



Maryland Health Benefit Exchange

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
MHBE Full-Service Communications and
Marketing Services

SOLICITATION NO.: BPM040600

Issue Date: November 09th, 2023

NOTICE

A Prospective Offeror who has received this document from the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange's website, <https://emaryland.buyspeed.com/bsol/>, or a source other than the Procurement Officer, and who wishes to assure receipt of any changes or additional materials related to this RFP should immediately contact the Procurement Officer and provide the Prospective Offeror's name and mailing address so that addenda to the RFP or other communications can be sent to the Prospective Offeror.

Minority Business Enterprises are encouraged to respond to this solicitation.

**STATE OF MARYLAND NOTICE TO
OFFERORS/CONTRACTORS**

In order to help us improve the quality of State Proposals solicitations, and to make our procurement process more responsive and business friendly, we ask that you take a few minutes to provide comments and suggestions regarding the enclosed solicitation. Please return your comments with your Proposals. If you have chosen not to submit a Proposal on this Contract, please email this completed form to hix.procurement@maryland.gov

Title: MHBE Full-Service Communications and Marketing Services
Project No: BPM040600

1. If you have responded with a “no proposal,” please indicate the reason(s) below:

- Other commitments preclude our participation at this time.
- The subject of the solicitation is not something we ordinarily provide.
- We are inexperienced in the work/commodities required.
- Specifications are unclear, too restrictive, etc. (Explain in the REMARKS section.)
- The scope of work is beyond our present capacity.
- Doing business with the State of Maryland is simply too complicated. (Explain in REMARKS section.)
- We cannot be competitive. (Explain in the REMARKS section.)
- Time allotted for completion of the Proposal is insufficient.
- Start-up time is insufficient.
- Bonding/Insurance requirements are restrictive. (Explain in the REMARKS section.)
- Proposal requirements (other than specifications) are unreasonable or too risky. (Explain in REMARKS section.)
- MBE or VSBE requirements. (Explain in REMARKS section.)
- Prior State of Maryland contract experience was unprofitable or otherwise unsatisfactory. (Explain in REMARKS section.)
- Payment schedule is too slow.
- Other: _____

2. If you have submitted a Proposal, but wish to offer suggestions or express concerns, please use the Remarks section below.

REMARKS:

Vendor Name: _____ Date: _____

Contact Person: _____ Phone (____) _____ - _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

**STATE OF MARYLAND
Maryland Health Benefit Exchange
RFP KEY INFORMATION SUMMARY SHEET**

Request for Proposals: MHBE Full-Service Communications and Marketing Services

Solicitation Number: BPM040600

RFP Issue Date: November 09, 2023

RFP Issuing Office: Maryland Health Benefit Exchange

Procurement Officer: Shirelle Green
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Baltimore, MD 21202
Hix.procurement@maryland.gov

Contract Monitor: Betsy Plunkett
Director, Marketing and Web Strategies
750 East Pratt Street, 6th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202

Proposals are to be sent via email to: via eMMA only emma.maryland.gov

Pre-Proposal Conference: November 17th, 2023, 10:00 AM local Time
Via Google Meet:

Friday, November 17 · 10:00 – 11:00am
Time zone: est.
Google Meet joining info
Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/wpk-csox-ayj>
Or dial: (US) +1 657-221-9259 PIN: 173 717 289#

Questions and Answer: Submit by November 27, 2023@ 10am

Proposal Due (Closing) Date and Time: December 11, 2023, at 10:00 AM Local Time

MBE Subcontracting Goal: 10% (excluding pass-through media buy)

Contract Type: Time and Material

Contract Duration: Three-Year Base term with 2 One-Year Options

Federal Funding: Yes

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SECTION 1 – MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

1 Offeror Minimum Qualifications

The Offeror must provide proof with its Proposal that the following Minimum Qualifications have been met:

- 1.1 The Offeror’s place of business, where the main account team services this Contract, shall be located within a 100-mile radius of ZIP code 21202. As proof of meeting this requirement, the Offeror shall provide with its Proposal the address of the proposed place of business where the main account team serving this Contract shall be located.
- 1.2 The Offeror shall have experience developing and designing integrated advertising campaigns (print, radio, television, outdoor, mobile, social/digital, etc.) to launch statewide awareness initiatives. As proof, the Offeror shall provide with its Proposal three references from the past five years that collectively attest to the Offeror’s experience. In addition, please provide at least two samples of print and or digital campaigns.
- 1.3 The Offeror shall have experience developing and executing public relations campaigns in the health care, behavioral change or consumer product categories. As proof, the Offeror shall provide

with its Proposal three references from the past five years who collectively attest to the Offeror's experience.

- 1.4 The Offeror shall have experience with projects or marketing/communications campaigns involving outreach and education to diverse or hard-to-reach populations. As proof, the Offeror shall provide with its Proposal three references from the past five years that collectively attest to the Offeror's experience. All references must be on company's letterhead, date of services and nature of the project.

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SECTION 2 – CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS: SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 Summary Statement

- 2.1.1 The Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to provide full-service Communications and Marketing services to support Maryland's health insurance marketplace.
- 2.1.2 It is the MHBE's intention to obtain services, as specified in this RFP, from a Contract between the selected Offeror and the State. The anticipated duration of services to be provided under this Contract is a three-year base period, starting on or about July 1, 2024, running through June 30th, 2027, with two one-year options exercised at the sole discretion of the MHBE. The Option years will run from July 1, 2027, to June 30th, 2028 and Option year two will run from July 1, 2028 to June 30th, 2029.
- 2.1.3 The MHBE intends to make a single award as a result of this RFP. See RFP Section 4.13 for more Contract award information.

- 2.1.4 An Offeror, either directly or through its subcontractor(s), must be able to provide all services and meet all of the requirements requested in this solicitation, and the successful Offeror (the Contractor) shall remain responsible for Contract performance regardless of subcontractor participation in the work.

2.2 Background and Purpose

2.2.1 Background

The Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) was established in April 2011 in accordance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA). Beginning in October 2013, MHBE, in partnership with the Maryland Department of Health and private health insurance companies in the State, began offering a range of health insurance options for individuals and small businesses through [Maryland Health Connection](#), the state-based health insurance marketplace. MHBE recently concluded its 11th open enrollment period that ran from Nov. 1, 2023 to Jan. 15, 2024. More than 180,000 Marylanders enrolled in private health coverage for 2023. Maryland's success during the most recent open enrollment was recognized in state and national media:

- [WMDT-TV Ch. 47](#) Open Enrollment for MD Health Connection Begins Nov. 1
Need health insurance? Open enrollment for Maryland's marketplace starts next week
- [WYPR 88.1 FM](#) State gears up for open enrollment for health insurance exchange
- [MD Daily Record](#) Open Enrollment for Obamacare Plans Begin Today in Maryland
- [The Baltimore Sun](#) Open Enrollment for Health Plans Is Now Open (through Jan. 15)
- [Eye on Annapolis](#) Sign Up For Health Coverage Through the State
- [WBFF-TV Fox 45](#) American Marketing Association-Baltimore: [Achieving the 'Unexpected': GMMB and the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange See Big Enrollment Gains with Targeted Campaign](#)

In its first 10 years, Maryland Health Connection helped to cut the state's uninsured rate to an all-time low of 6%, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, from 14% or higher where it remained for many years prior to the establishment of the ACA. Today, more than 430,000 Marylanders are covered due to the ACA — 100,000+ in private health plans with help from federal tax credits and an additional 315,000 due to the expansion of Medicaid.

In 2023, Maryland's enrollment was tied for third in the nation (with AL, behind DC and UT) in the percentage of young adult enrollments (ages 18-34). About 1.3 million Marylanders — 1 of every 5 residents — are now insured through Maryland Health Connection, including most of the state's Medicaid enrollees. MHBE has continually worked to refine the consumer experience by improving the [MarylandHealthConnection.gov](#) website for ease of use and offering a mobile app, which allows end-to-end enrollment in both private coverage and Medicaid. Nearly 1,000 consumer assistance workers and insurance brokers across the state offer free, in-person enrollment assistance. MHBE continues in its mission to offer affordable health insurance to all Marylanders.

Challenges remain to continue gaining coverage for uninsured Marylanders, including:

1. Changes needed to stabilize the marketplace and hold down rate increases for the individual market as it covers people with pre-existing conditions previously omitted.

2. Continued gaps in awareness and health insurance literacy, especially among groups that historically have had high uninsured rates including young adults, Blacks and Hispanics. A strong, detailed, measurable plan of outreach to these groups is critical to the mission.
3. Reaching uninsured in rural areas with higher rates of uninsured, including the Eastern Shore and Southern regions, despite progress made so far in those areas. A strong, detailed, measurable plan of outreach to these areas is also vital to the mission.
4. Reaching Maryland small businesses that may be eligible for tax credits and that may be reconsidering their previous strategy of sending employees to the individual market for coverage because rates have been less volatile in the small group market for health insurance.

For purposes of the marketing, communications and outreach campaign, the target audience has been identified through research¹ as follows:

- Demographic/Segmentation:
 - 18-34 years of age
 - Black
 - Hispanic
 - Women
 - Single mothers
 - Young, working males
- Small Businesses
 - Up to 50 employees
- Small Business Influencers, including:
 - Insurance brokers/producers
 - Accountants
 - Bankers
 - Lawyers
 - Opinion leaders
- Channel Audiences:
 - Plan issuers
 - Insurance companies
 - Managed Care Organizations (MCOs)
 - Local and state agencies
 - Health care providers
 - Health care systems, hospitals and clinics
 - Faith-based organizations
 - Not-for-profit organizations
 - Community-based organizations
 - Educational institutions (colleges and universities)
 - Advocacy and consumer groups
 - Business and trade associations
 - Navigators/Caseworkers

The MHBE has established Guiding Principles for its marketing, outreach, and education program. These principles, which will guide the work done under this Contract, are as follows:

- ***Bring Everyone Along:*** Although not everyone in the state is affected by coverage expansion directly, every opinion matters regarding health reform. The campaign's core

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2010-2011

- efforts will focus on enrollment of the key target audiences, while opinion leaders, elected officials, media and the general public must also be educated and their support cultivated.
- **Leverage the Power of Partnerships:** Maximize education and enrollment by leveraging existing resources, networks and channels; identify opportunities for collaboration and partnerships with common visions and missions.
 - **Segment Audiences and Customize Communications:** Develop marketing and communications tactics based on research and evidence of how different populations can best be reached and encouraged to enroll and retain coverage; ensure materials are culturally and linguistically appropriate. Communications also should reflect the audience's lower literacy levels and potential lack of health insurance literacy.
 - **Educate to Improve Delivery of the Consumer Experience:** Provide educational assets to partners for distribution to consumers enhancing consumer experience.
 - **Evaluate and Adjust Campaign Strategies:** Monitor and modify based on feedback from stakeholders, partners, ongoing research, program metrics and national indicators.
 - **Improve the User Experience:** Assessing and upgrading the usability of MarylandHealthConnection.gov. Success will be measurable in consumer satisfaction surveys and in reduced call times and volumes.
 - **Reach the Hard-to-Reach:** Maryland's uninsured rate has dropped to 6.1% as of 2016, according to the latest U.S. Census Bureau reporting, and maintained that level. Reaching the remainder of the population will require more targeted outreach than the earlier open enrollments when people in need were clamoring for the coverage opportunity.
 - **Retain Customers:** Communications and outreach are vital to help retain customers already served through MarylandHealthConnection.gov, in part by improving information such as "What to Do After You Enroll," so consumers know how to use their policies to improve their health.
 - **Support Efforts to Stabilize the Marketplace:** Coordinate messaging internally and within stakeholder groups to ensure consistency.
 - **Improve Understanding of Health Insurance:** Apply knowledge of key terminology to consumer messaging in creative ways, such as through social media, public relations, and advertising to educate consumers and help them through the enrollment process.

2.2.2 Purpose

During the initial years of the MHBE's operation, marketing and outreach focused on building anticipation for the new state-based health insurance marketplace and creating a brand for Maryland Health Connection. This approach then shifted to rebuilding confidence in the agency's eligibility and enrollment system and a more regional approach to growing enrollment throughout Maryland. In the near future, the focus will be on reaching and providing support and information to Marylanders who remain uninsured, especially those eligible for financial support. The MHBE is seeking a Contractor who shall develop and execute a comprehensive strategic marketing plan in service of the Agency's objectives throughout the State of Maryland.

2.3 Scope of Work

MHBE is soliciting from qualified Offerors proposals to be the Prime Contractor on the MHBE's full-service communications and marketing Contract. The MHBE encourages Offerors to consider establishing strong partnerships with subcontractors who are experts and have experience in specialized areas, to ensure that project goals, objectives and deliverables are achieved. While certain services may be provided by the subcontractor(s), the awarded Prime Contractor ultimately will be responsible to ensure that all project goals, objectives and deliverables are met. The MHBE will hold the Prime Contractor responsible for managing, overseeing, and providing all negotiated services and deliverables.

There is no transition-in period contemplated for this contract. The Contractor shall be prepared to start work under this contract on or around July 1, 2024.

The pass-through budget for media purchases through this Contract is anticipated to be approximately **\$2.3 million for Fiscal Year 2025** and will be proportionally adjusted as the Contract Not-to-Exceed amount changes in future Contract years. The pass-through budget for media purchases includes the placement of print, broadcast, digital and out-of-home advertising media.

2.3.1 General Requirements

The Scope of Work includes the following general requirements that Offerors shall address in their Proposals.

1. Review and Analysis of Existing Information and Data & Ability to Conduct New Research

Contractor shall make use of existing research, data maps, analyses and reports completed by the MHBE, consultants, other states, the federal government, universities and research firms, foundations, advocacy groups and others that inform the development and design of marketing, outreach and education strategies in Maryland. Contractor shall conduct research to refine communications, outreach and education strategies that are not identified in previous reports, surveys, data and/or focus group results. In support of additional research or analysis, Contractor shall provide detailed descriptions and explanations on the types of additional strategies needed.

2. Strategies for Promotional Activities and Communication Vehicles

Contractor shall assess and recommend different types of promotional strategies and activities for both written and verbal communications for all appropriate target audiences and populations. In developing promotions, Contractor shall:

- Assess cultural and linguistic standards to support development of effective marketing, outreach and education activities to diverse target populations;
- Assess reading grade level and health literacy standards to support development of marketing, outreach and education materials to ensure that communications are easily understood by the targeted audiences;
- Identify, propose and recommend public and private sector partners who will engage and participate in the design and development of the statewide marketing, outreach and education campaigns;
- Identify the types of communications needed to effectively reach Maryland's demographically diverse populations, including creative sales, outreach and education channels that will be most effective for each target population. Based on the Contractor's strategic recommendations, these may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Printed materials such as fliers, brochures, panel cards, posters, and bus advertisements
 - Paid advertising (e.g., radio, television, and newspaper ads)
 - Online and technology-based advertising, including use of social media and digital advertising

- Health provider publications and websites
- Partnerships with ethnic media.
- Present ideas about how MHC can become more granular in its targeting, perhaps similar to the use of political campaign-like strategies to figure out exactly where the uninsured are in any neighborhood, any block, etc.
- Explore partnerships with various organizations and develop communications strategies accordingly, including but not limited to the following types of organizations:
 - Community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, community service organizations, faith-based organizations, advocacy groups
 - Health providers, health systems, hospitals, clinics, urgent care centers
 - Insurance producers (brokers)
 - Business and trade associations, including labor unions
 - Retail and commercial entities serving the uninsured populations
 - Public libraries, schools, community colleges and universities
 - Maryland’s professional schools and associations such as medical, nursing, pharmacy and public health
 - Chambers of commerce.
- Develop and present strategies to reduce marketing costs now and long term. Contractor shall determine creative ways for how the services Contractor proposes could become more sustainable, how we might be able to share services, etc.

3. Strategies to strengthen outreach to address health insurance disparities among communities of color, working-class residents and individuals with disabilities.

These groups are more likely to suffer poor health outcomes as a consequence of systemic social determinants of health.

MHBE continues to address racial disparities in health care through messaging, partnerships, and outreach efforts. In 2023, enrollment by Black residents grew nearly 3% and enrollment by Hispanic residents grew by 9%, however there is still work to be done. In a July 2021 statewide research survey commissioned by MHBE with oversample of Black and Hispanic/Latino Marylanders, offered in English and Spanish, showed that about three-quarters of Hispanics (74%) are familiar with MHC, outpacing both Black (66%) and white Marylanders (65%). The survey indicated that non-white young adults are more likely to believe they would not be eligible for financial help even if they are. We seek strategies to continue to set enrollment targets and inform outreach to uninsured groups.

2.3.1.1 CATEGORY 1: MARKETING/COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY SUPPORT

The Contractor **shall** provide marketing and communications strategy support including the following services:

- Assisting with the development of communications, outreach and education strategies.
- Building on an existing creative approach and theme for consumer and small business campaigns developed for previous open enrollments, as well as special enrollments, including support for the Maryland Easy Enrollment Health Insurance Program, known as Easy Enrollment. The novel 1st-in-the-nation program launched in 2020 in concert with the Office of the Comptroller to reach the self-identified uninsured through their state tax returns. More than 13,500 people have gained coverage through the Tax Time Easy Enrollment Program in the four years since it began. A second easy enrollment program was launched with the Department of Labor for unemployed Marylanders to check a box on their unemployment request form to get help enrolling in health coverage.

- Recommending and performing market research to support comprehensive recommendations and assistance for all aspects of marketing and planning and incorporate existing marketing research and branding to develop strategies.
- Conducting UX testing for the consumer website, MarylandHealthConnection.gov, to identify consumer challenges within the enrollment process.
- Providing account management services including evaluation and metrics, oversight and management of integrated team and subcontractors.

Anticipated Timing	
Plan Development	Q1 (July 1–Sept. 30)
Account Management	Q1 (July 1–Sept. 30) through Q2 (Oct. 1–Dec. 31)
Creative Planning and Concepting	Q1 (July 1–Sept. 30) through Q2 (Oct. 1–Dec. 31)
Market Research/UX Testing	Q1 (July 1–Sept. 30) through Q2 (Oct. 1–Dec. 31)
Evaluation	Quarterly per state fiscal year

2.3.1.2 CATEGORY 2: ADVERTISING CREATIVE SERVICES

The Contractor shall develop and execute an advertising campaign targeting Maryland residents eligible for health coverage through Maryland Health Connection as well as those who influence those individuals. Targets with influence over the uninsured may include parents of young adults, small business owners, insurance producers, opinion leaders, and other residents interested in health care reform. The advertising campaign must include a diverse media mix to reach demographically diverse populations in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways statewide. The 2024 open enrollment period is planned to run from Nov. 1 to Jan. 15. The Easy Enrollment Program runs from Jan. 31–April 15, and may be extended into the fall.

The Contractor shall provide creative services including account management, creative concepting, data visualizations such as infographics, video storytelling including film/video/photography, editing, and production of all advertising (TV, radio, online/digital, transit, outdoor, and out-of-home, etc., per the approved media plan). Creative services shall include development of advertising for placement in a variety of media, that shall include the following:

- Television advertising development shall include content creation, editing, production, and recording.
- Radio advertising development shall include content creation, editing, production, and recording.
- Print media advertising development shall include content creation, editing, and design.
- Out-of-home advertising development shall include the content creation, editing, design, and production of advertising deployed in transit, billboards, athletic venues/stadiums, retail, rest areas, movie theater “trailers,” and other applicable settings.
- Digital advertising development shall include content creation, editing, and design of online banner ads, creative for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter channels.
- Contractor shall supply translation services for advertising including translation of print, radio, and other media for multicultural outlets identified by the MHBE, talent fees, studio expenses, location expenses, and voiceovers.

In developing its advertising campaign, the Contractor shall use survey research to gauge the public interest in health care options and outreach approaches. Research, at a minimum, shall:

- Occur in geographically diverse areas of the State to address the needs of Maryland’s population;
- Solicit input and feedback on the messaging and branding of Maryland Health Connection;
- Solicit input and feedback on effective types of written and verbal communications vehicles and strategies that should be used for the statewide marketing, outreach and education campaigns for the target audiences;
- Solicit input and feedback on who would be the most effective messenger(s) to conduct outreach and education to each target population; and
- Solicit input and feedback on creative concepts for the advertising campaign.

Anticipated Timing: Advertising	
Creative Development Begins	Q1 (July 1-Sept. 30)
Review/Approval	Q1 (July 1-Sept. 30)
In Market	Q2 to coincide with recommend strategy for open enrollment

2.3.1.3 CATEGORY 3: MEDIA PLANNING AND BUYING

Contractor will research, develop and execute a comprehensive media plan that includes a diverse media mix. The research will include media audience and ratings/readership, value-added opportunities (*e.g.*, on-air interviews, brochure distribution at media events, etc.). Contractor will conduct the media buy as determined by the Contract Monitor. All media markets in Maryland shall be examined for inclusion in the plan. Proposed recommendations also should include:

- Identification of specific media to be used, including:
 - Timing, frequency, penetration and length of placement
 - Allocation of placement within selected media
 - Justification of media allocation and integration in campaign, cost effectiveness and return on investment
 - Itemization of media cost
- Execution of earned media projects, including:
 - Developing creative ideas to generate earned media attention around open enrollment and Maryland Health Connection.
 - Pitching ideas to media contacts to maximize opportunities, especially within target demographics.
 - Developing and distributing Public Service Announcements to appropriate media outlets.

Anticipated Timing: Media Planning	
Media Plan completion	45-60 days prior to open enrollment
Media Placement	0-7 days before open enrollment begins and ending on the last day of Open Enrollment, based on strategy.

2.3.1.4 CATEGORY 4: ONLINE MARKETING/DIGITAL DESIGN

The Contractor shall provide online marketing and digital design services including developing a comprehensive strategic digital marketing plan. These services shall include:

- Developing and executing a comprehensive search engine marketing (SEM) and search engine optimization (SEO) strategy including retargeting for www.MarylandHealthConnection.gov.
- Designing and producing digital display advertising and promotions for social media sites, mobile, SMS (text campaigns, push alerts, etc.) and other strategies as recommended.
- Conducting testing and readiness activities in support of launching new digital activities.
- Providing regular measurement and analysis of SEM/SEO campaigns.
- Coordinating with MHBE’s IT and marketing teams to assist with implementation of enhancements in response to UX testing findings, including provision of design assets, templates, and wireframes.

Anticipated Timing: Online Marketing Digital Design	
SEM/SEO Plan	Q1 (July 1-Sept. 30)
Execution of SEM/SEO	Q1-Q2 (July 1-Sept. 30 & Oct. 1-Dec. 31)
Measurement	Quarterly beginning Q2 (Oct. 1)
UX testing implementation	Q2 (Oct. 1-Dec. 31)

2.3.1.5 CATEGORY 5: SOCIAL MEDIA

The Contractor shall develop and execute a social media engagement strategy that includes a plan for cultivating and maximizing channels to foster long-term relationships with customers/subscribers and creates a “culture of care” that represents the Maryland Health Connection brand. Social media engagement development and execution shall include:

- Building an asset library to be utilized across all channels that includes GIFs, photos, images, videos, widgets, podcasts, interviews, etc. that carries the branding and embodies the mission of MHBE.
- Developing short videos for YouTube, Instagram and Facebook channels that promote chosen topics.
- Measuring and analyzing social media program, including but not limited to: share of conversation, adjusted engagement levels and level of influence measures.
- Creating and maintaining a social media calendar, including informative posts with visuals that align with engagement strategy.
- Securing influencers who represent the target audience to promote enrollment.

2.3.1.6 CATEGORY 6: EDUCATION AND OUTREACH — CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The Contractor shall develop and execute strategies and communications materials to support the MHBE in its efforts to conduct outreach and education in intergovernmental, corporate and community channels as follows:

- Intergovernmental outreach shall include development of infographics, such as data visualizations, social media GIFs, and whiteboard animations to help communicate the value of more Marylanders having health coverage and the role of Maryland Health Connection in helping achieve that goal. These tools will help MHBE tell its story.

