

National Coalition of STD Directors

Check Yourself: Remote HIV/STI Testing Initiative

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Testing Solutions for Check Yourself Remote HIV/STI Testing Initiative

RFP Overview and Key Information

Section	Description
RFP Title	Testing Solutions for Check Yourself Remote HIV/STI Testing Initiative.
Program Overview	Check Yourself is a national non-clinic, self-collect testing program designed by, for and in partnership with public health departments to uptake HIV/STI asymptomatic screening.
Scope of Work (SOW)	The SOW outlines the description of work and services offered by the vendor and general requirements for participation to support the Check Yourself programming.
RFP Lead Contact Information	Jessica Zamora Senior Manager, Home Testing jzamora@ncsddc.org
RFP Issue Date	Wednesday, March 13 th 12pm EST (noon)
Expression of Interest Deadline	Wednesday, April 10 th 12pm EST (noon)
RFP Submission Deadline	Wednesday, April 17 th , 12pm EST (noon)
RFP Proposal Submission	Proposal forms should be completed electronically via NCSO website.
Evaluation Criteria	RFP proposals should meet general requirements including submission deadline, format, and completeness of responses.
Program Kick-off	November 2024
Questions and Clarifications	Submit Question and Answers form by Friday, March 29 th 12pm EST (noon). The answers to vendor questions will be published and posted approximately a week after the close of the question period on Friday, April 5 th 12pm EST (noon).
Proposal Review Process	Evaluation by a committee based on set criteria.

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Overview

1. Check Yourself Program

1.1. Description

The National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSO) seeks partnership with a vendor to manufacture and supply non-clinic, self-collect testing kits for the Check Yourself program and the detection of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Trichomoniasis, Syphilis, Hepatitis C, other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), and a screening panel for HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). The program aims to offer affordable testing services to multidisciplinary partnerships to perform targeted outreach and increase screening access to serviced population, especially tribal, rural, LGBTQ+ and other marginalized populations in need.

1.2. Background Information

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a noticeable decline in HIV/STI testing. However, STI rates persistently continue to rise nationwide, and it is imperative to have ongoing diagnosis and treatment to reduce transmission. In response, The Check Yourself program aims to enhance accessibility of self-collection testing services to tribal, rural, LGBTQ+ and other marginalized populations who may benefit the most of these services.

This RFP invites proposals from vendors that align with NCSO's values. We encourage prospective partners to contribute innovative strategies that will support our expected outcomes in reaching and serving all communities, uptake in testing that result in high positivity rates fostering a healthier and more equitable future for the population we collectively aim to benefit.

1.3 Expected Outcomes:

Mission Statement: Empower individuals to be advocates for their own health by providing accessible and convenient self-collection testing services ensuring proactive screening for the well-being of our communities.

Objectives:

- Long term program sustainability: Achieving financial sustainability that fosters expansion by generating revenue that exceeds expenditures.
- Expand Check Yourself to additional regions and states for effective outreach: Supporting public health by increasing accessibility to self-collection testing services to populations in need including tribal, rural, and other marginalized populations.
- Meaningful data collection: Contribute, advocate, and influence public health policy (local, state, and national levels) and FDA approval of self-collection testing services.

2. Scope of Work (SOW)

Please read each section carefully. The SOW outlines the description of work and services offered by the vendor and general requirements for participation to support the Check Yourself programming.

2.1. Full panel STI test kits

- 2.1.1 Manufacture, supply and distribute “Full panel” STI test kits that include screening for the following biomarkers: HIV (I, II, P24 antigen), Syphilis EIA, Chlamydia, Gonorrhea and Trichomoniasis, Hepatitis C.
- 2.1.2 Whole blood collection for the screening of HIV (I, II, P24 Antigen) and Syphilis EIA.
- 2.1.3 Multisite testing for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea detection through oral, rectal, and vaginal methods, along with Urogenital and rectal Nucleic Acid Amplification Testing (NAAT).
- 2.1.4 Confirmatory Testing available for HIV (I, II, P24 antigen).
- 2.1.5 Rapid Plasma Reagin (RPR) testing available for Syphilis.
- 2.1.6 Vendor laboratory to reflex to RNA testing following a reactive Hepatitis C antibody test.
- 2.1.7 Variation in self-collection testing kits is available.
- 2.1.8 Self-collection testing kits shall be accessible for individuals over the age of 18, and for younger individuals in compliance with state law and corporate policies.
- 2.1.9 Testing kits shall be provided at no-charge to eligible patients utilizing the platform.
- 2.1.10 Method for ordering and distributing test kits shall involve an automated process directly with the vendor.
- 2.1.11 Pre-paid self-mailing supplies for kit return.
- 2.1.12 Offer clear instructions on how to successfully complete the task.

