, indicators, and program needs.

TRACK-SPECIFIC: GRANT WRITING

Q6: Does BPHC anticipate any minimum or typical project value, number of grant writing assignments, or annual utilization for consultants selected for the Grant Writing Track?

A: BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. This RFP does not anticipate any minimum or typical project value or annual utilization for consultants.

Q86: Does BPHC primarily anticipate support for:

- Federal grant applications?
- State grants?
- Foundation funding?
- Municipal or other funding sources?

A: The Grant Writing Track is not limited to a single funder type. BPHC may seek support for competitive applications from federal, state, private, foundation, municipal, or other funding sources as program needs and opportunities arise.

Q99: For vendors selected under the Grant Writing Track, would participation in the development of a grant application preclude that vendor from subsequently performing work funded through that grant award?

A: The RFP does not state that grant-development participation automatically precludes a vendor from later performing grant-funded work. Any future engagement would be reviewed for applicable procurement, conflict-of-interest, funder, and contract requirements.

Q136: Does the Grant Writing Track encompass only grant-seeking activities (e.g., identifying opportunities and developing applications for external funding), or does it also include support for administering competitive grant programs operated by BPHC, including funding opportunity design, application review, and related grants management functions?

A: The Grant Writing Track is not limited to a single funder type. BPHC may seek support for competitive applications from federal, state, private, foundation, municipal, or other funding sources as program needs and opportunities arise. The RFP states that BPHC programs and bureaus will engage pre-qualified vendors as project needs arise and will contact selected vendors to develop project-specific scopes of work and negotiate budgets and deliverables. It does not require a mini-bid, rotation, or competition among every vendor for each assignment. The specific selection approach may vary by project and applicable procurement requirements.

Q144: Will this work be limited to proposal development, or could assignments include post-award support such as grant modifications, reporting, budget revisions, or funder communications?

A: The Grant Writing Track is primarily written as pre-award proposal development support. The RFP does not specifically include post-award grant administration, modifications, reporting, or budget revisions. Any such need would have to be defined in a project-specific scope consistent with the resulting contract.