- Corporate outreach shall include:
 - Researching and identifying organizations around the state for outreach such as retail, sports/recreation, trade, corporations, labor and nonprofit organizations.
 - Contacting and fostering relationships with identified organizations to build promotional partnerships to reduce the number of uninsured in Maryland, through activities including:
 - Distribution of branded Maryland Health Connection enrollment toolkit and materials
 - Community outreach events and information sessions
 - Promotion of MarylandHealthConnection.gov through partner websites, newsletters, etc.
 - Development of collateral materials and in-store promotions
 - Loyalty programs and education of stakeholders
 - Other creative approaches as recommended by Contractor.

- Community, civic, and faith-based outreach shall include:
 - Researching and identifying community organizations around the state for outreach to reach a diverse audience that remains uninsured or is eligible for health coverage through Maryland Health Connection
 - Contacting identified organizations to build promotional partnerships that seek to reduce the number of uninsured in Maryland
 - Recommending and executing innovative and creative approaches to reaching target demographics for the uninsured population, such as establishing an advocacy plan for minority colleges and universities as well as those with alumni groups for ethnic populations, planning regional forums to give community access to information and influencers
 - Contractor shall create new and maximize existing relationships with grassroots community organizations and social influencers.

Anticipated Timing: Community and Corporate Outreach	
Research and identify groups, create community and corporate outreach plan	Q1(July 1–Sept. 30)
Negotiate with partners	Q1(July 1–Sept. 30)
Prepare materials	Q1(July 1–Sept. 30)
Plan and implement events, programs and partnerships	Q1(July 1–Sept. 30) and Q2 (Oct. 1–Dec. 31)

2.3.1.7 CATEGORY 7: COLLATERAL DEVELOPMENT (PRINTING EXCLUDED FROM SCOPE OF WORK)

The Contractor shall provide development, design, and limited production (exclusive of printing) for collateral and promotional items as follows:

- In consultation with MHBE staff, develop, design, produce, ship brochures, posters and promo items such as lip balm, squeeze balls, wipe cloths, etc. used to promote and advertise MarylandHealthConnection.gov to consumers and stakeholder partners. Potential account service coordination with printer for distribution to appropriate partners.

- Design a variety of additional collateral materials to support outreach and education enrollment efforts. The Offeror will be responsible for all aspects of the development and design of the materials used to market www.MarylandHealthConnection.gov, such as:
 - Health and financial literacy videos required for the Maryland Health Connection website. These would expand the existing video library on the MarylandConnect channel on YouTube. A variety of lengths will be necessary to walk consumers through the process. Please include pricing in the proposal for the following: two :30 second videos; four :60 second videos and six 2-minute videos to educate and provide instructions on completing the application, selecting an insurance plan and completing enrollment. (The MHBE is not obligated to produce any videos.) These videos will be viewed online and need to be informative and educational. Offerors should propose a strategy for meeting this goal.

- Design materials that support marketing outreach to partners including insurance producers, plan issuers, third-party administrators, such as:
 - Business-to-Business communications tools including newsletters, brochures, manuals, forms, templates and toolkits.
 - Materials will be accessible through the MHBE’s stakeholder website, marylandhbe.com (website is already designed and deployed; not part of Scope of Work).
 - Develop outreach materials to support outreach to hard-to-reach populations in Maryland, including Black and Hispanic communities and “Young Invincibles” (18- to 34-year-olds).
 - Design template materials for reaching the uninsured population in Maryland in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.
 - Provide materials in a variety of template formats that can be downloaded and printed by community-based organizations.
 - Create a library of images and archive of materials so consumer assistance organizations may select materials, customize brochures (postcards or a limited number of template materials) for marketing purposes.
 - Design outreach materials to support the corporate outreach program and community/faith-based outreach programs outlined above.
 - Materials should be available in a variety of formats for various audiences to ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness. The plan for collateral materials should take into account accessibility for those with disabilities and offer suggestions for collaboration with other agencies and organizations when possible.

2.3.1.8 CATEGORY 8: UX TESTING/WEB DESIGN SUPPORT

The Contractor shall conduct UX testing for the consumer website, MarylandHealthConnection.gov to identify consumer challenges within the enrollment process. The Contractor shall coordinate with MHBE’s IT and marketing teams to assist with implementation of findings. This may include providing design assets, templates, and wireframes.

2.3.2 Staffing Plan, Personnel Qualifications and Professional Experience

Effective resource planning and personnel management are critical components of successful delivery of requirements defined in this RFP. Contractor shall demonstrate the assignment of staff with appropriate skill sets by delivering a draft staffing plan with its proposal and updating the staffing plan throughout the term of the Contract as applicable.

The draft staffing plan shall be submitted with the Contractor's Proposal (reference RFP Section 4.4.2.8). The staffing plan shall be updated throughout the term of the Contract whenever there is a change in Contractor resources or upon the introduction of new content, approaches, methodologies, or other substantive changes to the Marketing Services RFP.

The qualifications identified in sections 2.3.2.1-2.3.2.5 shall apply to the staff categories described therein. Resumes for each of the Contractor's proposed staffing choices for Key Personnel as defined in 2.3.2.1 below as well as any identified members of the MHBE account team shall be submitted with the Contractor's Proposal (reference RFP Section 5.4.2.7).

2.3.2.1 Senior Staff includes personnel who have at least 10 years' experience, routinely supervise other staff members and make decisions about their work. Duties include developing marketing strategies, managing teams of marketing managers and specialists, and assuming responsibility for meeting marketing objectives. Senior Staff represent Key Personnel as defined under this contract.

Representative job titles include:

- Vice President
- Executive Vice President
- VP Digital
- Digital Director
- Digital Manager
- Account Director
- Senior Designer

2.3.2.2 Mid-Level Staff includes personnel who have 5-10 years' experience formulating, developing and executing marketing campaign strategies. Representative job titles include:

- Senior Account Executive
- Account Supervisor
- Associate Designer
- Creative Designers
- Content Director
- Community Outreach Coordinator

2.3.2.3 Junior Staff includes personnel who have 1-5 years' experience in marketing-related work such as copywriting, social media content, community relations, graphic design, and web development.

Representative job titles include:

- Associate Designer
- Assistant Account Executive

2.3.2.4 Clerical Staff: Work that generally involves day-to-day office tasks such as, but not exclusively, word processing and typing, entering data into spreadsheets, sorting and filing, photocopying and collating, record keeping, appointment scheduling and minor bookkeeping.

2.3.2.5 Interns: Occasional use may be permitted with approval of the Contract Monitor.

SECTION 3 – CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Insurance Requirements

All insurance required by this section shall be effective when the Contract commences and shall remain in effect during the term of the Contract and renewal option periods, if exercised. Certificates of insurance and evidence of the payment of premiums shall be furnished to the Procurement Officer within ten (10) business days after notice of recommended Contract award.

All insurance companies shall be licensed or authorized to do business within the State and shall be subject to approval by Exchange.

The Contractor shall maintain Commercial General Liability Insurance with limits sufficient to cover losses resulting from or arising out of Contractor action or inaction in the performance of the Contract by the Contractor, its agents, servants, employees or subcontractors, but no less than a Combined Single Limit for Bodily Injury, Property Damage and Personal and Advertising Injury Liability of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 aggregate.

The Contractor shall maintain Errors and Omissions/Professional Liability insurance with minimum limits of \$3,000,000 per occurrence. The Contractor shall maintain Automobile and/or Commercial Truck Insurance as appropriate with Liability, Collision and PIP limits no less than those required by the State where the vehicle(s) is registered but in no case less than those required by the State of Maryland. If automotive equipment is required in the performance of this Contract, automobile bodily injury liability insurance with a limit of not less than One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000.00) for each person and Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000.00) for each accident, and property damage liability insurance with a limit of not less than Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00) for each accident shall be required.

The Offeror shall maintain Employee Theft Insurance with minimum limits of \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

The Offeror shall maintain such insurance as necessary and/or as required under Workers' Compensation Acts, U.S. Longshoremen's and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act, and the Federal Employers' Liability Act, as well as any other applicable statute or regulation.

Upon execution of a Contract with the State, Offeror shall provide the Contract Monitor with current certificates of insurance, and shall update such certificates from time to time, as directed by the Contract Monitor. Such copy of the Offeror's current certificate of insurance shall contain at minimum the following:

1. Workers' Compensation - The Offeror shall maintain such insurance as necessary and/or as required under Workers' Compensation Acts, the Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act, and the Federal Employers' Liability Act.
2. Commercial General Liability as required above.
3. Errors and Omissions/Professional Liability as required above.
4. Automobile and/or Commercial Truck Insurance as required above.
5. Employee Theft Insurance as required above.

The State shall be named as an additional named insured on the policies with the exception of Workers' Compensation Insurance. Certificates of insurance evidencing coverage shall be provided prior to the commencement of any activities in the Contract. All insurance policies shall be endorsed to include a clause that requires that the insurance carrier provide the Contract Monitor, by certified mail, not less than 60 days advance notice of any non-renewal, cancellation, or expiration. In the event the Contract Monitor receives a notice of nonrenewal, the Offeror shall provide the Contract Monitor with an insurance policy from another carrier at least 30 days prior to the expiration of the insurance policy then in effect. All insurance policies shall be with a company licensed by the State to do business and to provide such policies.

3.1.2 Subcontractor Insurance

The Master Contractor shall require that any subcontractors providing products/services under this Contract obtain and maintain comparable levels of insurance and shall upon request by the Contract Monitor, provide the same documentation as is required of the Contractor.

3.2 Security Requirements

3.2.1 Employee Identification.

- 3.2.1.1 Each person who is an employee or agent of the Contractor or subcontractor shall display his or her company ID badge at all times while on State premises. Upon request of authorized State personnel, each such employee or agent shall provide additional photo identification.
- 3.2.1.2 At all times at any facility, the Contractor's personnel shall cooperate with State site requirements that include but are not limited to being prepared to be escorted at all times, providing information for badge issuance, and wearing the badge in a visible location at all times.

3.3 Problem Escalation Procedure

- 3.3.1 The Contractor must provide and maintain a Problem Escalation Procedure (PEP) for both routine and emergency situations. The PEP must state how the Contractor will address problem situations as they occur during the performance of the Contract, especially problems that are not resolved to the satisfaction of the State within appropriate timeframes.

The Contractor shall provide contact information to the Contract Monitor, as well as to other State personnel as directed should the Contract Monitor not be available.

3.3.2 The Contractor must provide the PEP no later than ten (10) Business Days after Contract Commencement. The PEP, including any revisions thereto, must also be provided within ten (10) Business Days after the start of each Contract year and within ten (10) Business Days after any change in circumstance which changes the PEP. The PEP shall detail how problems with work under the Contract will be escalated in order to resolve any issues in a timely manner. The PEP shall include:

- a. The process for establishing the existence of a problem;
- b. Names, titles, and contact information for progressively higher levels of personnel in the Contractor's organization who would become involved in resolving a problem;
- c. For each individual listed in the Contractor's PEP, the maximum amount of time a problem will remain unresolved with that individual before the problem escalates to the next contact person listed in the Contractor's PEP;
- d. Expedited escalation procedures and any circumstances that would trigger expedited them;
- e. The method of providing feedback on resolution progress, including the frequency of feedback to be provided to the State;
- f. Contact information for persons responsible for resolving issues after normal business hours (e.g., evenings, weekends, holidays, etc.) and on an emergency basis; and
- g. A process for updating and notifying the Contract Monitor of any changes to the PEP.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit any rights of the Contract Monitor or the State which may be allowed by the Contract or applicable law.

3.4.1 Invoicing

a) All invoices for services shall be signed by the Contractor and submitted to the Contract Monitor within 30 days of delivery of services and shall include, at the minimum, the following information:

- Contractor name
- Remittance address
- Federal taxpayer identification number
- Invoice period
- Invoice date
- Invoice number
- State assigned Contract number
- State assigned Purchase or Blanket Purchase Order number(s)
- Services provided with supporting documentation providing details
- Amount due

Invoices submitted without the required information cannot be processed for payment until the Contractor provides the required information.

b) The MHBE reserves the right to reduce or withhold Contract payment in the event the Contractor does not provide the MHBE with all required deliverables within the time frame specified in the Contract or in the event that the Contractor otherwise materially breaches the terms and conditions of the Contract until such time as the Contractor brings itself into full compliance with the Contract.

3.5 SOC 2 Type 2 Audit Report

A SOC 2 Type 2 Report is not a Contractor requirement for this Contract.

3.6 MBE Reports

If this solicitation includes an MBE Goal (see Section 4.30), the Contractor and its MBE subcontractors shall provide the following MBE Monthly Reports based upon the commitment to the goal:

1. **Attachment D-4A**, the MBE Participation Prime Contractor Paid/Unpaid MBE Invoice Report by the 10th of the month following the reporting period to the Contract Monitor and the MBE Liaison Officer;
1. **Attachment D-4B (if applicable)**, the MBE Prime Contractor Report by the 10th of the month following the reporting period to the Contract Monitor and the MBE Liaison Officer; and
1. **Attachment D-5**, the MBE Participation Subcontractor Paid/Unpaid MBE Invoice Report by the 10th of the month following the reporting period to the Contract Monitor and the MBE Liaison Officer.

3.7 Substitution of Personnel

- 3.7.1 **Continuous Performance of Key Personnel.** Unless substitution is approved per paragraphs 3.10.2-3.10.4 of this section, Key Personnel shall be the same personnel proposed in the Contractor's Technical Proposal, which will be incorporated into the Contract by reference. Such identified Key Personnel shall perform continuously for the duration of the Contract, or such lesser duration as specified in the Technical Proposal. Key Personnel may not be removed by the Contractor from working under this Contract, as described in the RFP or the Contractor's Technical Proposal, without the prior written approval of the Contract Monitor.

If the Contract is task order based, the provisions of this section apply to Key Personnel identified in each task order proposal and agreement.

- 3.7.2 **Definitions.** For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

Extraordinary Personal Circumstance – Any circumstance in an individual's personal life that reasonably requires immediate and continuous attention for more than fifteen (15) days and precludes the individual from performing his/her job duties under this Contract. Examples of such circumstances may include, but are not limited to: a sudden leave of absence to care for a family member who is injured, sick, or incapacitated; the death of a family member, including the need to attend to the estate or other affairs of the deceased or his/her dependents; substantial damage to, or destruction of, the individual's home that causes a major disruption in the individual's normal living circumstances; criminal or civil proceedings against the individual or a family member; jury duty; and military service call-up.

Incapacitating – Any health circumstance that substantially impairs the ability of an individual to perform the job duties described for that individual's position in the RFP or the Contractor's Technical Proposal.

Sudden – When the Contractor has less than thirty (30) days’ prior notice of a circumstance beyond its control that will require the replacement of any Key Personnel working under the Contract.

3.7.3 **Key Personnel General Substitution Provisions.** The following provisions apply to all of the circumstances of staff substitution described in paragraph 3.7.4 of this section.

1. The Contractor shall demonstrate to the Contract Monitor’s satisfaction that the proposed substitute Key Personnel have qualifications at least equal to those of the Key Personnel for whom the replacement is requested.
2. The Contractor shall provide the Contract Monitor with a substitution request that shall include:
 - A detailed explanation of the reason(s) for the substitution request;
 - The resume of the proposed substitute personnel, signed by the substituting individual and his/her formal supervisor;
 - The official resume of the current personnel for comparison purposes; and
 - Any evidence of any required credentials.
3. The Contract Monitor may request additional information concerning the proposed substitution. In addition, the Contract Monitor and/or other appropriate State personnel involved with the Contract may interview the proposed substitute personnel prior to deciding whether to approve the substitution request.
4. The Contract Monitor will notify the Contractor in writing of: (i) the acceptance or denial, or (ii) contingent or temporary approval for a specified time limit, of the requested substitution. The Contract Monitor will not unreasonably withhold approval of a requested Key Personnel replacement.

3.7.4 Replacement Circumstances

3.7.4.1 Voluntary Key Personnel Replacement.

To voluntarily replace any Key Personnel, the Contractor shall submit a substitution request as described in paragraph 3.7.3 of this section to the Contract Monitor at least fifteen (15) days prior to the intended date of change. Except in a circumstance described in paragraph 3.10.4 (2) of this clause, a substitution may not occur unless and until the Contract Monitor approves the substitution in writing.

3.7.4.2 Key Personnel Replacement Due to Vacancy.

The Contractor shall replace Key Personnel whenever a vacancy occurs due to the sudden termination, resignation, leave of absence due to an Extraordinary Personal Circumstance, Incapacitating injury, illness or physical condition, or death of such personnel. (A termination or resignation with thirty (30) days or more advance notice shall be treated as a Voluntary Key Personnel Replacement as per Section 3.10.4.1 of this section.).

Under any of the circumstances set forth in this paragraph 3.10.4.2, the Contractor shall identify a suitable replacement and provide the same information or items required under paragraph 3.10.3 of this section within fifteen (15) days of the actual vacancy occurrence or from when the

Contractor first knew or should have known that the vacancy would be occurring, whichever is earlier.

3.7.4.3 Key Personnel Replacement Due to an Indeterminate Absence.

If any Key Personnel has been absent from his/her job for a period of ten (10) days due to injury, illness, or other physical condition, leave of absence under a family medical leave, or an Extraordinary Personal Circumstance and it is not known or reasonably anticipated that the individual will be returning to work within the next twenty (20) days to fully resume all job duties, before the 25th day of continuous absence, the Contractor shall identify a suitable replacement and provide the same information or items to the Contract Monitor as required under paragraph 3.10.3 of this section.

However, if this person is available to return to work and fully perform all job duties before a replacement has been authorized by the Contract Monitor, at the option and sole discretion of the Contract Monitor, the original personnel may continue to work under the Contract, or the replacement personnel will be authorized to replace the original personnel, notwithstanding the original personnel's ability to return.

3.7.4.4 Directed Personnel Replacement.

3.7.4.4.1. The Contract Monitor may direct the Contractor to replace any personnel who are perceived as being unqualified, non-productive, unable to fully perform the job duties due to full or partial Incapacity or Extraordinary Personal Circumstance, disruptive, or known, or reasonably believed, to have committed a major infraction(s) of law, agency, or Contract requirements. Normally, a directed personnel replacement will occur only after prior notification of problems with requested remediation, as described in paragraph 3.10.4.4.2. If after such remediation the Contract Monitor determines that the personnel performance has not improved to the level necessary to continue under the Contract, if at all possible at least fifteen (15) days notification of a directed replacement will be provided. However, if the Contract Monitor deems it necessary and in the State's best interests to remove the personnel with less than fifteen (15) days' notice, the Contract Monitor can direct the removal in a timeframe of less than fifteen (15) days, including immediate removal.

In circumstances of directed removal, the Contractor shall, in accordance with paragraph 3.7.3 of this section, provide a suitable replacement for approval within fifteen (15) days of the notification of the need for removal, or the actual removal, whichever occurs first.

3.7.4.4.2 If deemed appropriate at the discretion of the Contract Monitor, the Contract Monitor shall give written notice of any personnel performance issues to the Contractor, describing the problem and delineating the remediation requirement(s). The Contractor shall provide a written Remediation Plan within ten (10) days of the date of the notice and shall implement the Remediation Plan immediately upon written acceptance by the Contract Monitor. If the Contract Monitor rejects the Remediation Plan, the Contractor shall revise and resubmit the plan to the Contract Monitor within five (5) days, or in the timeframe set forth by the Contract Monitor in writing.

Should performance issues persist despite the approved Remediation Plan, the Contract Monitor will give written notice of the continuing performance issues and either request a new Remediation Plan within a specified time limit or direct the substitution of personnel whose performance is at issue with a qualified substitute, including requiring the immediate removal of the Key Personnel at issue.

Replacement or substitution of personnel under this section shall be in addition to, and not in lieu of, the State's remedies under the Contract or which otherwise may be available at law or in equity.

SECTION 4 – Procurement instructions

4.1 Contract Type

The Contract shall be a Time and Material Contract as described in with COMAR 21.06.03.05 (with the exception of the Category 3 set allowance).

4.2 Contract Duration

4.2.1 The Contract resulting from this RFP shall be for a base period of three (3) year beginning on or about July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027, with two additional one-year options exercised at the sole discretion of the MHBE.

4.2.2 As of the NTP Date, the Contractor shall perform all activities required by the Contract, including the requirements of this solicitation, and the offerings in its Technical Proposal, for the compensation described in its Financial Proposal.

4.2.3 The Contractor's obligations to pay invoices to Subcontractors that provide products/services during the Contract term, as well as the audit, confidentiality, document retention, and indemnification obligations of the Contract (see Attachment H - Contract) shall survive expiration or termination of the Contract and continue in effect until all such obligations are satisfied.

4.3 Procurement Officer

The sole point of contact in the MHBE for purposes of this solicitation prior to the award of any Contract is the Procurement Officer at the address listed below:

Shirelle Green
Procurement Officer
Maryland Health Benefit Exchange
750 East Pratt Street, 6th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone Number: 410-547-8152
E-mail: hix.procurement@maryland.gov

The MHBE may change the Procurement Officer at any time by written notice.

4.4 Contract Monitor

The Contract Monitor is:

Betsy Plunkett
Director, Marketing and Web Strategies
750 East Pratt Street, 6th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202

The MHBE may change the Contract Monitor at any time by written notice.

4.5 Pre-Proposal Conference

A Pre-Proposal Conference (the Conference) will be held at the date, time, stated on the key information sheet and will be held via Google Meet.

All prospective Offerors are encouraged to email the Procurement Officer of their decision to attend in order to facilitate better preparation of their Proposals.

The Conference will be summarized. As promptly as is feasible after the Conference, a summary of the Conference and all questions and answers known at that time will be distributed to all prospective Offerors known to have received a copy of this RFP. This summary, as well as the questions and answers, will also be posted on eMaryland Marketplace Advantage and the MHBE procurement site located here: <http://www.marylandhbe.com/about-us/procurement/>. See RFP Section 4.6.

In order to assure adequate accommodations at the Conference, please e-mail the Pre-Proposal Conference Response Form (**Attachment A**) to the attention of the Procurement Officer at least three (3) Business Days prior to the Pre-Proposal Conference date. In addition, if there is a need for sign language interpretation and/or other special accommodations due to a disability, please notify the Procurement Officer at least five (5) Business Days prior to the Pre-Proposal Conference date.

4.6 eMaryland Marketplace Advantage

eMMA is an electronic commerce system administered by the Maryland Department of General Services. Each Offeror is requested to indicate its eMaryland Marketplace Advantage (eMMA) vendor number in the Transmittal Letter (cover letter) submitted at the time of its Proposal submission to this RFP.

In addition to using the MHBE website <http://www.marylandhbe.com/about-us/procurement/> and possibly other means for transmitting the RFP and associated materials, solicitation and summary of the Pre-Proposal Conference, Offeror questions, and Procurement Officer's responses, addenda, and other solicitation-related information will be provided via eMMA. **Offerors shall provide their Proposals in two separate envelopes through eMMA following the [Quick Reference Guides \(QRG\)](#) labelled "5 - eMMA QRG Responding to Solicitations (RFP)" for double envelope submissions.**

4.7 Questions

Written questions from prospective Offerors will be accepted by the Procurement Officer prior to the Conference. If possible and appropriate, such questions will be answered at the Conference. (No

substantive question will be answered prior to the Conference.) Questions to the Procurement Officer shall be submitted via e-mail to the Procurement Officer's e-mail address indicated on the RFP Key Information Summary Sheet (near the beginning of the solicitation, after the Title Page and Notice to Vendors). Please identify in the subject line the Solicitation Number and Title. Questions, both oral and written, will also be accepted from prospective Offerors attending the Conference. If possible and appropriate, these questions will be answered at the Conference.

Questions will also be accepted subsequent to the Conference and should be submitted to the Procurement Officer via email in a timely manner prior to the Proposal due date. Questions are requested to be submitted at least **ten (10) days** prior to the Proposal due date. The Procurement Officer, based on the availability of time to research and communicate an answer, shall decide whether an answer can be given before the Proposal due date. Time permitting, answers to all substantive questions that have not previously been answered, and are not clearly specific only to the requestor, will be posted to eMMA and the MHBE procurement site in sufficient time for the answer to be taken into consideration in the Proposal.

4.8 Procurement Method

This Contract will be awarded in accordance with the Competitive Sealed Proposals process under Section II.B of the Procurement Policies and Procedures of the MHBE (PP&P).

4.9 Proposals Due (Closing) Date and Time

Proposals, in the number and form set forth in RFP Section 5.2 "Proposals" must be received by the Procurement Officer at the Procurement Officer's email address no later than the Proposal Due date and time indicated on the RFP Key Information Summary Sheet (near the beginning of the solicitation, after the Title Page and Notice to Vendors) in order to be considered.

Requests for extension of this time or date will not be granted. Except as provided in COMAR 21.05.03.02.F and 21.05.02.10, Proposals received after the due date and time listed in the RFP Key Information Summary Sheet will not be considered.

Proposals may be modified or withdrawn by written notice received by the Procurement Officer before the time and date set forth in the RFP Key Information Summary Sheet for receipt of Proposals.

Proposals must be submitted via eMMA. Proposals will not be opened publicly.

Vendors not responding to this solicitation are requested to submit the "Notice to Vendors" form, which includes company information and the reason for not responding (e.g., too busy, cannot meet mandatory requirements, etc.). This form is located in the RFP immediately following the Title Page (page ii).

4.10 Multiple or Alternate Proposals

Neither multiple nor alternate Proposals will be accepted. Submitting Proposals for more than one functional area is not considered a multiple or alternate Proposal.

4.11 Economy of Preparation

Proposals should be prepared simply and economically and provide a straightforward and concise

description of the Offeror's Proposal to meet the requirements of this RFP.

4.12 Public Information Act Notice

An Offeror should give specific attention to the clear identification of those portions of its Proposal that it considers confidential and/or proprietary commercial information or trade secrets, and provide justification why such materials, upon request, should not be disclosed by the State under the Public Information Act, Md. Code Ann., General Provisions Article, Title 4. (Also, see RFP Section 5.4.2.2 "Claim of Confidentiality"). This confidential and/or proprietary information should be identified by page and section number and placed after the Title Page and before the Table of Contents in the Technical Proposal and if applicable, separately in the Financial Proposal.

Offerors are advised that, upon request for this information from a third party, the Procurement Officer is required to make an independent determination whether the information must be disclosed.

4.13 Award Basis

The Contract shall be awarded to the responsible Offeror submitting the Proposal that has been determined to be the most advantageous to the State, considering price and evaluation factors set forth in this RFP for providing the services as specified in this RFP. In order for MHBE to achieve its overall minority participation goal, MHBE may recommend and award a contract to a certified minority business enterprise or to a person whose offer otherwise reflects the greatest amount of certified MBE or minority participation in the event of two or more offers in which the Offerors' Technical and Price proposals are determined by the Procurement Officer to be equally most advantageous to the State. The MBE documentation required by COMAR 21.11.03.10B(2)-(6) shall be used in making this determination. See RFP Section 6 for further award information.

4.14 Oral Presentation

Offerors may be required to make oral presentations to State representatives. Offerors must confirm in writing any substantive oral clarification of or change in their Proposals made in the course of discussions. Any such written clarifications or changes then become part of the Offeror's Proposal and are binding if the Contract is awarded. The Procurement Officer will notify Offerors of the time and place of oral presentations.

4.15 Duration of Proposal

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP are irrevocable for 120 days following the closing date for submission of Proposals or best and final offers (see Section 6.5.2.5) if requested. This period may be extended at the Procurement Officer's request only with the Offeror's written agreement.

4.16 Revisions to the RFP

If it becomes necessary to revise this RFP before the due date for Proposals, the MHBE shall post addenda to eMMA and the MHBE Procurement website. It remains the responsibility of all prospective Offerors to check all applicable websites for any addenda issued prior to the submission of Proposals. Addenda made after the due date for Proposals will be sent only to those Offerors that submitted timely Proposals and that remain under award consideration as of the issuance date of the addenda.

Acknowledgment of the receipt of all addenda to this RFP issued before the Proposal due date shall be included in the Transmittal Letter accompanying the Offeror's Technical Proposal. Acknowledgement of the receipt of addenda to the RFP issued after the Proposal due date shall be in the manner specified in the addendum notice. Failure to acknowledge receipt of an addendum does not relieve the Offeror from complying with the terms, additions, deletions, or corrections set forth in the addendum.

4.17 Cancellations

The State reserves the right to cancel this RFP, accept or reject any and all Proposals, in whole or in part, received in response to this RFP, waive or permit the cure of minor irregularities, and conduct discussions with all qualified or potentially qualified Offerors in any manner necessary to serve the best interests of the State. The State also reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to award a Contract based upon the written Proposals received without discussions or negotiations.

4.18 Incurred Expenses

The State will not be responsible for any costs incurred by any Offeror in preparing and submitting a Proposal, in making an oral presentation, providing a demonstration, or performing any other activities related to submitting a Proposal in response to this solicitation.

4.19 Protest/Disputes

Any protest related to this solicitation shall be subject to the provisions of Section VII of the MHBE Procurement Policies & Procedures. Any dispute related to the Contract shall be subject to the Disputes provisions of the Contract resulting from this RFP (refer to RFP Attachment H).

4.20 Offeror Responsibilities

The selected Offeror shall be responsible for all products and services required by this RFP. All subcontractors must be identified and a complete description of their role relative to the Proposal must be included in the Offeror's Proposal. If applicable, subcontractors utilized in meeting the established MBE or VSBE participation goal(s) for this solicitation shall be identified as provided in the appropriate Attachment(s) to this RFP (see Section 4.30 "Minority Business Enterprise Goals").

If an Offeror that seeks to perform or provide the services required by this RFP is the subsidiary of another entity, all information submitted by the Offeror, including but not limited to references, financial reports, or experience and documentation (e.g. insurance policies, bonds, letters of credit) used to meet minimum qualifications, if any, shall pertain exclusively to the Offeror, unless the parent organization will guarantee the performance of the subsidiary. If applicable, the Offeror shall submit with its Proposal an explicit statement, signed by an authorized representative of the parent organization, stating that the parent organization will guarantee the performance of the subsidiary.

A parental guarantee of the performance of the Offeror under this Section will not automatically result in crediting the Offeror with the experience and/or qualifications of the parent under any evaluation criteria pertaining to the Offeror's experience and qualifications. Instead, the Offeror will be evaluated on the extent to which the State determines that the experience and qualification of the parent are transferred to and shared with the Offeror, the parent is directly involved in the performance of the Contract, and the value of the parent's participation as determined by the State.

4.21 Mandatory Contractual Terms

By submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP, an Offeror, if selected for award, shall be deemed to have accepted the terms and conditions of this RFP and the Contract, attached herein as **Attachment H**. Any exceptions to this RFP or the Contract shall be clearly identified in the Executive Summary of the Technical Proposal. **A Proposal that takes exception to these terms may be rejected (see RFP Section 5.4.2.4).**

4.22 Proposal Affidavit

A Proposal submitted by an Offeror must be accompanied by a completed Proposal Affidavit. A copy of this Affidavit is included as **Attachment C** of this RFP.

4.23 Contract Affidavit

All Offerors are advised that if a Contract is awarded as a result of this solicitation, the successful Offeror will be required to complete a Contract Affidavit, a copy which is included as **Attachment I** of this RFP. This Affidavit must be provided within five (5) Business Days of notification of proposed Contract award. The Contractor must also submit a Contract Affidavit with any Contract renewal, including the exercise of any options or modifications that may extend the Contract term. For purposes of completing Section “B” of this Affidavit (Certification of Registration or Qualification with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation), a business entity that is organized outside of the State of Maryland is considered a “foreign” business.

4.24 Compliance with Laws/Arrearages

By submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP, the Offeror, if selected for award, agrees that it will comply with all federal, State, and local laws applicable to its activities and obligations under the Contract.

By submitting a response to this solicitation, each Offeror represents that it is not in arrears in the payment of any obligations due and owing the State, including the payment of taxes and employee benefits, and shall not become so in arrears during the term of the Contract if selected for Contract award.

4.25 Verification of Registration and Tax Payment

Before a business entity can do business in the State, it must be registered with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT). SDAT is located at State Office Building, Room 803, 301 W. Preston St., Baltimore, MD 21201. For registration information, visit <https://www.egov.maryland.gov/businessexpress>

It is strongly recommended that any potential Offeror complete registration prior to the due date for receipt of Proposals. An Offeror’s failure to complete registration with SDAT may disqualify an otherwise successful Offeror from final consideration and recommendation for Contract award.

4.26 False Statements

Offerors are advised that Md. Code Ann., State Finance and Procurement Article, § 11-205.1 provides as follows:

- (a) In connection with a procurement contract a person may not willfully:
 - (1) falsify, conceal, or suppress a material fact by any scheme or device;
 - (2) make a false or fraudulent statement or representation of a material fact; or
 - (3) use a false writing or document that contains a false or fraudulent statement or entry of a material fact.
- (b) A person may not aid or conspire with another person to commit an act under subsection (a) of this section.
- (c) A person who violates any provision of this section is guilty of a felony and on conviction is subject to a fine not exceeding \$20,000 or imprisonment not exceeding 5 years or both.

4.27 Payments by Electronic Funds Transfer

By submitting a response to this solicitation, the Offeror agrees to accept payments by electronic funds transfer (EFT) unless the State Comptroller's Office grants an exemption. Payment by EFT is mandatory for contracts exceeding \$200,000. The selected Offeror shall register using the COT/GAD X-10 Vendor Electronic Funds (EFT) Registration Request Form. Any request for exemption must be submitted to the State Comptroller's Office for approval at the address specified on the COT/GAD X-10 form, must include the business identification information as stated on the form, and must include the reason for the exemption. The COT/GAD X-10 form may be downloaded from the Comptroller's website at: http://comptroller.marylandtaxes.com/Government_Services/State_Accounting_Information/Static_Files/APM/X-1020130407.pdf.

4.28 Prompt Payment Policy

This procurement and the Contract(s) to be awarded pursuant to this solicitation are subject to the Prompt Payment Policy Directive issued by the Governor's Office of Minority Affairs (GOMA) and dated August 1, 2008. Promulgated pursuant to Md. Code Ann., State Finance and Procurement Article, §§ 11-201, 13-205(a), and Title 14, Subtitle 3, and COMAR 21.01.01.03 and 21.11.03.01, the Directive seeks to ensure the prompt payment of all subcontractors on non-construction procurement contracts. The Contractor shall comply with the prompt payment requirements outlined in the Contract "Prompt Payment" clause (see **Attachment H**). Additional information is available on GOMA's website at: <http://goma.maryland.gov/Documents/Legislation/PromptPaymentFAQs.pdf>

4.29 Electronic Procurements Authorized

- 4.29.1 Unless otherwise prohibited by law, the MHBE may conduct procurement transactions by electronic means, including the solicitation, proposing, award, execution, and administration of a contract, as provided in Md. Code Ann., Maryland Uniform Electronic Transactions Act, Commercial Law Article, Title 21.
- 4.29.2 Participation in the solicitation process on a procurement contract for which electronic means has been authorized shall constitute consent by the Offeror to conduct by electronic means all elements of the procurement of that Contract which are specifically authorized under the

- solicitation or Contract.
- 4.29.3 “Electronic means” refers to exchanges or communications using electronic, digital, magnetic, wireless, optical, electromagnetic, or other means of electronically conducting transactions. Electronic means includes facsimile, e-mail, internet-based communications, electronic funds transfer, specific electronic bidding platforms (e.g., <https://emaryland.buyspeed.com/bso/>), and electronic data interchange.
- 4.29.4 In addition to specific electronic transactions specifically authorized in other sections of this solicitation (e.g., RFP § 4.27 “Payments by Electronic Funds Transfer”) and subject to the exclusions noted in section 4.29.5 of this subsection, the following transactions are authorized to be conducted by electronic means on the terms described:
- 4.29.4.1 The Procurement Officer may conduct the procurement using eMMA, e-mail, or facsimile to issue:
- (a) The solicitation (e.g., the RFP);
 - (b) Any amendments;
 - (c) Pre-Proposal conference documents;
 - (d) Questions and responses;
 - (e) Communications regarding the solicitation or Proposal to any Offeror or potential Offeror;
 - (f) Notices of award selection or non-selection; and
 - (g) The Procurement Officer’s decision on any Proposal protest or Contract claim.
- 4.29.4.2 An Offeror or potential Offeror may use e-mail or facsimile to:
- (a) Ask questions regarding the solicitation;
 - (b) Reply to any material received from the Procurement Officer by electronic means that includes a Procurement Officer’s request or direction to reply by e-mail or facsimile, but only on the terms specifically approved and directed by the Procurement Officer; and
 - (c) Submit a "No Proposal Response" to the solicitation.
 - (d) Submit documents determined by the MHBE to require original signatures (contract execution or modifications).
- 4.29.4.3 The Procurement Officer, the Contract Monitor, and the Contractor may conduct day-to-day Contract administration, except as outlined in Section E of this subsection utilizing e-mail, facsimile, or other electronic means if authorized by the Procurement Officer or Contract Monitor.
- 4.29.5 The following transactions related to this procurement and any Contract awarded pursuant to it are *not authorized* to be conducted by electronic means:
- (a) Filing of Proposal Protests;
 - (b) Filing of Contract Claims;
 - (c) Any transaction, submission, or communication where the Procurement Officer has specifically directed that a response from the Contractor or Offeror be provided in writing or hard copy.
- 4.29.6 Any facsimile or e-mail transmission is only authorized to the facsimile numbers or e-mail addresses for the identified person as provided in the solicitation, Contract, or direction from the Procurement Officer or Contract Monitor.

- 4.29.7 The Procurement Officer, the Contract Monitor, and the Contractor may conduct day-to-day Contract administration utilizing e-mail, facsimile, or other electronic means if authorized by the Procurement Officer or Contract Monitor.
- 4.29.8 Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this Section 1.32, MHBE requires all Transmittal Letters, Proposals and any Contract resulting from this RFP to contain original signatures executed in ink by a person authorized to bind the Contractor. However, the Contractor may scan and submit electronically any document containing such original signature(s). The Contract may be signed by the Parties in counterparts, each of which shall be deemed to be an original but all of which, taken together, shall constitute one and the same Contract.

4.30 Minority Business Enterprise Goals

4.30.1 Establishment of Goal. An overall MBE subcontractor participation goal of **10%** of the total contract dollar value, excluding the media buy pass-through amount of an anticipated \$1,000,000 per year, has been established for this procurement. This goal applies to all option years of the Contract.

The Contractor is encouraged to use a diverse group of subcontractors and suppliers from any/all of the various MBE classifications to meet the remainder of the overall MBE participation goal.

There are no MBE subcontractor participation subgoals for this procurement.

4.30.2 Attachments D-1 to D-5 – The following Minority Business Enterprise participation instructions, and forms are provided to assist Offerors:

- Attachment D-1A** MBE Utilization and Fair Solicitation Affidavit & MBE Participation Schedule (**must be submitted with Proposal**)
- Attachment D-1B** Waiver Guidance
- Attachment D-1C** Good Faith Efforts Documentation to Support Waiver Request
- Attachment D-2** Outreach Efforts Compliance Statement
- Attachment D-3A** MBE Subcontractor Project Participation Certification
- Attachment D-3B** MBE Prime Project Participation Certification
- Attachment D-4A** Prime Contractor Paid/Unpaid MBE Invoice Report
- Attachment D-4B** MBE Prime Contractor Report
- Attachment D-5** Subcontractor/Contractor Unpaid MBE Invoice Report

4.30.3 An Offeror shall include with its Proposal a completed MBE Utilization and Fair Solicitation Affidavit (**Attachment D-1A**) whereby:

- (a) The Offeror acknowledges the certified MBE participation goal and commits to make a good faith effort to achieve the goal and any applicable subgoals, or requests a waiver, and affirms that MBE subcontractors were treated fairly in the solicitation process; and
- (b) The Offeror responds to the expected degree of MBE participation, as stated in the solicitation, by identifying the specific commitment of certified MBEs at the time of Proposal submission. The Offeror shall specify the percentage of total contract value associated with each MBE subcontractor identified on the MBE participation schedule, including any work performed by the MBE Prime (including a Prime participating as a joint venture) to be counted towards meeting the MBE participation goals.

- (c) An Offeror requesting a waiver should review Attachment D-1B (Waiver Guidance) and D-1C (Good Faith Efforts Documentation to Support Waiver Request) prior to submitting its request.

If an Offeror fails to submit a completed Attachment D-1A with the Proposal as required, the Procurement Officer shall determine that the Proposal is not reasonably susceptible of being selected for award.

- 4.30.4** Offerors are responsible for verifying that each MBE (including any MBE Prime and/or MBE Prime participating in a joint venture) selected to meet the goal and any subgoals and subsequently identified in **Attachment D-1A** is appropriately certified and has the correct NAICS codes allowing it to perform the committed work.
- 4.30.5** Within ten (10) Business Days from notification that it is the recommended awardee or from the date of the actual award, whichever is earlier, the Offeror must provide the following documentation to the Procurement Officer.
 - (a) Outreach Efforts Compliance Statement (**Attachment D-2**);
 - (b) MBE Subcontractor/Prime Project Participation Certification (**Attachment D-3A/3B**); and
 - (c) Any other documentation required by the Procurement Officer to ascertain Offeror responsibility in connection with the certified MBE subcontractor participation goal or any applicable subgoals.

Further, if the recommended awardee believes a waiver (in whole or in part) of the overall MBE goal or of any applicable subgoal is necessary, the recommended awardee must submit a fully-documented waiver request that complies with COMAR 21.11.03.11.

If the recommended awardee fails to return each completed document within the required time, the Procurement Officer may determine that the recommended awardee is not responsible and, therefore, not eligible for Contract award. If the Contract has already been awarded, the award is voidable.

- 4.30.6** A current directory of certified MBEs is available through the Maryland State Department of Transportation (MDOT), Office of Minority Business Enterprise, 7201 Corporate Center Drive, Hanover, Maryland 21076. The phone numbers are (410) 865-1269, 1-800-544-6056, or TTY (410) 865-1342. The directory is also available on the MDOT website at <http://mbe.mdot.maryland.gov/directory/>. The most current and up-to-date information on MBEs is available via this website. **Only MDOT-certified MBEs may be used to meet the MBE subcontracting goals.**
- 4.30.7** The Contractor, once awarded a Contract, will be responsible for submitting or requiring its subcontractor(s) to submit the following forms to provide the State with ongoing monitoring of MBE participation:
 - a. **Attachment D-4A** (Prime Contractor Paid/Unpaid MBE Invoice Report);
 - b. **Attachment D-4B** (MBE Prime Contractor Report, *if applicable*); and **Attachment D-5** (MBE Subcontractor Unpaid MBE Invoice Report).

4.30.8 An Offeror that requested a waiver of the goal or any of the applicable subgoals will be responsible for submitting the Good Faith Efforts Documentation to Support Waiver Request (**Attachment D-1C**) and all documentation within ten (10) Business Days from notification that it is the recommended awardee or from the date of the actual award, whichever is earlier, as required in COMAR 21.11.03.11.

4.30.9 All documents, including the MBE Utilization and Fair Solicitation Affidavit & MBE Participation Schedule (**Attachment D-1A**), completed and submitted by the Offeror in connection with its certified MBE participation commitment shall be considered a part of the resulting Contract and are hereby expressly incorporated into the Contract by reference thereto. All of the referenced documents will be considered a part of the Proposal for order of precedence purposes (see Contract – **Attachment M**, Section 2.1).

4.30.10 The Offeror is advised that liquidated damages will apply in the event the Contractor fails to comply in good faith with the requirements of the MBE program and pertinent Contract provisions. (See Contract – **Attachment M**, “Liquidated Damages” clause).

4.30.11 As set forth in COMAR 21.11.03.12-1(D), when a certified MBE firm participates on a Contract as a Prime Contractor (including a joint-venture where the MBE firm is a partner), a procurement agency may count the distinct, clearly defined portion of the work of the contract that the certified MBE firm performs with its own work force towards fulfilling up to fifty-percent (50%) of the MBE participation goal (overall) and up to one hundred percent (100%) of not more than one of the MBE participation sub-goals, if any, established for the contract.

In order to receive credit for self-performance, an MBE Prime must list its firm in Section 4A of the MBE Participation Schedule (**Attachment D-1A**) and include information regarding the work it will self-perform. For the remaining portion of the overall goal and the sub-goals, the MBE Prime must also identify certified MBE subcontractors (see Section 4B of the MBE Participation Schedule (**Attachment D-1A**)) used to meet those goals. If dually-certified, the MBE Prime can be designated as only one of the MBE sub-goal classifications but can self-perform up to 100% of the stated sub-goal.

As set forth in COMAR 21.11.03.12-1, once the Contract work begins, the work performed by a certified MBE firm, including an MBE Prime, can only be counted towards the MBE participation goal(s) if the MBE firm is performing a commercially useful function on the Contract.

4.30.12 With respect to Contract administration, the Contractor shall:

1. Submit to the Department’s designated representative by the 10th of the month following the reporting period:
 - a. A Prime Contractor Paid/Unpaid MBE Invoice Report (Attachment D-4A) listing any unpaid invoices, over 45 days old, received from any certified MBE subcontractor, the amount of each invoice and the reason payment has not been made; and
 - b. (If Applicable) An MBE Prime Contractor Report (Attachment D-4B) identifying an MBE Prime’s self-performing work to be counted towards the MBE participation goals.

2. Include in its agreements with its certified MBE subcontractors a requirement that those subcontractors submit to the Department's designated representative by the 10th of the month following the reporting period an MBE Subcontractor Paid/Unpaid Invoice Report (**Attachment D-5**) that identifies the Contract and lists all payments to the MBE subcontractor received from the Contractor in the preceding reporting period month, as well as any outstanding invoices, and the amounts of those invoices.
3. Maintain such records as are necessary to confirm compliance with its MBE participation obligations. These records must indicate the identity of certified minority and non-minority subcontractors employed on the Contract, type of work performed by each, and actual dollar value of work performed. Subcontract agreements documenting the work performed by all MBE participants must be retained by the Contractor and furnished to the Procurement Officer on request.
4. Consent to provide such documentation as reasonably requested and right-of-entry at reasonable times for purposes of the State's representatives verifying compliance with the MBE participation obligations. Contractor must retain all records concerning MBE participation and make them available for State inspection for three years after final completion of the Contract.
5. Upon completion of the Contract and before final payment and/or release of retainage, submit a final report in affidavit form and under penalty of perjury, of all payments made to, or withheld from MBE subcontractors.

4.31 Federal Funding Acknowledgement

- 4.31.1 There are programmatic conditions that apply to this Contract due to federal funding. (See **Attachment E**).
- 4.31.2 The total amount of federal funds allocated for the MHBE s \$42.1 in Maryland State fiscal year 2021. This represents 77.8% of all funds budgeted for the unit in that fiscal year. This does not necessarily represent the amount of funding available for any particular grant, contract, or solicitation.
- 4.31.3 This Contract contains federal funds. The source of these federal funds is: Medicaid. The CFDA number is: 93.778. The conditions that apply to all federal funds awarded by the MHBE are contained in Federal Funds **Attachment E**. Any additional conditions that apply to this particular federally-funded contract are contained as supplements to Federal Funds **Attachment E** and Offerors are to complete and submit these Attachments with their Proposals as instructed in the Attachments. Acceptance of this agreement indicates the Offeror's intent to comply with all conditions, which are part of this Contract.

4.32 Conflict of Interest Affidavit and Disclosure

Under State Government Article 15-508 of the State ethics laws, a person and their employer who assist or are involved in the drafting of specifications for a procurement are prohibited from submitting a proposal for that procurement, from assisting or representing another person, directly or indirectly, who is submitting a proposal for that procurement, and from participating in the implementation of those specifications, whether as a prime or subcontractor. Master Contractors will provide IT consulting and technical services for MHBE and must do so impartially and without any conflicts of interest.

Master Contractors must complete and submit the Conflict of Interest Affidavit included as **Attachment**

F of this RFP and must, in accordance with its provisions, immediately advise MHBE if an actual or potential conflict arises after the date of the affidavit. This responsibility to advise MHBE of any actual or potential conflicts of interest shall include advising MHBE, contemporaneously with the submission of any response to a RFR, of any actual or potential conflict relating to the Master Contractor's response to that particular RFR. If the Procurement Officer makes a determination before award of a TO Agreement pursuant to a respective RFR that facts or circumstances exist that give rise to or could in the future give rise to a conflict of interest as defined in COMAR 21.05.08.08A, the Procurement Officer may reject a TO Proposal in accordance with COMAR 21.06.02.03B.

In addition, all Offerors are advised that if the Offeror is awarded a Contract as a result of this solicitation, the successful Offeror's personnel and any participating subcontractor personnel may be required to complete a Conflict of Interest Affidavit and disclosure. False Statements.

Contractors are advised that Section 11-205.1 of State Finance and Procurement Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland provides as follows:

- a. In connection with a procurement contract a person may not willfully:
 1. Falsify, conceal, or suppress a material fact by any scheme or device;
 2. Make a false or fraudulent statement or representation of a material fact; or
 3. Use a false writing or document that contains a false or fraudulent statement or entry of a material fact.
- b. A person may not aid or conspire with another person to commit an act under subsection (a) of this section.
- c. A person who violates any provision of this section is guilty of a felony and on conviction is subject to a fine not exceeding \$20,000 or imprisonment not exceeding 5 years or both.

4.33 Non-Disclosure Agreement

All Offerors are advised that this solicitation and any resultant Contract(s) are subject to the terms of the Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) contained in this solicitation as **Attachment G**. This Agreement must be provided within five (5) Business Days of notification of proposed Contract award. However, to expedite processing, it is suggested that this document be completed and submitted with the Proposal.

4.34 Nonvisual Access

By submitting a Proposal, the Offeror warrants that the information technology (IT) offered under the Proposal: (1) provides equivalent access for effective use by both visual and nonvisual means; (2) will present information, including prompts used for interactive communications, in formats intended for both visual and nonvisual use; (3) if intended for use in a network, can be integrated into networks for obtaining, retrieving, and disseminating information used by individuals who are not blind or visually impaired; and (4) is available, whenever possible, without modification for compatibility with software and hardware for nonvisual access. The Offeror further warrants that the cost, if any, of modifying the information technology for compatibility with software and hardware used for nonvisual access will not increase the cost of the information technology by more than five percent (5%). For purposes of this solicitation and resulting Contract, the phrase "equivalent access" means the ability to receive, use, and manipulate information and operate controls necessary to access and use information technology by nonvisual means. Examples of equivalent access include keyboard controls used for input and synthesized speech, Braille, or other audible or tactile means used for output.

The Maryland IT Nonvisual Access standards can be found at:
www.doit.maryland.gov/policies/pages/nva.aspx.

4.35 Mercury and Products That Contain Mercury

This solicitation does not include the procurement of products known to likely include mercury as a component.

4.36 Non-Exchange Entity Agreement

This solicitation does not require a Non-Exchange Entity Agreement.

SECTION 5 – PROPOSAL FORMAT

5.1 Two Part Submission

Offerors shall submit Proposals in separate volumes:

- Volume I – TECHNICAL PROPOSAL
- Volume II – FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

5.2 Proposal Submissions

5.2.1 Volume I – Technical Proposal, and Volume II – Financial Proposal shall be sealed separately from one another.

1. RFP title and number,
2. Name and address of the Offeror, and
3. Closing date and time for receipt of Proposals

to the Procurement Officer (see RFP Key Information Summary Sheet) prior to the date and time for receipt of Proposals (see RFP Section 4.9 “Proposals Due (Closing) Date and Time”).

5.2.2

A. Technical Proposal consisting of:

- 1) Technical Proposal and all supporting material in Microsoft Word format, version 2007 or greater,
- 2) Technical Proposal in searchable Adobe PDF format,
- 3) a second searchable Adobe copy of the Technical Proposal, with confidential and proprietary information redacted (see **Section 4.8**), and

5.3 Delivery

Offerors must submit via eMMA.

1. Offerors must submit Proposals through the State’s internet based electronic procurement system, eMMA.
2. The Procurement Officer must receive all electronic Proposal material by the RFP due date and time specified in the Key Information Summary Sheet.

Request for extension of this date or time will not be granted. Except as provided in COMAR 21.05.03.02F, Proposal received by the Procurement Officer after the due date will not be considered.

5.4 Volume 1 – Technical Proposal

Note: No pricing information is to be included in the Technical Proposal (Volume I). Pricing information is to be included only in the Financial Proposal (Volume II).

5.4.1 Format of Technical Proposal. The RFP sections are numbered for ease of reference. Section 5.4.2 sets forth the order of information to be provided in the Technical Proposal, e.g., Section 5.4.2.1 “Title and Table of Contents,” Section 5.4.2.2 “Claim of Confidentiality,” Section 5.4.2.3 “Transmittal Letter,” Section 5.4.2.4 “Executive Summary,” etc. In addition to the instructions below, responses in the Offeror’s Technical Proposal should reference the organization and numbering of Sections in the RFP (ex. “Section 2.2.1 Response . . . ; “Section 2.2.2 Response . . .,” etc.). This Proposal organization will allow State officials and the Evaluation Committee (see RFP Section 6.1) to “map” Offeror responses directly to RFP requirements by Section number and will aid in the evaluation process.

5.4.2 The Technical Proposal shall include the following documents and information in the order specified as follows. Each section of the Technical Proposal shall be separated by a TAB as detailed below:

5.4.2.1 Title Page and Table of Contents (Submit under TAB A). The Technical Proposal should begin with a Title Page bearing the name and address of the Offeror and the name and number of this RFP. A Table of Contents shall follow the Title Page for the Technical Proposal, organized by section, subsection, and page number.

5.4.2.2 Claim of Confidentiality (If applicable, submit under TAB A-1). Any information which is claimed to be confidential is to be noted by reference and included after the Title Page and before the Table of Contents, and if applicable, also in the Offeror’s Financial Proposal. An explanation for each claim of confidentiality shall be included (see Section 4.8 “Public Information Act Notice”). The entire Proposal should not be given a blanket confidentiality designation. Any confidentiality designation must apply to specific sections, pages, or portions of pages of the Proposal.

5.4.2.3 Transmittal Letter (Submit under TAB B). A Transmittal Letter shall accompany the Technical Proposal. The purpose of this letter is to transmit the Proposal and acknowledge the receipt of any addenda. The Transmittal Letter should be brief and signed by an individual who is authorized to commit the Offeror to the services and requirements as stated in this RFP. The Transmittal Letter should include the following:

1. Name and address of the Offeror;
2. Name, title, e-mail address, and telephone number of primary contact for the Offeror;
3. Solicitation Title and Solicitation Number that the Proposal is in response to;
4. Signature, typed name, and title of an individual authorized to commit the Offeror to its Proposal;
5. Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) of the Offeror, or if a single individual, that individual’s Social Security Number (SSN);
6. Offeror’s eMMA number;
7. Offeror’s MBE certification number (if applicable);

8. Acceptance of all State RFP and Contract terms and conditions (see Section 4.17); if any exceptions are taken, they are to be noted in the Executive Summary (see Section 5.4.2.4); and
9. Acknowledgement of all addenda to this RFP.

5.4.2.4 **Executive Summary (Submit under TAB C).** The Offeror shall condense and highlight the contents of the Technical Proposal in a separate section titled “Executive Summary.” In addition, the Summary shall indicate whether the Offeror is the subsidiary of another entity, and if so, whether all information submitted by the Offeror pertains exclusively to the Offeror. If not, the subsidiary Offeror shall include a guarantee of performance from its parent organization as part of its Executive Summary.

The Summary shall also identify any exceptions the Offeror has taken to the requirements of this RFP, the Contract (Attachment H), or any other attachments. Exceptions to terms and conditions may result in having the Proposal deemed unacceptable or classified as not reasonably susceptible of being selected for award.

If the Offeror has taken no exceptions to the requirements of this RFP, the Contract (Attachment H), or any other attachments, the Executive Summary shall so state.

5.4.2.5 **Minimum Qualifications Documentation (If applicable, Submit under TAB D).** The Offeror shall submit any Minimum Qualifications documentation that may be required, as set forth in RFP Section 1, “Minimum Qualifications.”

5.4.2.6 **Offeror Technical Response to RFP Requirements and Proposed Work Plan (Submit under TAB E).**

5.4.5.6.1 The Offeror shall address each Scope of Work requirement (RFP Section 2) in its Technical Proposal and describe how its proposed services, including the services of any proposed subcontractor(s), will meet or exceed the requirement(s). If the State is seeking Offeror agreement to any requirement(s), the Offeror shall state its agreement or disagreement. Any paragraph in the Technical Proposal that responds to a Scope of Work requirement shall include an explanation of how the work will be done. Any exception to a requirement, term, or condition may result in having the Proposal classified as not reasonably susceptible of being selected for award or the Offeror deemed not responsible.

5.4.5.6.2 The Offeror shall give a definitive **section-by-section** description of the proposed plan to meet the requirements of the RFP, i.e., a Work Plan. The Work Plan shall include the specific methodology, techniques, and number of staff, if applicable, to be used by the Offeror in providing the required services as outlined in RFP Section 2, Scope of Work. The description shall include an outline of the overall management concepts employed by the Offeror and a project management plan, including project control mechanisms and overall timelines. Project deadlines considered contract deliverables must be recognized in the Work Plan.

5.4.5.6.3 The Offeror shall identify the location(s) from which it proposes to provide the services, including, if applicable, any current facilities that it operates, and any required construction to satisfy the State’s requirements as outlined in this RFP.

5.4.5.6.4 The Offeror shall provide a draft Problem Escalation Procedure (PEP) that includes, at a minimum, titles of individuals to be contacted by the Department's Contract Monitor should problems arise under the Contract and explains how problems with work under the Contract will be escalated in order to resolve any issues in a timely manner. Final procedures shall be submitted as indicated in RFP Section 3.3.

5.4.5.6.6 The Offeror shall provide a detailed explanation of service capabilities to address each of the following:

- Describe the Offeror's understanding and knowledge of both the federal and state requirements of the Affordable Care Act as it pertains to a state-based health insurance exchange;
- Describe the Offeror's understanding and knowledge of the goals and objectives of the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange and the stakeholders involved in the process;
- Describe the Offeror's understanding and knowledge of the goals and objectives of the communications and outreach campaign as described in Section 3 of this solicitation;
- Provide examples of the Offeror's capabilities, skills, and experience with prior projects in successfully and effectively developing and implementing creative advertising campaigns including television, radio, print, outdoor, mobile, online, and other mediums. Include impact analyses and results as well as examples;
- Provide examples of the Offeror's capabilities, skills, and experience with prior projects in effectively and successfully developing and designing comprehensive statewide marketing, outreach and education campaigns for health care, public health or related programs;
- Describe and provide examples of the Offeror's knowledge and experience with prior projects involving successful marketing, outreach and education campaigns which targeted diverse, multicultural and "hard to reach" populations;

In addition to addressing Section 2 Scope of Work requirements, also provide a detailed implementation plan that clearly demonstrates the Offeror's ability to meet the MHBE's requirements. This implementation plan should include a list of specific implementation tasks and transition protocols, a timetable for initiation and completion of such tasks, beginning with the contract commencement and continuing through the end of the campaign. This plan should address any specific milestones identified in Section 2 and all other tasks and protocols necessary for successful implementation. The implementation plan should be specific about requirements for information transfer as well as any services or assistance required from the MHBE during implementation. The implementation plan should also specifically identify those individuals, by area of expertise, responsible for key implementation activities and clearly identify their roles for implementation. The plan shall also include a description of how communication is to be accomplished for at-risk and minority populations and for persons with disabilities, including native language testing and development of messaging, strategies and materials that are linguistically and culturally appropriate.

Please provide a mock proposed budget (**ATTACHMENT J**) that describes the percent of overall effort per labor category the Offeror proposes for each of the Scope of Work categories described in RFP Section 2.3. The mock budget will describe the percentage effort each Offeror recommends for each category and the percentage split between labor categories. Offerors should consider the existence of MHBE staff resources, especially in the areas of social media marketing. The mock budget is for evaluation purposes only.

5.4.2.7 Experience and Qualifications of Proposed Staff (Submit under TAB F). The Offeror shall identify the qualifications and types of staff proposed to be utilized under the Contract.

The Offeror shall describe in detail how the proposed staff's experience and qualifications relate to their specific responsibilities, including any staff of proposed subcontractor(s), as detailed in the Work Plan. The Offeror shall include individual resumes for the Key Personnel and the proposed MHBE Account Team, including Key Personnel for any proposed subcontractor(s), who are to be assigned to the project if the Offeror is awarded the Contract. Each resume should include the amount of experience the individual has had relative to the Scope of Work set forth in this solicitation. Letters of intended commitment to work on the project, including letters from any proposed subcontractor(s), shall be included in this section.

The Offeror shall provide a staffing plan that describes how the Offeror intends to staff this Contract to meet the MHBE's needs. Provide an organizational chart showing the management structure of the firm with a description of the qualifications, credentials and the location of upper management, regional management and support staff, as well as those actually assigned and dedicated to managing this account. The following information is to be included:

- Names, titles and roles of key personnel
- Area of expertise
- Geographic location
- Brief description of qualification and credentials

5.4.2.8 Offeror Qualifications and Capabilities (Submit under TAB G). The Offeror shall include information on past experience with similar projects and/or services. The Offeror shall describe how its organization can meet the requirements of this RFP and shall also include the following information:

1. The number of years the Offeror has provided the similar services;
2. The number of clients/customers and geographic locations that the Offeror currently serves;
3. The names and titles of headquarters or regional management personnel who may be involved with supervising the services to be performed under this Contract;
4. The Offeror's process for resolving billing errors; and
5. An organizational chart that identifies the complete structure of the Offeror, including any parent company, headquarters, regional offices, and subsidiaries of the Offeror.

5.4.2.9 References (Submit under TAB H). At least three (3) references are requested from customers who are capable of documenting the Offeror's ability to provide the services specified in this RFP. References used to meet any Minimum Qualifications (see RFP Section 1) may be used to meet this request. Each reference shall be from a client for whom the Offeror has provided services within the past five (5) years and shall include the following information:

1. Name of client organization;
2. Name, title, telephone number, and e-mail address, if available, of point of contact for client organization; and

3. Value, type, duration, and description of services provided.

The Department reserves the right to request additional references or utilize references not provided by an Offeror.

5.4.2.10 List of Current or Prior State Contracts (Submit under TAB I). Provide a list of all contracts with any entity of the State of Maryland for which the Offeror is currently performing services or for which services have been completed within the last five (5) years. For each identified contract, the Offeror is to provide:

1. The State contracting entity;
2. A brief description of the services/goods provided;
3. The dollar value of the contract;
4. The term of the contract;
5. The State employee contact person (name, title, telephone number, and, if possible, e-mail address); and
6. Whether the contract was terminated before the end of the term specified in the original contract, including whether any available renewal option was not exercised.

Information obtained regarding the Offeror's level of performance on State contracts will be used by the Procurement Officer to determine the responsibility of the Offeror and considered as part of the experience and past performance evaluation criteria of the RFP.

5.4.2.11 Financial Capability (Submit under TAB J). An Offeror must include in its Proposal a commonly accepted method to prove its fiscal integrity. If available, the Offeror shall include Financial Statements, preferably a Profit and Loss (P&L) statement and a Balance Sheet, for the last two (2) years (independently audited preferred).

In addition, the Offeror may supplement its response to this Section by including one or more of the following with its response:

1. Dun & Bradstreet Rating;
2. Standard and Poor's Rating;
3. Lines of credit;
4. Evidence of a successful financial track record; and
5. Evidence of adequate working capital.

5.4.2.12 Certificate of Insurance (Submit under TAB K). The Offeror shall provide a copy of its current certificate of insurance showing the types and limits of insurance in effect as of the Proposal submission date. The current insurance types and limits do not have to be the same as described in Section 3.1. See Section 3.1 for the required insurance certificate submission for the recommended Offeror.

5.4.2.13 Subcontractors (Submit under TAB L). The Offeror shall provide a complete list of all subcontractors that will work on the Contract if the Offeror receives an award, including those utilized in meeting the MBE and/or VSBE subcontracting goal, if applicable. This list shall include a full description of the duties each subcontractor will perform and why/how each subcontractor was deemed the most qualified for this project.

5.4.2.14 Legal Action Summary (Submit under TAB M). This summary shall include:

1. A statement as to whether there are any outstanding legal actions or potential claims against the Offeror and a brief description of any action;
2. A brief description of any settled or closed legal actions or claims against the Offeror over the past five (5) years;
3. A description of any judgments against the Offeror within the past five (5) years, including the case name, court case docket number, and what the final ruling or determination was from the court; and
4. In instances where litigation is on-going and the Offeror has been directed not to disclose information by the court, the name of the judge and location of the court.

5.4.2.15 Samples of Past Work of Similar Scope

The Offeror shall provide at samples of work to demonstrate an understanding of the Scope of Work. Requested samples, per category, including such items as (examples):

- **Category 1:** Sample status report demonstrating how the agency provides regular status updates to clients (provide hard copies according to the proposal requirements for the evaluation committee)
- **Category 2:** Advertising creative samples including television, radio, print and/or online advertising (the Offeror may include CD/DVD/Flash drive samples and/or hard copy samples of work; if hard copies are submitted, please adhere to the proposal guidelines for the evaluation committee)
- **Category 4:** Digital Advertising, SMS campaign (CD/DVD/Flash drive samples are acceptable)
- **Category 5:** Social media policy, platforms, content strategy (these samples may be mixed and include both hard copy and CD/DVD/Flash drive samples; printed policies and content documents should adhere to proposal guidelines regarding quantities)
- **Category 6:** Community and corporate outreach strategy (hard copy strategy documents in adherence to proposal guidelines)
- **Category 7:** Collateral materials (hard copy, original samples ONLY)
- **Category 8:** Provide a link to website and or hard copies showing website redesign experience

5.4.3 Additional Required Technical Submissions (Submit under TAB O).

The following documents shall be completed, signed, and included in the Technical Proposal that follows the material submitted in response to Section 5.4.1.

- a. Completed Bid/Proposal Affidavit (RFP **Attachment B**).
- b. Completed MDOT Certified MBE Utilization and Fair Solicitation Affidavit (**Attachment D-1A**). See **Section 4.30**;
- c. If applicable, a signed statement from the Offeror's Parent Organization Guaranteeing Performance of the Offeror. ***refer to RFP Section 4.20.**
- d. Federal Funding Acknowledgement (**Attachment E**); refer to **RFP Section 4.31**.
- e. Completed Conflict of Interest Affidavit and Disclosure (**Attachment F**) ***refer to RFP Section 4.32.**

5.5 Volume II – Financial Proposal

Under separate sealed cover from the Technical Proposal and clearly identified:

- A. Financial Proposal consisting of:
 - 1) Financial Proposal entered into the price form spreadsheet within eMMA and all supporting material fully executed.,
 - 2) Financial Proposal in searchable Adobe PDF format,
 - 3) a second searchable Adobe copy of the Financial Proposal, with confidential and proprietary information removed (see **Section 4.8**).

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SECTION 6 – EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

6.1 Evaluation Committee

Evaluation of Proposals will be performed in accordance with this RFP by a committee established for that purpose and based on the evaluation criteria set forth below. The Evaluation Committee will review Proposals, participate in Offeror oral presentations and discussions, and provide input to the Procurement Officer. The MHBE reserves the right to utilize the services of individuals outside of the established Evaluation Committee for advice and assistance, as deemed appropriate.

6.2 Evaluation Criteria

The Contract will be awarded to all qualified Offerors in accordance with the Competitive Sealed Proposals procurement process under Section II. B of MHBE’s Procurement Policies and Procedures.

6.3 Technical Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The criteria to be used to evaluate each Technical Proposal are listed below in descending order of importance. Unless stated otherwise, any sub-criteria within each criterion have equal weight.

6.3.1 Experience and Qualifications of Proposed Staff (See RFP § 5.4.2.7).

MHBE will evaluate the length and relevance of experience and qualifications of the Offeror's (and any subcontractors') personnel, as described in the Offeror's Proposal. Relevance will be determined by the alignment of experience with the associated Scope of Work/deliverables of team members.

6.3.2 Offeror Qualifications and Capabilities, including proposed Subcontractors (See RFP § 5.4.2.8 – 5.4.2.14).

MHBE will evaluate the length and relevance of experience and qualifications of the Offeror's (and any subcontractors') personnel, as described in the Offeror's Proposal. Relevance will be determined by the alignment of experience with the associated Scope of Work/deliverables of team members.

6.3.3 Offeror's Technical Response to RFP Requirements, Work Plan and creativity of samples. (See RFP § 5.4.2.6 and 5.4.2.16).

MHBE will evaluate the Offeror's comprehensive understanding of the RFP's work requirements and mastery of the relevant subject matter, as demonstrated in the Offeror's Proposal responding to the work requirements set forth in the RFP, including an explanation of how the work will be done. Understanding of the work requirements will be determined by evaluating the Offeror's ability to articulate strategic recommendations, tactics, and creativity, how the proposed recommendations will reduce the number of uninsured individuals in Maryland and increase enrollment of small businesses and individuals through Maryland Health Connection. The creativity of the samples will be evaluated based on the Offeror's work samples and their relevance to the Scope of Work.

6.4 Financial Criteria

Financial Proposals will be evaluated separately. Offerors shall propose prices for **all** labor. All Qualified Offerors will be ranked from the lowest (most advantageous) to the highest (least advantageous) price based on the Total Proposal Price within the stated guidelines set forth in this RFP and as submitted on **Attachment B** - Financial Proposal Form.

6.5 Selection Procedures

6.5.1 **General.** The Contract will be awarded in accordance with the Competitive Sealed Proposals (CSP) method found in Section II.B of the MHBE Procurement Policies and Procedures. The Competitive Sealed Proposals method allows for the conducting of discussions and the revision of Proposals during these discussions. Therefore, the State may conduct discussions with all Offerors that have submitted Proposals that are determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for contract award or potentially so. However, the State reserves the right to make an award without holding discussions.

In either case (i.e., with or without discussions), the State may determine an Offeror to be not responsible and/or an Offeror's Proposal to be not reasonably susceptible of being selected for award at any time after the initial closing date for receipt of Proposals and prior to Contract award. If the State finds an Offeror to be not responsible and/or an Offeror's Technical Proposal to be not reasonably susceptible of being selected for award, that Offeror's Financial Proposal will subsequently be returned if the Financial Proposal is unopened at the time of the determination.

6.5.2 Selection Process Sequence

- 6.5.2.1 A determination is made that the MDOT Certified MBE Utilization and Fair Solicitation Affidavit (**Attachment D-1A**) is included and properly completed, if there is an MBE goal. Finally, a determination is made that all Minimum Qualifications, if any (See RFP Section 1), have been satisfied.
- 6.5.2.2 Technical Proposals are evaluated for technical merit and ranked. During this review, oral presentations and discussions may be held. The purpose of such discussions will be to assure a full understanding of the State's requirements and Offeror's ability to perform the services, as well as facilitate arrival at a Contract that is most advantageous to the State. Offerors will be contacted by the State as soon as any discussions are scheduled.
- 6.5.2.3 Offerors must confirm in writing any substantive oral clarifications of, or changes in, their Technical Proposals made in the course of discussions. Any such written clarifications or changes then become part of the Offeror's Technical Proposal. Technical Proposals are given a final review and ranked.
- 6.5.2.4 The Financial Proposal of each Qualified Offeror (a responsible Offeror determined to have submitted an acceptable Proposal) will be evaluated and ranked separately from the Technical evaluation. After a review of the Financial Proposals of Qualified Offerors, the Evaluation Committee or Procurement Officer may again conduct discussions to further evaluate the Offeror's entire Proposal.
- 6.5.2.5 When in the best interest of the State, the Procurement Officer may permit Qualified Offerors to revise their initial Proposals and submit, in writing, Best and Final Offers (BAFOs). The State may make an award without issuing a request for a BAFO.

6.5.3 **Award Determination.** Upon completion of the Technical Proposal and Financial Proposal evaluations and rankings, each Offeror will receive an overall ranking. The Procurement Officer will recommend award of the Contract to the responsible Offeror that submitted the Proposal determined to be the most advantageous to the State. In making this most advantageous Proposal determination, technical factors will receive greater weight than financial factors.

6.6 Documents Required upon Notice of Recommendation for Contract Award

Upon receipt of a Notification of Recommendation for Contract Award, the following documents shall be completed, signed if applicable with original signatures, and submitted by the recommended awardee within five (5) Business Days, unless noted otherwise. Submit one (1) copy of each of the following documents:

1. Contract (**Attachment H**),
2. Contract Affidavit (**Attachment I**),
3. MBE **Attachments D-2 and D-3A/B**, within ten (10) Business Days, if applicable; *see **Section 4.30**,
4. MBE Waiver Justification within ten (10) Business Days (see **MBE Waiver Guidance and forms in Attachments D-1B and D-1C**), if a waiver has been requested (if applicable; *see **Section 4.30**),
5. Non-Disclosure Agreement (**Attachment G**), if applicable; *see **Section 4.33**,

RFP ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A – Pre-Proposal Conference Response Form

It is requested that this form be completed and submitted as described in RFP Section 4.5 by those potential Offerors that plan on attending the Pre-Proposal Conference.

ATTACHMENT B – Financial Proposal Instructions and Form

The Financial Proposal Form must be completed and submitted in the Financial Proposal package.

ATTACHMENT C – Proposal Affidavit

This Attachment must be completed and submitted with the Technical Proposal.

ATTACHMENTS D – Minority Business Enterprise Forms

If required (see RFP Section 4.30), these Attachments include the MBE subcontracting goal statement and instructions, and MBE Attachments D-1 through D-5. Attachment D-1 must be properly completed and submitted with the Offeror's Technical Proposal or the Proposal will be deemed not reasonably susceptible of being selected for award and rejected. Within ten (10) Business Days of receiving notification of recommendation for Contract award, the Offeror must submit Attachments D-2 and D-3A/B.

ATTACHMENT E – Federal Funds Attachment

If required (see RFP Section 4.31), these Attachments must be completed and submitted with the Technical Proposal as instructed in the Attachments. The terms and conditions in this attachment are incorporated into any resulting Contract with the Offeror.

ATTACHMENT F – Conflict of Interest Affidavit and Disclosure

If required (see RFP Section 4.32), this Attachment must be completed and submitted with the Technical Proposal.

ATTACHMENT G– Non-Disclosure Agreement

If required (see RFP Section 4.33), this Attachment must be completed and submitted within five (5) Business Days of receiving notification of recommendation for award. However, to expedite processing, it is suggested that this document be completed and submitted with the Technical Proposal.

ATTACHMENT H – Contract

This is the sample contract used by the MHBE. It is provided with the RFP for informational purposes and is not required to be submitted at Proposal submission time. Upon notification of recommendation for award, a completed contract will be sent to the recommended awardee for signature. The recommended awardee must return to the Procurement Officer one (1) executed copy of the Contract within five (5) Business Days after receipt. Upon Contract award, a fully executed copy will be sent to the Contractor.

ATTACHMENT I – Contract Affidavit

This Attachment must be completed and submitted by the recommended awardee to the Procurement Officer within five (5) Business Days of receiving notification of recommendation for award.

ATTACHMENT J – Mock Budget Proposal

Appendix I - Definitions

ATTACHMENT A – PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE RESPONSE FORM

Solicitation Number BPM040600

MHBE Full-Service Communications and Marketing RFP

A Pre-Proposal Conference will be held at the date, time, via Google Meet as indicated in the RFP Key Information Summary Sheet (near the beginning of the solicitation, after the Title Page and Notice to Vendors).

Please return this form at least three (3) Business Days prior to the Pre-Proposal Conference date, advising whether or not you plan to attend. The completed form should be returned via e-mail to the Procurement Officer. The Procurement Officer’s contact information is provided in the RFP Key Information Summary Sheet.

Please indicate:

_____ Yes, the following representatives will be in attendance:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

_____ No, we will not be in attendance.

Please specify whether any reasonable accommodations are requested (see RFP § 4.5 “Pre-Proposal Conference”):

Signature	Title
-----------	-------

Name of Firm (please print)

ATTACHMENT B – FINANCIAL PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS & FORM

B-1: FINANCIAL PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

In order to assist Offerors in the preparation of their Financial Proposal and to comply with the requirements of this solicitation, Financial Proposal Instructions and a Financial Proposal Form have been prepared. Offerors shall submit their Financial Proposal on the Financial Proposal Form in accordance with the instructions on the Financial Proposal Form and as specified herein. Do not alter the Financial Proposal Form or the Proposal may be determined to be not reasonably susceptible of being selected for award. The Financial Proposal Form is to be signed and dated, where requested, by an individual who is authorized to bind the Offeror to the prices entered on the Financial Proposal Form.

The Financial Proposal Form is used to calculate the Offeror’s EVALUATED PROPOSAL PRICE. Follow these instructions carefully when completing your Financial Proposal Form:

- A) All Unit and Extended Prices must be clearly entered in dollars and cents, e.g., \$24.15. Make your decimal points clear and distinct.
- B) All Unit Prices must be the actual price per unit the State will pay for the specific item or service identified in this RFP and may not be contingent on any other factor or condition in any manner.
- C) All calculations shall be rounded to the nearest cent, i.e., .344 shall be .34 and .345 shall be .35.
- D) Any goods or services required through this RFP and proposed by the vendor at **No Cost to the State** must be clearly entered in the Unit Price, if appropriate, and Extended Price with **\$0.00**.
- E) Every blank in every Financial Proposal Form shall be filled in. Any changes or corrections made to

the Financial Proposal Form by the Offeror prior to submission shall be initialed and dated.

- F) Except as instructed on the Financial Proposal Form, nothing shall be entered on or attached to the Financial Proposal Form that alters or proposes conditions or contingencies on the prices. Alterations and/or conditions may render the Proposal not reasonably susceptible of being selected for award.
- G) It is imperative that the prices included on the Financial Proposal Form have been entered correctly and calculated accurately by the Offeror and that the respective total prices agree with the entries on the Financial Proposal Form. Any incorrect entries or inaccurate calculations by the Offeror will be treated as provided in COMAR 21.05.03.03, and may cause the Proposal to be rejected.
- H) If option years are included, Offerors must submit pricing for each option year. Any option to renew will be exercised at the sole discretion of the State and comply with all terms and conditions in force at the time the option is exercised. If exercised, the option period shall be for a period identified in the RFP at the prices entered in the Financial Proposal Form.
- I) All Financial Proposal prices entered below are to be fully loaded prices that include all costs/expenses associated with the provision of services as required by the RFP. The Financial Proposal price shall include, but is not limited to, all: labor, profit/overhead, general operating, administrative, and all other expenses and costs necessary to perform the work set forth in the solicitation. No other amounts will be paid to the Contractor. If labor rates are requested, those amounts shall be fully-loaded rates; no overtime amounts will be paid.
- J) Unless indicated elsewhere in the RFP, sample amounts used for calculations on the Financial Proposal Form are typically estimates for evaluation purposes only. Unless stated otherwise in the RFP, the MHBE does not guarantee a minimum or maximum number of units or usage in the performance of this Contract.
- K) Failure to adhere to any of these instructions may result in the Proposal being determined not reasonably susceptible of being selected for award.

B-2: FINANCIAL PROPOSAL FORM

Provided as a separate Excel Document.

Submit one hard, signed copy and submit electronic files in both Excel and PDF format.

ATTACHMENT C – PROPOSAL AFFIDAVIT

A. AUTHORITY

I hereby affirm that I, _____ (name of affiant) am the _____ (title) and duly authorized representative of _____ (name of business entity) and that I possess the legal authority to make this affidavit on behalf of the business for which I am acting.

B. CERTIFICATION REGARDING COMMERCIAL NONDISCRIMINATION

The undersigned Offeror hereby certifies and agrees that the following information is correct: In preparing its Proposal on this project, the Offeror has considered all Proposals submitted from qualified, potential subcontractors and suppliers, and has not engaged in “discrimination” as defined in § 19-103 of the State Finance and Procurement Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. “Discrimination” means any disadvantage, difference, distinction, or preference in the solicitation, selection, hiring, or commercial treatment of a vendor, subcontractor, or commercial customer on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry, or national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, sexual identity, or on the basis of disability or any otherwise unlawful use of characteristics regarding the vendor’s, supplier’s, or commercial customer’s employees or owners. “Discrimination” also includes retaliating against any person or other entity for reporting any incident of “discrimination”. Without limiting any other provision of the solicitation on this project, it is understood that, if the certification is false, such false certification constitutes grounds for the State to reject the Proposal submitted by the Offeror on this project, and terminate any contract awarded based on the Proposal. As part of its Proposal, the Offeror herewith submits a list of all instances within the past four (4) years where there has been a final adjudicated determination in a legal or administrative proceeding in the State of Maryland that the Offeror discriminated against subcontractors, vendors, suppliers, or commercial customers, and a description of the status or resolution of that determination, including any remedial action taken. Offeror agrees to comply in all respects with the State’s Commercial Nondiscrimination Policy as described under Title 19 of the State Finance and Procurement Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

B-1. CERTIFICATION REGARDING MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

The undersigned Offeror hereby certifies and agrees that it has fully complied with the State Minority Business Enterprise Law, State Finance and Procurement Article, § 14-308(a)(2), Annotated Code of Maryland, which provides that, except as otherwise provided by law, a contractor may not identify a certified minority business enterprise in a Proposal and:

- (1) Fail to request, receive, or otherwise obtain authorization from the certified minority business enterprise to identify the certified minority Proposal;
- (2) Fail to notify the certified minority business enterprise before execution of the contract of its inclusion in the Proposal;
- (3) Fail to use the certified minority business enterprise in the performance of the contract; or
- (4) Pay the certified minority business enterprise solely for the use of its name in the Proposal.

Without limiting any other provision of the solicitation on this project, it is understood that if the certification is false, such false certification constitutes grounds for the State to reject the Proposal submitted by the Offeror on this project, and terminate any contract awarded based on the Proposal.

C. AFFIRMATION REGARDING BRIBERY CONVICTIONS

I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:

Neither I, nor to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, the above business (as is defined in Section 16-101(b) of the State Finance and Procurement Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland), or any of its officers, directors, partners, controlling stockholders, or any of its employees directly involved in the business's contracting activities including obtaining or performing contracts with public bodies has been convicted of, or has had probation before judgment imposed pursuant to Criminal Procedure Article, § 6-220, Annotated Code of Maryland, or has pleaded nolo contendere to a charge of, bribery, attempted bribery, or conspiracy to bribe in violation of Maryland law, or of the law of any other state or federal law, except as follows (indicate the reasons why the affirmation cannot be given and list any conviction, plea, or imposition of probation before judgment with the date, court, official or administrative body, the sentence or disposition, the name(s) of person(s) involved, and their current positions and responsibilities with the business):

D. AFFIRMATION REGARDING OTHER CONVICTIONS

I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:

Neither I, nor to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, the above business, or any of its officers, directors, partners, controlling stockholders, or any of its employees directly involved in the business's contracting activities including obtaining or performing contracts with public bodies, has:

- (1) Been convicted under state or federal statute of:
 - (a) A criminal offense incident to obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public or private contract; or
 - (b) Fraud, embezzlement, theft, forgery, falsification or destruction of records or receiving stolen property;
- (2) Been convicted of any criminal violation of a state or federal antitrust statute;
- (3) Been convicted under the provisions of Title 18 of the United States Code for violation of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1961 et seq., or the Mail Fraud Act, 18

U.S.C. § 1341 et seq., for acts in connection with the submission of Proposals for a public or private contract;

(4) Been convicted of a violation of the State Minority Business Enterprise Law, § 14-308 of the State Finance and Procurement Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland;

(5) Been convicted of a violation of § 11-205.1 of the State Finance and Procurement Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland;

(6) Been convicted of conspiracy to commit any act or omission that would constitute grounds for conviction or liability under any law or statute described in subsections (1)— (5) above;

(7) Been found civilly liable under a state or federal antitrust statute for acts or omissions in connection with the submission of Proposals for a public or private contract;

(8) Been found in a final adjudicated decision to have violated the Commercial Nondiscrimination Policy under Title 19 of the State Finance and Procurement Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland with regard to a public or private contract;

(9) Been convicted of a violation of one or more of the following provisions of the Internal Revenue Code:

(a) §7201, Attempt to Evade or Defeat Tax;

(b) §7203, Willful Failure to File Return, Supply Information, or Pay Tax,

(c) §7205, Fraudulent Withholding Exemption Certificate or Failure to Supply Information,

(d) §7206, Fraud and False Statements, or

(e) §7207, Fraudulent Returns, Statements, or Other Documents;

(10) Been convicted of a violation of 18 U.S.C. §286, Conspiracy to Defraud the Government with Respect to Claims, 18 U.S.C. §287, False, Fictitious, or Fraudulent Claims, or 18 U.S.C. §371, Conspiracy to Defraud the United States;

(11) Been convicted of a violation of the Tax-General Article, Title 13, Subtitle 7 or Subtitle 10, Annotated Code of Maryland;

(12) Been found to have willfully or knowingly violated State Prevailing Wage Laws as provided in the State Finance and Procurement Article, Title 17, Subtitle 2, Annotated Code of Maryland, if:

(a) A court:

(i) Made the finding; and

(ii) Decision became final; or

(b) The finding was:

(i) Made in a contested case under the Maryland Administrative Procedure Act; and

(ii) Not overturned on judicial review;

(13) Been found to have willfully or knowingly violated State Living Wage Laws as provided in the State Finance and Procurement Article, Title 18, Annotated Code of Maryland, if:

(a) A court:

(i) Made the finding; and

(ii) Decision became final; or

(b) The finding was:

(i) Made in a contested case under the Maryland Administrative Procedure Act; and

(ii) Not overturned on judicial review;

(14) Been found to have willfully or knowingly violated the Labor and Employment Article, Title 3, Subtitles 3, 4, or 5, or Title 5, Annotated Code of Maryland, if:

(a) A court:

(i) Made the finding; and

(ii) Decision became final; or

(b) The finding was:

(i) Made in a contested case under the Maryland Administrative Procedure Act; and

(ii) Not overturned on judicial review; or

(15) Admitted in writing or under oath, during the course of an official investigation or other proceedings, acts or omissions that would constitute grounds for conviction or liability under any law or statute described in §§ B and C and subsections D(1)—(14) above, except as follows (indicate reasons why the affirmations cannot be given, and list any conviction, plea, or imposition of probation before judgment with the date, court, official or administrative body, the sentence or disposition, the name(s) of the person(s) involved and their current positions and responsibilities with the business, and the status of any debarment):

E. AFFIRMATION REGARDING DEBARMENT

I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:

Neither I, nor to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, the above business, or any of its officers, directors, partners, controlling stockholders, or any of its employees directly involved in the business’s contracting activities, including obtaining or performing contracts with public bodies, has ever been suspended or debarred (including being issued a limited denial of participation) by any public entity, except as follows (list each debarment or suspension providing the dates of the suspension or debarment, the name of the public entity and the status of the proceedings, the name(s) of the person(s) involved and their current positions and responsibilities with the business, the grounds of the debarment or suspension, and the details of each person’s involvement in any activity that formed the grounds of the debarment or suspension).

F. AFFIRMATION REGARDING DEBARMENT OF RELATED ENTITIES

I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:

(1) The business was not established and does not operate in a manner designed to evade the application of or defeat the purpose of debarment pursuant to Sections 16-101, et seq., of the State Finance and Procurement Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland; and

(2) The business is not a successor, assignee, subsidiary, or affiliate of a suspended or debarred business, except as follows (you must indicate the reasons why the affirmations cannot be given without qualification):

G. SUBCONTRACT AFFIRMATION

I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:

Neither I, nor to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, the above business, has knowingly entered into a contract with a public body under which a person debarred or suspended under Title 16 of the State Finance and Procurement Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland will provide, directly or indirectly, supplies, services, architectural services, construction related services, leases of real property, or construction.

H. AFFIRMATION REGARDING COLLUSION

I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:

Neither I, nor to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, the above business has:

- (1) Agreed, conspired, connived, or colluded to produce a deceptive show of competition in the compilation of the accompanying Proposal that is being submitted; or
- (2) In any manner, directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement of any kind to fix the Proposal price of the Offeror or of any competitor, or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competitive bidding in connection with the contract for which the accompanying Proposal is submitted.

I. CERTIFICATION OF TAX PAYMENT

I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:

Except as validly contested, the business has paid, or has arranged for payment of, all taxes due the State of Maryland and has filed all required returns and reports with the Comptroller of the Treasury, State Department of Assessments and Taxation, and Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, as applicable, and will have paid all withholding taxes due the State of Maryland prior to final settlement.

J. CONTINGENT FEES

I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:

The business has not employed or retained any person, partnership, corporation, or other entity, other than a bona fide employee, bona fide agent, bona fide salesperson, or commercial selling agency working for the business, to solicit or secure the Contract, and that the business has not paid or agreed to pay any person, partnership, corporation, or other entity, other than a bona fide employee, bona fide agent, bona fide salesperson, or commercial selling agency, any fee or any other consideration contingent on the making of the Contract.

K. CERTIFICATION REGARDING INVESTMENTS IN IRAN

(1) The undersigned certifies that, in accordance with State Finance and Procurement Article, §17-705, Annotated Code of Maryland:

- (a) It is not identified on the list created by the Board of Public Works as a person engaging in investment activities in Iran as described in State Finance and Procurement Article, §17-702, Annotated Code of Maryland; and
- (b) It is not engaging in investment activities in Iran as described in State Finance and Procurement Article, §17-702, Annotated Code of Maryland.

2. The undersigned is unable to make the above certification regarding its investment activities in Iran due to the following activities: _____

L. CONFLICT MINERALS ORIGINATED IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (FOR SUPPLIES AND SERVICES CONTRACTS)

I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:

The business has complied with the provisions of State Finance and Procurement Article, §14-413, Annotated Code of Maryland governing proper disclosure of certain information regarding conflict minerals originating in the Democratic Republic of Congo or its neighboring countries as required by federal law.

M. I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:

Any claims of environmental attributes made relating to a product or service included in the Proposal are consistent with the Federal Trade Commission’s Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims

as provided in 16 C.F.R. §260, that apply to claims about the environmental attributes of a product, package, or service in connection with the marketing, offering for sale, or sale of such item or service.

N. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT this Affidavit is to be furnished to the Procurement Officer and may be distributed to units of: (1) the State of Maryland; (2) counties or other subdivisions of the State of Maryland; (3) other states; and (4) the federal government. I further acknowledge that this Affidavit is subject to applicable laws of the United States and the State of Maryland, both criminal and civil, and that nothing in this Affidavit or any contract resulting from the submission of this Proposal shall be construed to supersede, amend, modify or waive, on behalf of the State of Maryland, or any unit of the State of Maryland having jurisdiction, the exercise of any statutory right or remedy conferred by the Constitution and the laws of Maryland with respect to any misrepresentation made or any violation of the obligations, terms and covenants undertaken by the above business with respect to (1) this Affidavit, (2) the contract, and (3) other Affidavits comprising part of the contract.

I DO SOLEMNLY DECLARE AND AFFIRM UNDER THE PENALTIES OF PERJURY THAT THE CONTENTS OF THIS AFFIDAVIT ARE TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION, AND BELIEF.

Date: _____

By: _____ (print name of Authorized Representative and Affiant)

_____ (signature of Authorized Representative and Affiant)

SUBMIT THIS AFFIDAVIT WITH PROPOSAL

ATTACHMENT D - MBE FORMS

Please use the link below to access all MBE forms.

Be sure to use the updated form, old forms will not be accepted and may lead to your Proposal being rejected.

<https://procurement.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2018/05/AttachmentDMBE-Forms-1.pdf>

ATTACHMENT E - FEDERAL FUNDS ATTACHMENT
[Reference, among other provisions, 45 C.F.R. § 75.335]

In addition to other provisions required by the RFP and Contract related to the federal funds that may be included in any Contract to be awarded as a result of this RFP, the following provisions are applicable:

A. Contracts for more than the simplified acquisition threshold currently set at \$150,000, which is the inflation adjusted amount determined by the Civilian Agency Acquisition Council and the Defense Acquisition Regulations Council (Councils) as authorized by 41 U.S.C. 1908, must address administrative, contractual, or legal remedies in instances where contractors violate or breach contract terms, and provide for such sanctions and penalties as appropriate.

B. All contracts in excess of \$10,000 must address termination for cause and for convenience by the non-Federal entity including the manner by which it will be effected and the basis for settlement.

C. Debarment and Suspension (Executive Orders 12549 and 12689) (see 2 CFR 180.220 and 45 CFR 75.212) A party listed on the government-wide exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM), in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR part 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR part 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR part 1989 Comp., p. 235), “Debarment and Suspension” is not eligible for award under this RFP. SAM Exclusions contains the names of parties debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded by agencies, as well as parties declared ineligible under statutory or regulatory authority other than Executive Order 12549. Any Contractor awarded a Contract as a result of this RFP is responsible for ensuring that any party with which it subcontracts is not debarred or suspended and is in full compliance with the executive orders and federal regulations cited in this paragraph.

D. Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment (31 U.S.C. 1352)—Contractors that apply or bid for an award exceeding \$100,000 must file the required attached certification. Each tier (including the Contractor and any subcontractor(s)) certifies to the tier above that it will not and has not used federal appropriated funds to pay any person or organization for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with obtaining any federal contract, grant or any other award covered by 31 U.S.C. 1352. Each tier must also disclose any lobbying with non-federal funds that takes place in connection with obtaining any Federal award. Such disclosures are forwarded from tier to tier up to the non-federal awardee (which, in this case, is the State of Maryland).

1. *Form and rule:* All prospective and present contractors and subcontractors (this includes all levels of funding) who receive more than \$100,000 in federal funds must submit the attached form “Certification Against Lobbying.” It assures, generally, that contractors and subcontractors receiving federal funds will not lobby federal entities with federal funds, and that, as is required, they will disclose other lobbying on form SF-111.

2. *Form and instructions:* “Form LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” must be submitted by those receiving more than \$100,000 in federal funds, to disclose any lobbying of federal entities (a) with profits from federal contracts or (b) funded with nonfederal funds.

E. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any Contractor awarded a Contract as a result of this RFP certifies that it will comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 791 *et seq.*), and all regulations promulgated thereunder. Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap in all federally assisted programs and activities. It requires the analysis and making of any changes needed in three general areas of operation— programs, activities, and facilities and employment. It states, among other things, that: *Grantees that provide health ... services should undertake tasks such as ensuring emergency treatment for the hearing impaired and making certain that persons with impaired sensory or speaking skills are not denied effective notice with regard to benefits, services, and waivers of rights or consents to treatments.*

F. Age Discrimination Act of 1975. Any Contractor awarded a Contract as a result of this RFP certifies that it shall not discriminate on the basis of Age, according to the requirements of the Age Discrimination Act of 1975.

G. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Any Contractor awarded a Contract are a result of this RFP certifies that it shall comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and shall not discriminate in participation by race, color, or national origin.

H. Section 1557 of the ACA. Any Contractor awarded a Contract as a result of this RFP certifies that it shall comply with Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. § 18116) and any regulations promulgated thereunder. Section 1557 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in certain health programs or activities. Section 1557 further provides that, except as provided in Title I or the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (as amended, the ACA), an individual shall not, on the grounds prohibited under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any health program or activity, any part of which is receiving federal financial assistance or any program or activity that is administered by any entity (such as MHBE) established under Title I of the ACA.

ATTACHMENT E-1 – CERTIFICATION AGAINST LOBBYING

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING
Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

- (1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
- (2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.
- (3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all sub-awards at all tiers (including subcontracts, sub-grants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all sub-recipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by Section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Award No.	Organizational Entry
Name and Title of Official Signing for Organizational Entry	Telephone No. Of Signing Official
Signature of Above Official	Date Signed

ATTACHMENT E-2 DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES

Complete this form to disclose lobbying activities pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1352

<p>1. Type of Federal Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Contract b. Grant c. Cooperative Agreement d. Loan e. Loan guarantee f. Loan insurance 	<p>2. Status of Federal Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bid/offer/application b. Initial award c. Post-award 	<p>3. Report Type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Initial filing b. Material change <p>For Material Change Only: Year _____ quarter _____ Date of last report _____</p>
<p>4. Name and Address of Reporting Entity:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prime <input type="checkbox"/> Subawardee Tier _____, if known: Congressional District, <i>if known</i>:</p>	<p>5. If Reporting Entity in No. 4 is a Subawardee, Enter Name and Address of Prime:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Congressional District, <i>if known</i>:</p>	
<p>6. Federal Department/Agency:</p>	<p>7. Federal Program Name/Description:</p> <p>CFDA Number, <i>if applicable</i>: _____</p>	
<p>8. Federal Action Number, if known:</p>	<p>9. Award Amount, if known:</p> <p>\$ _____</p>	
<p>10. a. Name and Address of Lobbying Registrant <i>(if individual, last name, first name, MI):</i></p>	<p>b. Individuals Performing Services <i>(including address if different from No. 10a) (last name, first name, MI):</i></p>	
<p>11. Amount of Payment <i>(check all that apply)</i></p> <p>\$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> actual <input type="checkbox"/> planned</p>	<p>13. Type of Payment <i>(check all that apply)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> a. retainer <input type="checkbox"/> b. one-time <input type="checkbox"/> c. commission <input type="checkbox"/> d. contingent fee <input type="checkbox"/> e. deferred <input type="checkbox"/> f. other; specify: _____ 	
<p>12. Form of Payment <i>(check all that apply)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> a. cash <input type="checkbox"/> b. in-kind, specify: nature _____ value: _____ 		
<p>14. Brief Description of Services Performed or to be Performed and Date(s) of Service, including officer(s), employee(s), or Member(s) contacted, for Payment Indicated in Item 11:</p>		

(attach Continuation Sheet(s) SF-LLLA, if necessary)

15. Continuation Sheet(s) SF-LLLA attached: Yes No

16. Information requested through this form is authorized by title 31 U.S.C. Section 1352. This disclosure of lobbying activities is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed by the tier above when this transaction was made or entered into. This disclosure is required pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1352. This information will be available for public inspection. Any person who fails to file the required disclosure shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Signature: _____
 Print Name: _____
 Title: _____
 Telephone No.: _____ Date: _____

Federal Use Only			Authorized for Local Reproduction Standard Form LLL (Rev. 7-97)	

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF SF-LLL, DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES

This disclosure form shall be completed by the reporting entity, whether sub-awardee or prime Federal recipient, at the initiation or receipt of a covered Federal action, or a material change to a previous filing, pursuant to title 31 U.S.C. Section 1352. The filing of a form is required for each payment or agreement to make payment to any lobbying entity for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with a covered Federal action. Complete all items that apply for both the initial filing and material change report. Refer to the implementing guidance published by the Office of Management and Budget for additional information.

1. Identify the type of covered Federal action for which lobbying activity is and/or has been secured to influence the outcome of a covered Federal action.
2. Identify the status of the covered Federal action.

3. Identify the appropriate classification of this report. If this is a follow-up report caused by a material change to the information previously reported, enter the year and quarter in which the change occurred. Enter the date of the last previously submitted report by this reporting entity for this covered Federal action.
4. Enter the full name, address, city, State and zip code of the reporting entity. Include Congressional District, if known. Check the appropriate classification of the reporting entity that designates if it is, or expects to be, a prime or sub-award recipient. Identify the tier of the sub-awardee, e.g., the first sub-awardee of the prime is the 1st tier. Sub-awards include but are not limited to subcontracts, sub-grants and contract awards under grants.
5. If the organization filing the report in item 4 checks "Sub-awardee," then enter the full name, address, city, State and zip code of the prime Federal recipient. Include Congressional District, if known.
6. Enter the name of the Federal agency making the award or loan commitment. Include at least one organizational level below agency name, if known. For example, Department of Transportation, United States Coast Guard.
7. Enter the Federal program name or description for the covered Federal action (item 1). If known, enter the full Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for grants, cooperative agreements, loans, and loan commitments.
8. Enter the most appropriate Federal identifying number available for the Federal action identified in item 1 (e.g., Request for Proposal (RFP) number; Invitation for Bid (IFB) number; grant announcement number; the contract, grant, or loan award number; the application/proposal control number assigned by the Federal agency). Include prefixes, e.g., "RFP-DE-90-001."
9. For a covered Federal action where there has been an award or loan commitment by the Federal agency, enter the Federal amount of the award/loan commitment for the prime entity identified in item 4 or 5.
10. (a) Enter the full name, address, city, State and zip code of the lobbying registrant under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 engaged by the reporting entity identified in item 4 to influence the covered Federal action.
10. (b) Enter the full names of the individual(s) performing services, and include full address if different from 10 (a). Enter Last Name, First Name, and Middle Initial (MI).
11. The certifying official shall sign and date the form and print his/her name, title, and telephone number.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act, as amended, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB Control Number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is OMB No. 0348-0046. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0348-0046), Washington, DC 20503.

ATTACHMENT F– CONFLICT OF INTEREST AFFIDAVIT AND DISCLOSURE

Reference COMAR 21.05.08.08, Incorporated Herein

A. "Conflict of interest" means that because of other activities or relationships with other persons, a person is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the State, or the person's objectivity in performing the contract work is or might be otherwise impaired, or a person has an unfair competitive advantage.

B. "Person" has the meaning stated in COMAR 21.01.02.01B(64) and includes a Bidder/Offeror, Contractor, consultant, or Subcontractor or sub-consultant at any tier, and also includes an employee or agent of any of them if the employee or agent has or will have the authority to control or supervise all or a portion of the work for which a Bid/Proposal is made.

C. The Bidder/Offeror warrants that, except as disclosed in §D, below, there are no relevant facts or circumstances now giving rise or which could, in the future, give rise to a conflict of interest.

D. The following facts or circumstances give rise or could in the future give rise to a conflict of interest (explain in detail—attach additional sheets if necessary):

E. The Bidder/Offeror agrees that if an actual or potential conflict of interest arises after the date of this affidavit, the Bidder/Offeror shall immediately make a full disclosure in writing to the Procurement Officer of all relevant facts and circumstances. This disclosure shall include a description of actions which the Bidder/Offeror has taken and proposes to take to avoid, mitigate, or neutralize the actual or potential conflict of interest. If the contract has been awarded and performance of the contract has begun, the Contractor shall continue performance until notified by the Procurement Officer of any contrary action to be taken.

I DO SOLEMNLY DECLARE AND AFFIRM UNDER THE PENALTIES OF PERJURY THAT THE CONTENTS OF THIS AFFIDAVIT ARE TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION, AND BELIEF.

Date: _____ By: _____
(Authorized Representative and Affiant)

SUBMIT THIS AFFIDAVIT WITH BID/PROPOSAL

ATTACHMENT G – NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

THIS NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT (“Agreement”) is made by and between the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (“MHBE”), and _____ (the “Contractor”).

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the Contractor has been awarded a contract (the “Contract”) following the solicitation for MHBE Full-Service Communications and Marketing RFP #MDM0031037031 (the “RFP”); and

WHEREAS, in order for the Contractor to perform the work required under the Contract, it will be necessary for the State at times to provide the Contractor and the Contractor’s employees, agents, and Subcontractors (collectively the “Contractor’s Personnel”) with access to certain information the State deems confidential information (the “Confidential Information”).

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of being given access to the Confidential Information in connection with the solicitation and the Contract, and for other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which the parties acknowledge, the parties do hereby agree as follows:

1. Regardless of the form, format, or media on or in which the Confidential Information is provided and regardless of whether any such Confidential Information is marked as such, Confidential Information means (1) any and all information provided by or made available by the State to the Contractor in connection with the Contract and (2) any and all Personally Identifiable Information (PII) (including but not limited to personal information as defined in Md. Ann. Code, State Govt. §10-1301), PII protected under 45 C.F.R. § 155.260 and Protected Health Information (PHI) that is provided by a person or entity to the Contractor in connection with this Contract. Confidential Information includes, by way of example only, information that the Contractor views, takes notes from, copies (if the State agrees in writing to permit copying), possesses or is otherwise provided access to and use of by the State in relation to the Contract.
2. Contractor shall not, without the MHBE’s prior written consent, copy, disclose, publish, release, transfer, disseminate, use, or allow access for any purpose or in any form, any Confidential Information except for the sole and exclusive purpose of performing under the Contract. Contractor shall limit access to the Confidential Information to the Contractor’s Personnel who have a demonstrable need to know such Confidential Information in order to perform under the Contract and who have agreed in writing to be bound by the disclosure and use limitations pertaining to the Confidential Information. The names of the Contractor’s Personnel are attached hereto and made a part hereof as ATTACHMENT G-1. Contractor shall update ATTACHMENT G-1 by adding additional names (whether Contractor’s personnel or a subcontractor’s personnel) as needed, from time to time.
3. If the Contractor intends to disseminate any portion of the Confidential Information to non-employee agents who are assisting in the Contractor’s performance of the Contract or who will otherwise have a role in performing any aspect of the Contract, the Contractor shall first obtain the written consent of the State to any such dissemination. The State may grant, deny, or condition any such consent, as it may deem appropriate in its sole and absolute subjective discretion.

4. Contractor hereby agrees to hold the Confidential Information in trust and in strictest confidence, to adopt or establish operating procedures and physical security measures, and to take all other measures necessary to protect the Confidential Information from inadvertent release or disclosure to unauthorized third parties and to prevent all or any portion of the Confidential Information from falling into the public domain or into the possession of persons not bound to maintain the confidentiality of the Confidential Information, including those set forth in the Non-Exchange Entity Agreement between the Parties pursuant to the above RFP (the "Non-Exchange Entity Agreement"). For the avoidance of doubt, should any provisions of this Non-Disclosure Agreement conflict with those in the Non-Exchange Entity Agreement, the provisions of the Non-Exchange Entity Agreement shall control.
5. Contractor shall promptly advise the MHBE if it learns of any unauthorized use, misappropriation, or disclosure of the Confidential Information by any of the Contractor's Personnel or the Contractor's former Personnel. Contractor shall, at its own expense, cooperate with the State in seeking injunctive or other equitable relief against any such person(s). Should the Confidential Information constitute PII, as that term is defined in the Non-Exchange Entity Agreement, Contractor shall follow the procedures set forth therein for notifying the MHBE. Should the Confidential Information be other than PII, the Contractor shall notify the MHBE in writing.
6. Contractor shall, at its own expense, return to the MHBE all copies of the Confidential Information in its care, custody, control or possession upon request of the MHBE or on termination of the Contract. Should the Confidential Information constitute PII, the Contractor shall comply with the provisions of the Non-Exchange Entity Agreement regarding preservation, return or deletion of the Confidential Information. Unless otherwise instructed by the MHBE's Chief Compliance Officer, Contractor shall complete and submit ATTACHMENT G-2 when returning the Confidential Information to the MHBE. Contractor agrees it shall cooperate with the MHBE's Chief Compliance Officer with respect to whether to delete or retain, for the period specified in the Contract or required by applicable law, any Confidential Information stored electronically or otherwise held by the Contractor.
7. A breach of this Agreement by the Contractor or by the Contractor's Personnel shall constitute a breach of the Contract between the Contractor and the State.
8. Contractor acknowledges that any failure by the Contractor or the Contractor's Personnel to abide by the terms and conditions of use of the Confidential Information may cause irreparable harm to the State and that monetary damages may be inadequate to compensate the State for such breach. Accordingly, the Contractor agrees that the State may obtain an injunction to prevent the disclosure, copying or improper use of the Confidential Information. The Contractor consents to personal jurisdiction in the Maryland State Courts. The State's rights and remedies hereunder are cumulative and the State expressly reserves any and all rights, remedies, claims and actions that it may have now or in the future to protect the Confidential Information and to seek damages from the Contractor and the Contractor's Personnel for a failure to comply with the requirements of this Agreement. In the event the State suffers any losses, damages, liabilities, expenses, or costs (including, by way of example only, attorneys' fees and disbursements) that are attributable, in whole or in part to any failure by the Contractor or any of the Contractor's Personnel to comply with the requirements of this Agreement, the Contractor shall hold harmless and indemnify the State from and against any such losses, damages, liabilities, expenses, and costs.
9. Contractor and each of the Contractor's Personnel who receive or have access to any Confidential Information shall execute a copy of an agreement substantially similar to this Agreement, in no event less restrictive than as set forth in this Agreement, and the Contractor shall provide originals of such

executed Agreements to the State.

10. The parties further agree that:

- a. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Maryland;
- b. The rights and obligations of the Contractor under this Agreement may not be assigned or delegated, by operation of law or otherwise, without the prior written consent of the MHBE;
- c. The State makes no representations or warranties as to the accuracy or completeness of any Confidential Information;
- d. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this Agreement shall not affect the validity or enforceability of any other provision of this Agreement;
- e. Signatures exchanged by facsimile are effective for all purposes hereunder to the same extent as original signatures;
- f. The Recitals are not merely prefatory but are an integral part hereof; and
- g. The effective date of this Agreement shall be the same as the effective date of the Contract entered into by the parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have, by their duly authorized representatives, executed this Agreement as of the day and year first above written.

Contractor: _____ _____	(MHBE)
By: _____ (SEAL)	By: _____
Printed Name: _____	Printed Name: _____
Title: _____	Title: _____
Date: _____	Date: _____

ATTACHMENT G-2 - NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

CERTIFICATION TO ACCOMPANY RETURN OR DELETION OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

I AFFIRM THAT:

To the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, and upon due inquiry, I hereby certify that: (i) all Confidential Information which is the subject matter of that certain Non-Disclosure Agreement by and between the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange and _____ (“Contractor”) dated _____, 20____ (“Agreement”) is attached hereto and is hereby returned to the MHBE in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Agreement; and (ii) I am legally authorized to bind the Contractor to this affirmation. Any and all Confidential Information that was stored electronically by me has been permanently deleted from all of my systems or electronic storage devices where such Confidential Information may have been stored.

I DO SOLEMNLY DECLARE AND AFFIRM UNDER THE PENALTIES OF PERJURY THAT THE CONTENTS OF THIS AFFIDAVIT ARE TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION, AND BELIEF, HAVING MADE DUE INQUIRY.

DATE: _____

NAME OF CONTRACTOR: _____

BY: _____
(Signature)

TITLE: _____
(Authorized Representative and Affiant)

ATTACHMENT H – CONTRACT

MHBE Full-Service Communications and Marketing RFP

THIS CONTRACT (the “Contract”) is made this _____ (“Xth”) day of _____ (month), (year) by and between _____ (Contractor’s name) and the MARYLAND HEALTH BENEFIT EXCHANGE.

In consideration of the promises and the covenants herein contained, the adequacy and sufficiency of which is duly acknowledged by the parties, the parties agree as follows:

1. Definitions

In this Contract, the following words have the meanings indicated:

- 1.1 “ACA” means the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (Pub. L. 111-148) as amended by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law No. 111-152), together with regulations promulgated pursuant thereto.
- 1.2 “Agency” or “MHBE” means the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, a public corporation and a unit of State government.
- 1.3 “COMAR” means Code of Maryland Regulations.
- 1.4 “Contract” means this agreement between _____ (Contractor’s name) and the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange.
- 1.5 “Contract Monitor” means the following MHBE employee identified as the Contract Monitor or a successor designated by MHBE: Betsy Plunkett, Director, Marketing & Web Strategies, 750 East Pratt Street, 6th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202.
- 1.6 “Contractor” means _____ (Contractor’s name) whose principal business address is _____ (Contractor’s primary address) and whose principal office in Maryland is _____ (Contractor’s local address).
- 1.7 “Effective Date” shall mean July 1, 2024, following full execution of the Contract by the Parties.
- 1.8 “eMMA” means eMaryland Marketplace Advantage.
- 1.9 “Financial Proposal” means the Contractor’s Financial Proposal dated _____ (Financial Proposal date; if a Financial Proposal Best and Final Offer was provided, use the date of the Best and Final Offer here).

- 1.10 “Notice to Proceed Date” or “NTP Date” means the date specified in an NTP for work on Contract, project, Task Order or Work Order to begin.
- 1.11 “Minority Business Enterprise” (MBE) means an entity meeting the definition at COMAR 21.0 1.02.01B(54), which is certified by the Maryland Department of Transportation under COMAR 21.11.03.
- 1.12 “Notice to Proceed” or “NTP” means a written notice from the Procurement Officer that work under the Contract, project, Task Order or Work Order (as applicable) is to begin as of a specified date. The NTP Date is the start date of work under the Contract, project, Task Order or Work Order. Additional NTPs may be issued by either the Procurement Officer or the Contract Monitor regarding the start date for any service included within this solicitation with a delayed or non-specified implementation date.
- 1.13 “Personally Identifiable Information” or “PII” means personally identifiable information as defined by U.S. Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-07-12 (Jan. 3, 2017) (“The term PII refers to information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, either alone or when combined with other information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual”). PII is a broad category of information that includes subsets of other information, such as Personal Health Information (PHI) and “personal information”, as the latter term is used in the following sections of the Maryland Code Annotated: Section 14-3501(d) of the Commercial Law Article and Section 10-1301(c) of the State Government Article.
- 1.14 “Procurement Officer” means the following MHBE employee identified as the Procurement Officer or a successor designated by the MHBE: Michelle Compton, 750 East Pratt Street, 6th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202 , hix.procurement@maryland.gov
- 1.15 “Proposal(s)” means, as appropriate, either or both of the Contractor’s Technical or Financial Proposal.
- 1.16 “Protected Health Information” or “PHI” has the meaning provided in 45 C.F.R. § 160.103; generally, information transmitted or maintained in any form or medium that is (1) created or received by a health care provider, health plan, employer, or health care clearinghouse and (2) relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of an individual; the provision of health care to an individual; or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to an individual; and (i) that identifies the individual; or (ii) with respect to which there is a reasonable basis to believe the information can be used to identify the individual. .
- 1.17 “RFP” means the Request for Proposals for Marketing Outreach (Marketing Outreach) Solicitation # BPM040600, and any addenda thereto issued in writing by the State.
- 1.18 “State” means the State of Maryland, including the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange
- 1.19 “Technical Proposal” means the Contractor’s Technical Proposal dated _____ **(Technical Proposal date; if a Technical Proposal Best and Final Offer was provided, use the date of the Best and Final Offer here).**
- 1.20 Capitalized terms not defined herein shall have the meanings the RFP provides.

2. Scope of Contract

2.1 The Contractor shall perform in accordance with this Contract and Exhibits A-G, which are listed below and incorporated herein by reference. If there is any conflict between this Contract and the Exhibits, the terms of the Contract shall control. If there is any conflict among the Exhibits, the following order of precedence shall determine the prevailing provision:

Exhibit A – The RFP

Exhibit B – State Contract Affidavit, executed by the Contractor and dated _____.

Exhibit C – The Non-Disclosure Agreement

Exhibit D – The Federal Funds Attachment (Attachment E to the RFP, including E-1 and E-2).

Exhibit E – The Contractor’s Technical Proposal

Exhibit F – The Contractor’s Financial Proposal

2.2 The Procurement Officer may, at any time, by written order, make changes in the work within the general scope of the Contract or the RFP. No other order, statement, or conduct of the Procurement Officer or any other person shall be treated as a change or entitle the Contractor to an equitable adjustment under this section. Except as otherwise provided in this Contract, if any change under this section causes an increase or decrease in the Contractor’s cost of, or the time required for, the performance of any part of the work, whether or not changed by the order, an equitable adjustment in the Contract price shall be made and the Contract modified in writing accordingly. The Contractor must assert in writing its right to an adjustment under this section within thirty (30) days of receipt of written change order and shall include a written statement setting forth the nature and cost of such claim. No claim by the Contractor shall be allowed if asserted after final payment under this Contract. Failure to agree to an adjustment under this section shall be a dispute under the Disputes clause. Nothing in this section shall excuse the Contractor from proceeding with the Contract as changed.

2.3 Without limiting the rights of the Procurement Officer in Section 2.2 above, the Contract may be modified by mutual agreement of the parties, provided: (a) the modification is made in writing; (b) all parties sign the modification; and (c) all required approvals are obtained.

2.4 Contracts awarded in violation of the MHBE Procurement Policies and Procedures shall be voidable at the election of MHBE.

3. Period of Performance.

3.1 The Contract shall be effective as of July 1, 2024 following its full execution by the Parties. From this date, the Contract shall be for a base period of three (3) years, beginning on or about July 1, 2024 and ending on or about June 30, 2027, plus two option years, unless terminated earlier as provided in this Contract.

3.2 In its sole discretion, the MHBE shall have the unilateral right to extend the Contract for two, successive one year renewal options (each a “Renewal Term”) at the labor rates established in the Contract. “Term” means the Initial Term and any Renewal Term(s).

3.3 All maximum prices for rates as well as the terms offered in RFP Attachments B, B-1 and B-2 are binding on the Contractor for the term of the Contract.

3.4. The Contractor’s performance under the Contract shall commence as of the date provided in a written NTP.

3.5 The Contractor's obligation to pay invoices to subcontractors providing products/services in connection with this Contract, as well as the audit; confidentiality; document retention; patents, copyrights & intellectual property; warranty; indemnification obligations; and limitations of liability under this Contract; and any other obligations specifically identified, shall survive expiration or termination of the Contract.

4. Consideration and Payment

4.1 In consideration of the satisfactory performance of the work set forth in this Contract, the MHBE shall pay the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Contract and at the prices quoted in the Financial Proposal. Unless properly modified (see above Section 2.3), payment to the Contractor pursuant to this Contract, including the base term and any options exercised by the MHBE, shall not exceed the budgeted amount as approved by the Board of Trustees.

4.2 Payments to the Contractor shall be made no later than thirty (30) days after the MHBE's receipt of a proper invoice for services provided by the Contractor, acceptance by the MHBE of services provided by the Contractor, and pursuant to the conditions outlined in Section 4 of this Contract. Each invoice for services rendered must include the Contractor's Federal Tax Identification or Social Security Number for a Contractor who is an individual which is _____ (Contractor's FEIN or SSN). Charges for late payment of invoices other than as prescribed at Md. Code Ann., State Finance and Procurement Article, §15-104 are prohibited. Invoices shall be submitted to the Contract Monitor via hbe.finance@maryland.gov. Electronic funds transfer shall be used by the State to pay Contractor pursuant to this Contract and any other State payments due Contractor unless the State Comptroller's Office grants Contractor an exemption.

4.3 In addition to any other available remedies, if, in the opinion of the Procurement Officer, the Contractor fails to perform in a satisfactory and timely manner, the Procurement Officer may refuse or limit approval of any invoice for payment, and may cause payments to the Contractor to be reduced or withheld until such time as the Contractor meets performance standards as established by the Procurement Officer.

4.4 Payment of an invoice by the MHBE is not evidence that services were rendered as required under this Contract.

4.5 Contractor's eMaryland Marketplace vendor ID number is _____ (Contractor's eMMA number).

5. Rights to Records

5.1 The Contractor agrees that all documents and materials including, but not limited to, software, reports, drawings, studies, specifications, estimates, tests, maps, photographs, designs, graphics, mechanical, artwork, computations, and data prepared by the Contractor for purposes of this Contract shall be the sole property of the State and shall be available to the State at any time. The State shall have the right to use the same without restriction and without compensation to the Contractor other than that specifically provided by this Contract.

5.2 The Contractor agrees that at all times during the term of this Contract and thereafter, works created as a Deliverable under this Contract (as defined in Section 7.2), and services performed under this Contract shall be "works made for hire" as that term is interpreted under U.S. copyright law. To the extent that any products created as a deliverable under this Contract are not works

made for hire for the State, the Contractor hereby relinquishes, transfers, and assigns to the State all of its rights, title, and interest (including all intellectual property rights) to all such products created under this Contract, and will cooperate reasonably with the State in effectuating and registering any necessary assignments.

- 5.3 The Contractor shall report to the Contract Monitor, promptly and in written detail, each notice or claim of copyright infringement received by the Contractor with respect to all data delivered under this Contract.
- 5.4 The Contractor shall not affix any restrictive markings upon any data, documentation, or other materials provided to the State hereunder and if such markings are affixed, the State shall have the right at any time to modify, remove, obliterate, or ignore such warnings.
- 5.5 Upon termination of the Contract, the Contractor, at its own expense, shall deliver any equipment, software or other property provided by the State to the place designated by the Procurement Officer.

6. Exclusive Use

- 6.1 The State shall have the exclusive right to use, duplicate, and disclose any data, information, documents, records, or results, in whole or in part, in any manner for any purpose whatsoever, that may be created or generated by the Contractor in connection with this Contract. If any material, including software, is capable of being copyrighted, the State shall be the copyright owner and Contractor may copyright material connected with this project only with the express written approval of the State.
- 6.2 Except as may otherwise be set forth in this Contract, Contractor shall not use, sell, sub-lease, assign, give, or otherwise transfer to any third party any other information or material provided to Contractor by the MHBE or developed by Contractor relating to the Contract, except as provided for in Section 8 (“Confidential or Proprietary Information and Documentation”).

7. Patents, Copyrights, and Intellectual Property

- 7.1 All copyrights, patents, trademarks, trade secrets, and any other intellectual property rights existing prior to the Effective Date of this Contract shall belong to the party that owned such rights immediately prior to the Effective Date (“Pre-Existing Intellectual Property”). If any design, device, material, process, or other item provided by Contractor is covered by a patent or copyright or which is proprietary to or a trade secret of another, the Contractor shall obtain the necessary permission or license to permit the State to use such item or items pursuant to its rights granted under the Contract.
- 7.2 Except for (1) information created or otherwise owned by the MHBE or licensed by the MHBE from third parties, including all information provided by the MHBE to Contractor; (2) materials created by Contractor or its subcontractor(s) specifically for the State under the Contract (“Deliverables”), except for any Contractor Pre-Existing Intellectual Property included therein; and (3) the license rights granted to the State, all right, title, and interest in the intellectual property embodied in the solution, including the know-how and methods by which the solution is provided and the processes that make up the solution, will belong solely and exclusively to Contractor and its licensors, and the MHBE will have no rights to the same except as expressly granted in this Contract. For all Software provided by the Contractor under the Contract, Contractor hereby grants to the State a nonexclusive, irrevocable, unlimited, perpetual, non-

cancelable, and non-terminable right to use and make copies of the Software and any modifications to the Software. For all Contractor Pre-Existing Intellectual Property embedded in any Deliverables, Contractor grants to the State a license to use such Contractor Pre-Existing Intellectual Property in connection with its permitted use of such Deliverable. During the period between delivery of a Deliverable by Contractor and the date of payment therefor by the State in accordance with this Contract (including throughout the duration of any payment dispute discussions), subject to the terms and conditions contained herein, Contractor grants the State a royalty-free, non-exclusive, limited license to use such Deliverable and to use any Contractor Materials contained therein in accordance with this Contract.

- 7.3 Subject to the terms of Section 10, Contractor shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the State and its agents and employees, from and against any and all claims, costs, losses, damages, liabilities, judgments and expenses (including without limitation reasonable attorneys' fees) arising out of or in connection with any third-party claim that the Contractor-provided products/services infringe, misappropriate or otherwise violate any third-party intellectual property rights. Contractor shall not enter into any settlement involving third party claims that contains any admission of or stipulation to any guilt, fault, liability or wrongdoing by the State or that adversely affects the State's rights or interests, without the State's prior written consent.
- 7.4 Without limiting Contractor's obligations under Section 7.3, if an infringement claim occurs, or if the State or the Contractor believes such a claim is likely to occur, Contractor (after consultation with the State and at no cost to the State): (a) shall procure for the State the right to continue using the allegedly infringing component or service in accordance with its rights under this Contract; or (b) replace or modify the allegedly infringing component or service so that it becomes non-infringing and remains compliant with all applicable specifications.
- 7.5 Except as otherwise provided herein, Contractor shall not acquire any right, title or interest (including any intellectual property rights subsisting therein) in or to any goods, Software, technical information, specifications, drawings, records, documentation, data or any other materials (including any derivative works thereof) provided by the State to the Contractor. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, the State may, in its sole and absolute discretion, grant the Contractor a license to such materials, subject to the terms of a separate writing executed by the Contractor and an authorized representative of the State as well as all required State approvals.
- 7.6 Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, neither Contractor nor any of its subcontractors shall use any Software or technology in a manner that will cause any patents, copyrights or other intellectual property which are owned or controlled by the State or any of its affiliates (or for which the State or any of its subcontractors has received license rights) to become subject to any encumbrance or terms and conditions of any third party or open source license (including, without limitation, any open source license listed on <http://www.opensource.org/licenses/alphabetical>) (each an "Open Source License"). These restrictions, limitations, exclusions and conditions shall apply even if the State or any of its subcontractors becomes aware of or fails to act in a manner to address any violation or failure to comply therewith. No act by the State or any of its subcontractors that is undertaken under this Contract as to any Software or technology shall be construed as intending to cause any patents, copyrights or other intellectual property that are owned or controlled by the State (or for which the State has received license rights) to become subject to any encumbrance or terms and conditions of any open-source license.
- 7.7 The Contractor shall report to the MHBE, promptly and in written detail, each notice or claim of

copyright infringement received by the Contractor with respect to all Deliverables delivered under this Contract.

- 7.8 The Contractor shall not affix (or permit any third party to affix), without the MHBE's consent, any restrictive markings upon any Deliverables that are owned by the State, and if such markings are affixed, the MHBE shall have the right at any time to modify, remove, obliterate, or ignore such warnings.

8. Confidential or Proprietary Information and Documentation

- 8.1 Subject to the Maryland Public Information Act and any other applicable laws including, without limitation, Each party shall, however, be permitted to disclose relevant confidential information to its officers, agents, and employees to the extent that such disclosure is necessary for the performance of their duties under this Contract, provided that the data may be collected, used, disclosed, stored, and disseminated only as provided by and consistent with the law, including the ACA and 45 C.F.R. § 155.260, the Non-Exchange Entity Agreement and Non-Disclosure Agreement each incorporated into this Contract pursuant to Section 2.1, . .

- 8.2 The Contractor acknowledges its duty to become familiar and comply, to the extent applicable, with all requirements of the Patient Protection and ACA. If in connection with the procurement or at any time during the term of the Contract, the MHBE determines that the Contractor's access to PII in connection with work performed in accordance with the scope of work set forth in the solicitation makes the Contractor a Non-Exchange Entity, as that term is defined in 45 C.F.R. § 155.260(b)(1), the Contractor shall execute a Non-Exchange Entity Agreement as required by 45 C.F.R. § 155.260(b) in the form required by MHBE.

- 8.3 The Contractor acknowledges its duty to become familiar and comply, to the extent applicable, with all requirements of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 1320d et seq., and implementing regulations including 45 C.F.R. Parts 160 and 164. The Contractor also agrees to comply with the Maryland Confidentiality of Medical Records Act (MCMRA), Md. Code Ann. Health-General §§ 4-301 et seq. This obligation includes:

- (a) As necessary, adhering to the privacy and security requirements for protected health information and medical records under HIPAA and MCMRA and making the transmission of all electronic information compatible with the HIPAA requirements;
- (b) Providing training and information to employees regarding confidentiality obligations as to health and financial information and securing acknowledgement of these obligations from employees to be involved in the contract; and
- (c) Otherwise providing good information management practices regarding all health information and medical records.

- 8.4 If in connection with the procurement or at any time during the term of the Contract, the MHBE determines that functions to be performed in accordance with the scope of work set forth in the solicitation constitute business associate functions as defined in HIPAA, the Contractor shall execute a business associate agreement as required by HIPAA regulations at 45 C.F.R. 164.501 and in the form required by the MHBE.

- 8.5 This Section 8 shall survive expiration or termination of this Contract.

9. Loss of Data

In the event of loss of any State data or records where such loss is due to the act or omission of the Contractor or any of its subcontractors or agents, the Contractor shall be responsible for restoring or recreating, as applicable, such lost data in the manner and on the schedule set by the Contract Monitor. The Contractor shall ensure that all data is backed up and recoverable by the Contractor. At no time shall any Contractor actions (or any failures to act when Contractor has a duty to act) damage or create any vulnerabilities in data bases, systems, platforms, and/or applications with which the Contractor is working hereunder.

10. Indemnification and Notification of Legal Requests

- 10.1 At its sole cost and expense, Contractor shall (i) indemnify and hold the State, its employees and agents harmless from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, suits, damages, liabilities, losses, settlements, judgments, costs and expenses (including but not limited to attorneys' fees and costs), whether or not involving a third party claim, which arise out of or relate to the Contractor's, or any of its subcontractors', performance of this Contract and (ii) cooperate, assist, and consult with the State in the defense or investigation of any such claim, demand, action or suit. Contractor shall not enter into any settlement involving third party claims that contains any admission of or stipulation to any guilt, fault, liability or wrongdoing by the State or that adversely affects the State's rights or interests, without the State's prior written consent.
- 10.2 The State has no obligation: (i) to provide legal counsel or defense to the Contractor or its subcontractors in the event that a suit, claim or action of any character is brought against the Contractor or its subcontractors as a result of or relating to the Contractor's obligations or performance under this Contract, or (ii) to pay any judgment or settlement of any such suit, claim or action. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Contractor shall promptly notify the Procurement Officer of any such claims, demands, actions, or suits.
- 10.3 Notification of Legal Requests. In the event the Contractor receives a subpoena or other validly issued administrative or judicial process, or any discovery request in connection with any litigation, requesting State Pre-Existing Intellectual Property, of other information considered to be the property of the State, including but not limited to State data stored with or otherwise accessible by the Contractor, the Contractor shall not respond to such subpoena, process or other legal request without first notifying the State, unless prohibited by law from providing such notice. The Contractor shall promptly notify the State of such receipt providing the State with a reasonable opportunity to intervene in the proceeding before the time that Contractor is required to comply with such subpoena, other process or discovery request.
- 10.4 This indemnification clause shall not be construed to mean that the Contractor shall indemnify the State against liability for any losses, damages, claims, suits, actions, liabilities, and/or expenses that are attributable to the sole negligence of the State or the State's employees.
- 10.5 Section 10 shall survive expiration or termination of this Contract.

11. Non-Hiring of Employees

No official or employee of the State, as defined under Md. Code Ann., General Provisions Article, § 5-101, whose duties as such official or employee include matters relating to or affecting

the subject matter of this Contract, shall, during the pendency and term of this Contract and while serving as an official or employee of the State, become or be an employee of the Contractor or any entity that is a subcontractor on this Contract.

12. Disputes

- 12.1 As used herein, a “claim” means a written demand or assertion by one of the parties seeking, as a legal right, the payment of money, adjustment, or interpretation of contract terms, or other relief, arising under or relating to this Contract. A voucher, invoice, or request for payment that is not in dispute when submitted is not a claim. However, if the submission subsequently is not acted upon in a reasonable time, or is disputed as to liability or amount, it may be converted to claim for the purpose of this clause.
- 12.2 Within thirty (30) days of when the Contractor knows or should have known of the basis for a claim relating to the Contract, it shall file a written notice of claim on its letterhead to the Procurement Officer. Contemporaneously with, or within thirty (30) days after filing the notice of claim, the Contractor shall submit the written claim to the Procurement Officer. The claim shall be in writing and shall contain: (a) An explanation of the claim, including reference to all contract provisions upon which it is based; (b) The amount of the claim; (c) The facts upon which the claim is based; (d) All pertinent data and correspondence that the Contractor relies upon to substantiate the claim; and (e) a certification by a senior official, officer, or general partner of the Contractor or the subcontractor, as applicable, that, to the best of the person’s knowledge and belief, the claim is made in good faith, supporting data are accurate and complete, and the amount requested accurately reflects the contract adjustment for which the person believes the MHBE is liable. The Procurement Officer shall issue a final, written decision on the claim as expeditiously as possible. Any final decision of the Procurement Officer may award a Contract claim only for those expenses incurred not more than thirty (30) days before the contractor initially filed its notice of claim.
- 12.3 If the final decision of the Procurement Officer grants the claim in part and denies the claim in part, the MHBE shall pay the Contractor the undisputed amount. Payment of the partial claim shall not be construed as an admission of liability by the MHBE and does not preclude the MHBE from recovering the amount paid if a subsequent determination modifies the final decision.
- 12.4 Within ten (10) days of receipt of the final decision of the Procurement Officer, the Contractor may file a notice of appeal to the MHBE Executive Director for claims for monetary amounts less than \$50,000, and to the Board of Trustees for either claims for monetary amounts of \$50,000 or greater or for claims involving non-monetary relief. Contemporaneously with, or within twenty (20) days after filing the notice of appeal, the Contractor shall submit its written appeal to the MHBE Executive Director or Board of Trustees as applicable. The Executive Director shall issue a final decision resolving the appeal of claims for monetary amounts less than \$50,000. The Board of Trustees shall issue a final decision resolving appeals of claims for \$50,000 or more and those for non-monetary relief. The Contractor’s timely appeal to the Executive Director or the Board of Trustees shall be a strict condition precedent to the Contractor pursuing any legal rights which it alleges or which may exist in any other forum.
- 12.5 Pending resolution of a claim, the Contractor shall proceed diligently with the performance of the Contract in accordance with the Procurement Officer’s decision.
- 12.6 Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the MHBE’s right to withhold payments from the Contractor, assess liquidated damages against the Contractor, direct the Contractor to perform

pursuant to the terms of the Contract or any written change order, or to exercise any other rights allowed by Contract or at law.

13. Maryland Law

- 13.1 This Contract shall be construed, interpreted, and enforced according to the laws of the State of Maryland.
- 13.2 The Maryland Uniform Computer Information Transactions Act (Commercial Law Article, Title 22 of the Annotated Code of Maryland), does not apply to this Contract or any purchase order or Notice to Proceed issued under this Contract, or any software, or any software license required hereunder.
- 13.3 Any and all references to the Maryland Code, Annotated contained in this Contract shall be construed to refer to such Code sections as are from time to time amended.

14. Nondiscrimination in Employment

The Contractor agrees: (a) not to discriminate in any manner against an employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, marital status, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, or any otherwise unlawful use of characteristics, or disability of a qualified individual with a disability unrelated in nature and extent so as to reasonably preclude the performance of the employment, or the individual's refusal to submit to a genetic test or make available the results of a genetic test; (b) to include a provision similar to that contained in subsection (a), above, in any underlying subcontract except a subcontract for standard commercial supplies or raw materials; and (c) to post and to cause subcontractors to post in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment, notices setting forth the substance of this clause.

15. Contingent Fee Prohibition

The Contractor warrants that it has not employed or retained any person, partnership, corporation, or other entity, other than a bona fide employee, bona fide agent, bona fide salesperson, or commercial selling agency working for the business, to solicit or secure the Contract, and that the business has not paid or agreed to pay any person, partnership, corporation, or other entity, other than a bona fide employee, bona fide agent, bona fide salesperson, or commercial selling agency, any fee or any other consideration contingent on the making of this Contract.

16. Non-Availability of Funding

If the General Assembly fails to appropriate funds or if funds are not otherwise made available for continued performance for any fiscal period of this Contract succeeding the first fiscal period, this Contract shall be canceled automatically as of the beginning of the fiscal year for which funds were not appropriated or otherwise made available; provided, however, that this will not affect either the State's or the Contractor's rights under any termination clause in this Contract. The effect of termination of the Contract hereunder will be to discharge both the Contractor and the State from future performance of the Contract, but not from their rights and obligations existing at the time of termination. The Contractor shall be reimbursed for the reasonable value of any nonrecurring costs incurred but not amortized in the price of the Contract. The State shall notify the Contractor as soon as it has knowledge that funds may not be available for the

continuation of this Contract for each succeeding fiscal period beyond the first.

17. Termination for Default

If the Contractor fails to fulfill its obligations under this Contract properly and on time, or otherwise violates any provision of the Contract, the State may terminate the Contract by written notice to the Contractor. The notice shall specify the acts or omissions relied upon as cause for termination. All finished or unfinished work provided by the Contractor shall, at the State's option, become the State's property. The State shall pay the Contractor fair and equitable compensation for satisfactory performance prior to receipt of notice of termination, less the amount of damages caused by the Contractor's breach. If the damages are more than the compensation payable to the Contractor, the Contractor will remain liable after termination and the State can affirmatively collect damages. Termination hereunder, including the termination of the rights and obligations of the parties, shall be governed by the provisions of COMAR 21.07.01.11B.

18. Termination for Convenience

The performance of work under this Contract may be terminated by the State in accordance with this clause in whole, or from time to time in part, whenever the State shall determine that such termination is in the best interest of the State. The State will pay all reasonable costs associated with this Contract that the Contractor has incurred up to the date of termination, and all reasonable costs associated with termination of the Contract; provided, however, the Contractor shall not be reimbursed for any anticipatory profits that have not been earned up to the date of termination. Termination hereunder, including the determination of the rights and obligations of the parties, shall be governed by the provisions of COMAR 21.07.01.12A(2).

19. Delays and Extensions of Time

19.1 The Contractor agrees to prosecute the work continuously and diligently and no charges or claims for damages shall be made by it for any delays, interruptions, interferences, or hindrances from any cause whatsoever during the progress of any portion of the work specified in this Contract.

19.2 Time extensions will be granted only for excusable delays that arise from unforeseeable causes beyond the control and without the fault or negligence of the Contractor, including but not restricted to, acts of God, acts of the public enemy, acts of the State in either its sovereign or contractual capacity, acts of another Contractor in the performance of a contract with the State, fires, floods, epidemics, quarantine restrictions, strikes, freight embargoes, or delays of subcontractors or suppliers arising from unforeseeable causes beyond the control and without the fault or negligence of either the Contractor or the subcontractors or suppliers.

20. Suspension of Work

The State unilaterally may order the Contractor in writing to suspend, delay, or interrupt all or any part of its performance for such period of time as the Procurement Officer may determine to be appropriate for the convenience of the State.

21. Pre-Existing Regulations

The regulations set forth in Title 21 of the Code of Maryland Regulations ("COMAR 21") are applicable to this Contract where expressly referenced. In such cases, the referenced COMAR 21

regulation in effect on the date of execution of this Contract is applicable to this Contract.

22. Financial Disclosure

The Contractor shall comply with the provisions of Md. Code Ann., State Finance and Procurement Article, § 13-221, which requires that every person that enters into contracts, leases, or other agreements with the State or its agencies during a calendar year under which the business is to receive in the aggregate, \$100,000 or more, shall within thirty (30) days of the time when the aggregate value of these contracts, leases or other agreements reaches \$100,000, file with the Secretary of the State certain specified information to include disclosure of beneficial ownership of the business.

23. Political Contribution Disclosure

The Contractor shall comply with Md. Code Ann., Election Law Article, Title 14, which requires that every person that enters into a contract for a procurement with the State, a county, or a municipal corporation, or other political subdivision of the State, during a calendar year in which the person receives a contract with a governmental entity in the amount of \$200,000 or more, shall, file with the State Board of Elections statements disclosing: (a) any contributions made during the reporting period to a candidate for elective office in any primary or general election; and (b) the name of each candidate to whom one or more contributions in a cumulative amount of \$500 or more were made during the reporting period. The statement shall be filed with the State Board of Elections: (a) before execution of a contract by the State, a county, a municipal corporation, or other political subdivision of the State, and shall cover the 24 months prior to when a contract was awarded; and (b) if the contribution is made after the execution of a contract, then twice a year, throughout the contract term, on or before: (i) May 31, to cover the six (6) month period ending April 30; and (ii) November 30, to cover the six (6) month period ending October 31. Additional information is available on the State Board of Elections website: http://www.elections.state.md.us/campaign_finance/index.html.

24. Documents Retention and Inspection Clause

The Contractor and subcontractors shall retain and maintain all records and documents relating to this Contract for a period of ten (10) years after final payment by the State hereunder or any applicable statute of limitations or federal retention requirements (such as HIPPA) or condition of award, whichever is longer, and shall make them available for inspection and audit by authorized representatives of the State, including the Procurement Officer or designee, at all reasonable times. All records related in any way to the Contract are to be retained for the entire time provided under this section. In the event of any audit, the Contractor shall provide assistance to the State, without additional compensation, to identify, investigate, and reconcile any audit discrepancies and/or variances. This Section 24 shall survive expiration or termination of the Contract.

25. Right to Audit

25.1 The State reserves the right, at its sole discretion and at any time, to perform an audit of the Contractor's and/or subcontractor's performance under this Contract. An audit is defined as a planned and documented independent activity performed by qualified personnel including but not limited to State and federal auditors, to determine by investigation, examination, or evaluation of objective evidence from data, statements, records, operations and performance practices

(financial or otherwise) the Contractor's compliance with the Contract, including but not limited to adequacy and compliance with established procedures and internal controls over the Contract services being performed for the MHBE.

- 25.2 Upon three (3) Business Days' notice, the Contractor and/or any subcontractors shall provide the State reasonable access to their respective records to verify conformance to the terms of the Contract. The MHBE may conduct these audits with any or all of its own internal resources or by securing the services of a third-party accounting or audit firm, solely at the MHBE's election. The MHBE may copy, at its own expense, any record related to the services performed and provided under this Contract. The Contractor agrees to fully cooperate and assist in any audit conducted by or on behalf of the State, including, by way of example only, making records and employees available as, where, and to the extent requested by the State and by assisting the auditors in reconciling any audit variances. Contractor shall not be compensated for providing any such cooperation and assistance unless otherwise noted herein.
- 25.3 The right to audit shall include any of the Contractor's subcontractors including but not limited to any lower tier subcontractor(s) that provide essential support to the Contract services. The Contractor and/or subcontractor(s) shall ensure the MHBE has the right to audit such subcontractor(s).
- 25.4 The Contractor and/or subcontractors shall cooperate with MHBE and MHBE's designated accountant or auditor and shall provide the necessary assistance for the MHBE or MHBE's designated accountant or auditor to conduct the audit.
- 25.5 This Section shall survive expiration or termination of the Contract.

26. Compliance with Laws

The Contractor hereby represents and warrants that:

- 26.1 It is qualified to do business in the State and that it will take such action as, from time to time hereafter, may be necessary to remain so qualified;
- 26.2 It is not in arrears with respect to the payment of any monies due and owing the State, or any department or unit thereof, including but not limited to the payment of taxes and employee benefits, and that it shall not become so in arrears during the term of this Contract;
- 26.3 It shall comply with all federal, State and local laws, regulations, and ordinances applicable to its activities and obligations under this Contract; and
- 26.4 It shall obtain, at its expense, all licenses, permits, insurance, and governmental approvals, if any, necessary to the performance of its obligations under this Contract.

27. Cost and Price Certification

- 27.1 By submitting cost or price information, the Contractor certifies to the best of its knowledge that the information submitted is accurate, complete, and current as of the date of its Proposal.
- 27.2 The price under this Contract and any change order or modification hereunder, including profit or

fee, shall be adjusted to exclude any significant price increases occurring because the Contractor furnished cost or price information which, as of the date of its Proposal, was inaccurate, incomplete, or not current.

28. Subcontracting; Assignment

The Contractor may not subcontract any portion of the services provided under this Contract without obtaining the prior written approval of the Procurement Officer, nor may the Contractor assign this Contract or any of its rights or obligations hereunder, without the prior written approval of the Procurement Officer; provided, however, that a Contractor may assign monies receivable under a contract after due notice to the State. Any subcontracts shall include such language as may be required in various clauses contained within this Contract, exhibits, and attachments. The Contract shall not be assigned until all approvals, documents, and affidavits are completed and properly registered. The State shall not be responsible for fulfillment of the Contractor's obligations to its subcontractors.

29. Liability

For breach of this Contract, negligence, misrepresentation, or any other contract or tort claim, the Contractor shall be liable as follows:

- 29.1 For infringement of patents, copyrights, trademarks, service marks, and/or trade secrets, as provided in Section 7 ("Patents, Copyrights, and Intellectual Property") of this Contract;
- 29.2 Without limitation for damages for bodily injury (including death) and damage to real property and tangible personal property; and
- 29.3 For all other claims, damages, losses, costs, expenses, suits, or actions in any way related to this Contract where liability is not otherwise set forth as being "without limitation", and regardless of the basis on which the claim is made, Contractor's liability shall not exceed 3 times the value of the Contract. Third-party claims arising under Section 10 ("Indemnification") of this Contract are included in this limitation of liability only if the State is immune from liability. Contractor's liability for third-party claims arising under Section 10 of this Contract, including for intellectual property infringement, bodily injury, damage to real property, and damage to tangible personal property, shall be unlimited if the State is not immune from liability for claims arising under Section 10.

30. Commercial Nondiscrimination

- 30.1 As a condition of entering into this Contract, the Contractor represents and warrants that it will comply with the State's Commercial Nondiscrimination Policy, as described at Md. Code Ann., State Finance and Procurement Article, Title 19. As part of such compliance, the Contractor may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, sexual identity, genetic information or an individual's refusal to submit to a genetic test or make available the results of a genetic test or on the basis of disability or other unlawful forms of discrimination in the solicitation, selection, hiring, or commercial treatment of subcontractors, vendors, suppliers, or commercial customers, nor shall the Contractor retaliate against any person for reporting instances of such discrimination. The Contractor shall provide equal opportunity for subcontractors, vendors, and suppliers to participate in all of its public sector and private sector subcontracting and supply opportunities, provided that this clause does

not prohibit or limit lawful efforts to remedy the effects of marketplace discrimination that have occurred or are occurring in the marketplace. The Contractor understands that a material violation of this clause shall be considered a material breach of this Contract and may result in termination of this Contract, disqualification of the Contractor from participating in State contracts, or other sanctions. This clause is not enforceable by or for the benefit of, and creates no obligation to, any third party.

- 30.2 The Contractor shall include the above Commercial Nondiscrimination clause, or similar clause approved by the MHBE, in all subcontracts.
- 30.3 As a condition of entering into this Contract, upon the request of the Commission on Civil Rights, and only after the filing of a complaint against Contractor under Md. Code Ann., State Finance and Procurement Article, Title 19, as amended from time to time, Contractor agrees to provide within sixty (60) days after the request a complete list of the names of all Subcontractors, vendors, and suppliers that Contractor has used in the past four (4) years on any of its contracts that were undertaken within the State of Maryland, including the total dollar amount paid by Contractor on each subcontract or supply contract. Contractor further agrees to cooperate in any investigation conducted by the State pursuant to the State's Commercial Nondiscrimination Policy as set forth at Md. Code Ann., State Finance and Procurement Article, Title 19, and to provide any documents relevant to any investigation that are requested by the State. Contractor understands that violation of this clause is a material breach of this Contract and may result in contract termination, disqualification by the State from participating in State contracts, and other sanctions.

31. Prompt Pay Requirements

- 31.1 If the Contractor withholds payment of an undisputed amount to its subcontractor, the MHBE, at its option and in its sole discretion, may take one or more of the following actions:
- a. Not process further payments to the contractor until payment to the subcontractor is verified;
 - b. Suspend all or some of the contract work without affecting the completion date(s) for the contract work;
 - c. Pay or cause payment of the undisputed amount to the subcontractor from monies otherwise due or that may become due;
 - d. Place a payment for an undisputed amount in an interest-bearing escrow account; or
 - e. Take other or further actions as appropriate to resolve the withheld payment.
- 31.2 An "undisputed amount" means an amount owed by the Contractor to a subcontractor for which there is no good faith dispute. Such "undisputed amounts" include, without limitation:
- a. Retainage which had been withheld and is, by the terms of the agreement between the Contractor and subcontractor, due to be distributed to the subcontractor; and
 - b. An amount withheld because of issues arising out of an agreement or occurrence unrelated to the agreement under which the amount is withheld.
- 31.3 An act, failure to act, or decision of a Procurement Officer or a representative of the MHBE, concerning a withheld payment between the Contractor and a subcontractor under this provision, may not:
- a. Affect the rights of the contracting parties under any other provision of law;

- b. Be used as evidence on the merits of a dispute between the MHBE and the contractor in any other proceeding; or
- c. Result in liability against or prejudice the rights of the MHBE.

31.4 The remedies enumerated above are in addition to those provided under COMAR 21.11.03.13 with respect to subcontractors that have contracted pursuant to the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) program.

31.5 To ensure compliance with certified MBE subcontract participation goals, the MHBE may, consistent with COMAR 21.11.03.13, take the following measures:

- a. Verify that the certified MBEs listed in the MBE participation schedule actually are performing work and receiving compensation as set forth in the MBE participation schedule. This verification may include, as appropriate:
 - i. Inspecting any relevant records of the Contractor;
 - ii. Inspecting the jobsite; and
 - iii. Interviewing subcontractors and workers.

Verification shall include a review of the:

- i. The Contractor's monthly report listing unpaid invoices over thirty (30) days old from certified MBE subcontractors and the reason for nonpayment; and
 - ii. The monthly report of each certified MBE subcontractor, which lists payments received from the Contractor in the preceding thirty (30) days and invoices for which the subcontractor has not been paid.
- b. If the MHBE determines that the Contractor is not in compliance with certified MBE participation goals, then the MHBE will notify the Contractor in writing of its findings, and will require the Contractor to take appropriate corrective action. Corrective action may include, but is not limited to, requiring the Contractor to compensate the MBE for work performed as set forth in the MBE participation schedule.
 - c. If the MHBE determines that the Contractor is in material noncompliance with MBE contract provisions and refuses or fails to take the corrective action that the MHBE requires, then the MHBE may:
 - i. Terminate the contract;
 - ii. Refer the matter to the Office of the Attorney General for appropriate action; or
 - iii. Initiate any other specific remedy identified by the contract, including the contractual remedies required by any applicable laws, regulations, and directives regarding the payment of undisputed amounts.
 - d. Upon completion of the Contract, but before final payment or release of retainage or both, the Contractor shall submit a final report, in affidavit form under the penalty of perjury, of all payments made to, or withheld from, MBE subcontractors.

32. Use of Estimated Quantities

Unless specifically indicated otherwise in the State's solicitation or other controlling documents related to the Scope of Work, any sample amounts provided are estimates only and the MHBE does not guarantee a minimum or maximum number of units or usage in the performance of this Contract.

33. Contract Monitor and Procurement Officer

The work to be accomplished under this Contract shall be performed under the direction of the Contract Monitor. All matters relating to the interpretation of this Contract shall be referred to the Procurement Officer for determination.

34. Notices

All notices hereunder shall be in writing and either delivered personally or sent by certified or registered mail, postage prepaid, as follows:

If to the State: Raelene Glasgow
Procurement Officer
750 East Pratt Street, 6th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202

If to the Contractor: _____

35. Federal Funds Requirements and Restrictions

This Contract contains federal Medicaid Funds (CFDA number 93.778). Execution of this Contract indicates Contractor’s agreement with all federal funding terms and conditions that apply to contractors receiving federal funds from the above referenced source, including but not limited to those required by 45 C.F.R. § 75.335, Appendix II to Part 75 of Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations and Attachment G of the RFP (including G-1 and G-2). Attachment G of the RFP is incorporated into this Contract pursuant to Section 2.1, above.

36. Liquidated Damages

36.1 The Contract requires the Contractor to make good faith efforts to comply with the Minority Business Enterprise (“MBE”) Program and Contract provisions. The State and the Contractor acknowledge and agree that the State will incur economic damages and losses, including, but not limited to, loss of goodwill, detrimental impact on economic development, and diversion of internal staff resources, if the Contractor does not make good faith efforts to comply with the requirements of the MBE Program and pertinent MBE Contract provisions. The parties further acknowledge and agree that the damages the State might reasonably be anticipated to accrue as a result of such lack of compliance are difficult or impossible to ascertain with precision and liquidated damages represent a fair, reasonable, and appropriate estimation of damages.

Upon a determination by the State that the Contractor failed to make good faith efforts to comply with one or more of the specified MBE Program requirements or pertinent MBE Contract provisions and without the State being required to present any evidence of the amount or character of actual damages sustained, the Contractor agrees to pay liquidated damages to the State at the rates set forth below. Such liquidated damages are intended to represent estimated actual damages and are not intended as a penalty. The Contractor expressly agrees that the State may withhold payment on any invoices as an offset against liquidated damages owed. The

Contractor further agrees that for each specified violation, the agreed-upon liquidated damages are reasonably proximate to the loss the State is anticipated to incur as a result of each violation.

- 36.1.1 Failure to submit each monthly payment report in full compliance with COMAR 21.11.03.13B(3): \$34.23 per day until the monthly report is submitted as required.
 - 36.1.2 Failure to include in its agreements with MBE subcontractors a provision requiring submission of payment reports in full compliance with COMAR 21.11.03.13B(4): \$119.80 per MBE subcontractor.
 - 36.1.3 Failure to comply with COMAR 21.11.03.12 in terminating, canceling, or changing the scope of work/value of a contract with an MBE subcontractor and/or amendment of the MBE participation schedule: the difference between the dollar value of the MBE participation commitment on the MBE participation schedule for that specific MBE firm and the dollar value of the work performed by that MBE firm for the Contract.
 - 36.1.4 Failure to meet the Contractor's total MBE participation goal and subgoal commitments: the difference between the dollar value of the total MBE participation commitment on the MBE participation schedule and the MBE participation actually achieved.
 - 36.1.5 Failure to promptly pay all undisputed amounts to a subcontractor in full compliance with the prompt payment provisions of the Contract: \$37.00 per day until the undisputed amount due to the subcontractor is paid.
- 36.2 Notwithstanding the assessment or availability of liquidated damages, the State reserves the right to terminate the Contract and exercise any and all other rights or remedies which may be available under the Contract or otherwise may be available at law or in equity.

37. Parent Company Guarantee

_____ (Corporate name of Contractor's Parent Company) hereby guarantees absolutely the full, prompt, and complete performance by (Contractor) _____ of all the terms, conditions and obligations contained in this Contract, as it may be amended from time to time, including any and all exhibits that are now or may become incorporated hereunto, and other obligations of every nature and kind that now or may in the future arise out of or in connection with this Contract, including any and all financial commitments, obligations, and liabilities.

_____ (Corporate name of Contractor's Parent Company) may not transfer this absolute guaranty to any other person or entity without the prior express written approval of the State, which approval the State may grant, withhold, or qualify in its sole and absolute subjective discretion.

_____ (Corporate name of Contractor's Parent Company) further agrees that if the State brings any claim, action, lawsuit or proceeding against

_____ (Contractor), _____ (Corporate name of Contractor's Parent Company) may be named as a party, in its capacity as Absolute Guarantor.

38. Miscellaneous

- 38.1 Any provision of this Contract which contemplates performance or observance subsequent to any termination or expiration of this Contract shall survive termination or expiration of this Contract and continue in full force and effect.
- 38.2 If any term contained in this Contract is held or finally determined to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable in any respect, in whole or in part, such term shall be severed from this Contract, and the remaining terms contained herein shall continue in full force and effect, and shall in no way be affected, prejudiced, or disturbed thereby.

[Signature page to MHBE Full-Service Communications and Marketing RFP]

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the parties have executed this Contract as of the date hereinabove set forth.

CONTRACTOR	MARYLAND HEALTH BENEFIT EXCHANGE
_____	_____
By:	By: Michele Eberle, Executive Director
_____	Or designee:
Date	_____
PARENT COMPANY (GUARANTOR) (if applicable)	By:
_____	_____
By:	Date
_____	_____
Date	
Approved for form and legal sufficiency this ____ day of _____, 20__.	

Assistant Attorney General	

ATTACHMENT I – CONTRACT AFFIDAVIT

A. AUTHORITY

I hereby affirm that I, _____ (name of affiant) am the _____ (title) and duly authorized representative of _____ (name of business entity) and that I possess the legal authority to make this affidavit on behalf of the business for which I am acting.

B. CERTIFICATION OF REGISTRATION OR QUALIFICATION WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF ASSESSMENTS AND TAXATION

I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:

The business named above is a (check applicable box):

- (1) Corporation — domestic or foreign;
- (2) Limited Liability Company — domestic or foreign;
- (3) Partnership — domestic or foreign;
- (4) Statutory Trust — domestic or foreign;
- (5) Sole Proprietorship.

and is registered or qualified as required under Maryland Law. I further affirm that the above business is in good standing both in Maryland and (IF APPLICABLE) in the jurisdiction where it is presently organized, and has filed all of its annual reports, together with filing fees, with the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation. The name and address of its resident agent (IF APPLICABLE) filed with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation is:

Name and Department ID

Number: _____ *Address:* _____

and that if it does business under a trade name, it has filed a certificate with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation that correctly identifies that true name and address of the principal or owner as:

Name and Department ID

Number: _____ Address: _____

C. FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE AFFIRMATION

I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:

I am aware of, and the above business will comply with, the provisions of State Finance and Procurement Article, §13-221, Annotated Code of Maryland, which require that every business that enters into contracts, leases, or other agreements with the State of Maryland or its agencies during a calendar year under which the business is to receive in the aggregate \$100,000 or more shall, within 30 days of the time when the aggregate value of the contracts, leases, or other agreements reaches \$100,000, file with the Secretary of State of Maryland certain specified information to include disclosure of beneficial ownership of the business.

D. POLITICAL CONTRIBUTION DISCLOSURE AFFIRMATION

I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:

I am aware of, and the above business will comply with, Election Law Article, Title 14, Annotated Code of Maryland, which requires that every person that enters into a contract for a procurement with the State, a county, or a municipal corporation, or other political subdivision of the State, during a calendar year in which the person receives a contract with a governmental entity in the amount of \$200,000 or more, shall file with the State Board of Elections statements disclosing: (a) any contributions made during the reporting period to a candidate for elective office in any primary or general election; and (b) the name of each candidate to whom one or more contributions in a cumulative amount of \$500 or more were made during the reporting period. The statement shall be filed with the State Board of Elections: (a) before execution of a contract by the State, a county, a municipal corporation, or other political subdivision of the State, and shall cover the 24 months prior to when a contract was awarded; and (b) if the contribution is made after the execution of a contract, then twice a year, throughout the contract term, on or before: (i) May 31, to cover the six (6) month period ending April 30; and (ii) November 30, to cover the six (6) month period ending October 31.

E. DRUG AND ALCOHOL-FREE WORKPLACE

(Applicable to all contracts unless the contract is for a law enforcement agency and the agency head or the agency head's designee has determined that application of COMAR 21.11.08 and this certification would be inappropriate in connection with the law enforcement agency's undercover operations.)

I CERTIFY THAT:

(1) Terms defined in COMAR 21.11.08 shall have the same meanings when used in this certification.

(2) By submission of its Proposal, the business, if other than an individual, certifies and agrees that, with respect to its employees to be employed under a contract resulting from this solicitation, the business shall:

(a) Maintain a workplace free of drug and alcohol abuse during the term of the contract;

(b) Publish a statement notifying its employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of drugs, and the abuse of drugs or alcohol is prohibited in the business' workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of these prohibitions;

(c) Prohibit its employees from working under the influence of drugs or alcohol;

(d) Not hire or assign to work on the contract anyone who the business knows, or in the exercise of due diligence should know, currently abuses drugs or alcohol and is not actively engaged in a bona fide drug or alcohol abuse assistance or rehabilitation program;

(e) Promptly inform the appropriate law enforcement agency of every drug-related crime that occurs in its workplace if the business has observed the violation or otherwise has reliable information that a violation has occurred;

(f) Establish drug and alcohol abuse awareness programs to inform its employees about:

- (i) The dangers of drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace;
- (ii) The business's policy of maintaining a drug and alcohol free workplace;
- (iii) Any available drug and alcohol counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and
- (iv) The penalties that may be imposed upon employees who abuse drugs and alcohol in the workplace;

(g) Provide all employees engaged in the performance of the contract with a copy of the statement required by §E(2)(b), above;

(h) Notify its employees in the statement required by §E(2)(b), above, that as a condition of continued employment on the contract, the employee shall:

- (i) Abide by the terms of the statement; and
- (ii) Notify the employer of any criminal drug or alcohol abuse conviction for an offense occurring in the workplace not later than 5 days after a conviction;

(i) Notify the procurement officer within 10 days after receiving notice under §E(2)(h)(ii), above, or otherwise receiving actual notice of a conviction;

(j) Within 30 days after receiving notice under §E(2)(h)(ii), above, or otherwise receiving actual notice of a conviction, impose either of the following sanctions or remedial measures on any employee who is convicted of a drug or alcohol abuse offense occurring in the workplace:

- (i) Take appropriate personnel action against an employee, up to and including termination; or
- (ii) Require an employee to satisfactorily participate in a bona fide drug or alcohol abuse assistance or rehabilitation program; and

(k) Make a good faith effort to maintain a drug and alcohol-free workplace through implementation of §E(2)(a)—(j), above.

(3) If the business is an individual, the individual shall certify and agree as set forth in §E(4), below, that the individual shall not engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of drugs or the abuse of drugs or alcohol in the performance of the contract.

(4) I acknowledge and agree that:

(a) The award of the contract is conditional upon compliance with COMAR 21.11.08 and this certification;

(b) The violation of the provisions of COMAR 21.11.08 or this certification shall be cause to suspend payments under, or terminate the contract for default under COMAR 21.07.01.11 or 21.07.03.15, as applicable; and

(c) The violation of the provisions of COMAR 21.11.08 or this certification in connection with the contract may, in the exercise of the discretion of the Board of Public Works, result in suspension and debarment of the business under COMAR 21.08.03.

F. CERTAIN AFFIRMATIONS VALID

I FURTHER AFFIRM THAT:

To the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, each of the affirmations, certifications, or acknowledgements contained in that certain Proposal Affidavit dated _____, 202____, and executed by me for the purpose of obtaining the contract to which this Exhibit is attached remains true and correct in all respects as if made as of the date of this Contract Affidavit and as if fully set forth herein.

I DO SOLEMNLY DECLARE AND AFFIRM UNDER THE PENALTIES OF PERJURY THAT THE CONTENTS OF THIS AFFIDAVIT ARE TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION, AND BELIEF.

Date: _____

By: _____ (printed name of Authorized Representative and Affiant)

_____ (signature of Authorized Representative and Affiant)

ATTACHMENT J – MOCK BUDGET PROPOSAL

Instructions:

Offerors shall provide the percentage of work per labor category per Scope of Work section that the Offeror is proposing under this contract for the Base Year. This allocation should match the narrative description of the Offeror’s implementation strategy and will be considered in conjunction with that narrative. The Offeror should consider using existing State resources and make any recommendations to maximize impact of the State’s efforts, including allocating larger portions of the budget to certain categories within the scope of work. **In no instance should any dollar amount or rate be disclosed on this attachment. Proposed labor rates should only be disclosed in the Financial Proposal, Attachment B-2. Any Technical Proposal containing pricing information may be deemed not susceptible for award.** Offerors shall complete the following table and include it with its technical response.

The following table is for evaluation purposes only.

Labor Category	Percentage (%) of Work Assigned to Each Labor Category
Category 1 - Communications and Marketing Planning Support	
Senior Staff	
Mid-Level Staff	
Junior Staff	
Clerical Staff	
<i>Total % Category 1</i>	
Category 2 - Advertising Creative Services	
Senior Staff	
Mid-Level Staff	
Junior Staff	
Clerical Staff	
<i>Total %Category 2</i>	
Category 3 - Media Planning and Buying	
Senior Staff	
Mid-Level Staff	
Junior Staff	
Clerical Staff	
<i>Total % Category 3</i>	
<i>Offeror shall attach a recommended media strategy with budget that specifies the media mix and recommended schedule through January 31, 2019</i>	
Category 4 - Online Design/ Digital Marketing	
Senior Staff	
Mid-Level Staff	
Junior Staff	

Clerical Staff	
<i>Total % Category 4</i>	
Category 5 - Social Media	
Senior Staff	
Mid-Level Staff	
Junior Staff	
Clerical Staff	
<i>Total % Category 5</i>	
Category 6 Outreach and Education	
Senior Staff	
Mid-Level Staff	
Junior Staff	
Clerical Staff	
<i>Total % Category 6</i>	
Category 7 - Collateral Design * (*Printing is excluded from Scope of Work)	
Senior Staff	
Mid-Level Staff	
Junior Staff	
Clerical Staff	
<i>Total % Category 7</i>	
Category 8 - Testing/Web Design Support	
Senior Staff	
Mid-Level Staff	
Junior Staff	
Clerical Staff	
<i>Total % Category 8</i>	

APPENDIX I - Abbreviations and Definitions

For purposes of this RFP, the following abbreviations or terms have the meanings indicated below:

1. **Affordable Care Act (ACA)** - The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (Pub. L. 111-148) as amended, including by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law No. 111-152), and all regulations promulgated pursuant thereto.
2. **Agency** - The Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE).
3. **Business Day(s)** – The official working days of the week to include Monday through Friday. Official working days exclude State Holidays (see definition of “Normal State Business Hours” below).
4. **COMAR** – Code of Maryland Regulations available on-line at www.dsd.state.md.us.
5. **Contract**– The Contract awarded to the successful Offeror(s) pursuant to this RFP. The Contract will be in the form of **Attachment H**.
6. **Contract Commencement** - The date the Contract is signed by the Agency following any required approvals of the Contract, including approval by the MHBE Board of Trustees, if such approval is required. See Section 1.4.
7. **Contract Monitor** – The State representative for this Contract who is primarily responsible for Contract administration functions, including issuing written direction, invoice approval, monitoring this Contract to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Contract, monitoring MBE and VSBE compliance, and achieving completion of the Contract on budget, on time, and within scope. The Contract Monitor may authorize in writing one or more State representatives to act on behalf of the Contract Monitor in the performance of the Contract Monitor’s responsibilities.
8. **Contractor**– The selected Offeror that is awarded a Contract by the State.
9. **eMMA** – eMaryland Marketplace Advantage (see RFP Section 1.8).
10. **Key Personnel** – All personnel identified in the solicitation as such, or personnel identified by the Offeror in its Proposal that are essential to the work being performed under the Contract. See RFP Sections 3.10 and 5.4.2.7.
11. **Local Time** – Time in the Eastern Time Zone as observed by the State of Maryland. Unless otherwise specified, all stated times shall be Local Time, even if not expressly designated as such.
12. **Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE or Exchange or Agency)** - The unit of Maryland State government issuing this RFP.
13. **Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)** – Any legal entity certified as defined at COMAR 21.01.02.01B(54) which is certified by the Maryland Department of Transportation under COMAR 21.11.03.

- 14. Normal State Business Hours** - Normal State business hours are 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday except State Holidays, which can be found at: www.dbm.maryland.gov – keyword: State Holidays.
- 15. Notice to Proceed (NTP)** – A written notice from the Procurement Officer that work on the Contract shall begin on a specific date. Additional NTPs may be issued by either the Procurement Officer or the Contract Monitor regarding the start date for any service included within this solicitation with a delayed or non-specified implementation date.
- 16. Notice to Proceed Date** – The date specified in an NTP for work on the Contract to begin.
- 17. Offeror** – An entity that submits a Proposal in response to this RFP.
- 18. Open Enrollment** – Annual period when individuals may enroll or renew coverage in qualified health plans for the next plan year. The Open Enrollment period typically begins in the final quarter of the calendar year. For 2021, the Open Enrollment period is expected to begin on November 1 and end on December 15, with the option to extend the deadline at MHBE’s discretion.
- 19. Procurement Officer** – Prior to the award of any Contract, the sole point of contact in the State for purposes of this solicitation. After Contract award, the Procurement Officer has responsibilities as detailed in the Contract (Attachment M) and is the only State representative who can authorize changes to the Contract. The Department may change the Procurement Officer at any time by written notice to the Contractor.
- 20. Proposal** – As appropriate, either or both of an Offeror’s Technical or Financial Proposal.
- 21. Request for Proposals (RFP)** – This Request for Proposals issued by the MHBE with the Solicitation Number and date of issuance indicated in the RFP Key Information Summary Sheet (near the beginning of the solicitation, after the Title Page and Notice to Vendors), including any addenda.
- 22. State** – The State of Maryland.
- 23. Subcontractor** – An agent, service provider, supplier, or vendor selected by the Contractor to provide subcontracted services or products under the direction of the Contractor or other Subcontractors and including any direct or indirect Subcontractors or a Subcontractor.
- 24. Time and Material** – Type of payment to the Contractor based on direct labor hours billed at specific hourly rates, plus the actual cost of any materials provided. The labor category hourly rates may not exceed the hourly rates proposed. The Contractor will be required to provide time records and/or other documentation documenting that all direct hours billed have actually been expended by its’ principal or employees or those of subcontractors, totally and productively in the performance under the Contract. In addition, the Contractor must also provide documentation of the actual cost of materials or other activities directly used in the performance of the Contract. The fixed hourly labor category rates, plus the actual cost of materials will be the only payment made for this type of Contract.