2.2 Laboratory Testing and Resulting

- 2.2.1 The vendor shall conduct testing on specimens within forty-eight (48) or seventy-two (72) of receipt of specimens.
- 2.2.2 Electronic Lab Reporting: real-time report of results to local and state public health departments.

2.3. Data Collection

- 2.3.1 Ensure confidential test results are made available to authorized staff at NCSO, including program partners in an efficient and user-friendly manner.
- 2.3.2 View and generate reports for both aggregate and individual level data (e.g., patient negative/positive results, test kit order date, last test date, patient demographic and sexual health screening information, zip code, telehealth-based treatment, and documented linkage to care efforts).

- 2.3.3 Generate quarterly reports in an electronically accessible raw anonymized data or readable format
- 2.3.4 View aggregate level data in a password protected webpage.

2.4. Patient Support Features

- 2.4.1 Automated Kit reminder communications: methods must include but not limited to mobile device push application, email communications and/or phone call.
- 2.4.2 Warmline for test kit assistance and support.
- 2.4.3 Comprehensive educational materials for instructions for kit use and guidance for post-test actions in English and Spanish.
- 2.4.4 Notification of test result: The vendor's clinical team provides explanation of test result, referral for additional testing and/or treatment offered within the laboratory or partnered agency. Patient encounters should be documented.
- 2.4.5 Individuals shall have access to their test results at no cost, on a confidential HIPPA compliant portal.
- 2.4.6 Provide telehealth-based treatment and document linkage to care efforts.

2.5 Test kit design and production

- 2.5.1 Test kits shall include all necessary supplies to successfully complete self-collection testing.
- 2.5.2 Test kit packaging shall be discreet and adhere to safety standards.
- 2.5.3 Test kit box, welcome letter and all materials shall include Check Yourself program logo.
- 2.5.4 The vendor shall manage marketing compliant with the Check Yourself program guidelines. Additionally, it is understood that NCSO reserves the right to collaborate with other laboratories concurrently. The vendor acknowledges this operational requirement and agrees to cooperate fully, following NCSO's guidance and coordination efforts in managing such collaborations to ensure seamless service delivery and compliance with all relevant standards and guidelines.

2.6 Check Yourself Website

- 2.6.1 The vendor must be able to integrate a user-friendly, secure website within the Check Yourself webpage for individuals and/or partners of the program to order bulk and/or telehealth test kits. The website must also be available in Spanish.
- 2.6.2 The individual and/or partner shall be able to select the type of test kit to order.
- 2.6.3 The vendor must be able to develop a risk assessment survey that includes personal health information and sexual health screening information. The vendor must receive approval from NCSO before publishing to the Check Yourself webpage.
- 2.6.4 The Check Yourself ordering webpage shall be developed by or before November 2024.

3. Partnering Benefits in the SOW

3.1 Brand Enhancement and Reputation: The vendor will enhance their brand visibility in the public health sector.

3.2 Long-Term Partnership Opportunities: The mutual partnership offers collaborative opportunities and sustained partnerships with key stakeholders, healthcare providers, community organization, public health departments facilitating valuable industry connections within the public health sector.

3.3 Geographic Reach: Ability to outreach to new demographic communities that will benefit from services offered through the programming – United States (US) and US territories only.

3.4 Innovation and Development: The Check Yourself program allows for the development and implementation of innovative solutions for non-clinic, self-collect testing services, positioning NCSO and the vendor as a leader in HIV/STI prevention.

3.5 Positive Social Impact: The vendor will directly contribute to the improvement of community health outcomes and enhance their social influence or impact profile.

3.6 Data Collection: The vendor gains the unique opportunity to contribute to a comprehensive data pool, facilitating a deeper understanding of HIV/STI testing patterns and health outcomes. The work contributions within the scope of work support the development of policies that are grounded in empirical evidence.

4. Special Conditions

4.1 Identification of Parties: This RFP is to be entered into by and between National Coalition of STD Directors, Check Yourself program members and the vendor. The vendor should identify a point of contact for the RFP proposal. If a change in key staffing occurs during the proposal evaluation, the vendor should notify the RFP lead of that change immediately.

4.2 Limitation on Communication: Prospective vendors are prohibited from communicating on the RFP with NCS D staff, evaluation committee or any other members who may be associated except for the RFP Lead.

4.2.1 The Vendor may contact the RFP Lead via email for any questions or concerns.

4.3 Regulatory Compliance: The vendor adheres to all relevant healthcare regulations and standards. Proof of compliance must be provided.

4.3.1 Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments Certificate of Accreditation (CLIA Waiver).

4.3.2 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA): maintains the privacy of protected health information (PHI) of patients utilizing the platform.

4.4 Quality Assurance and Control: The vendor has implemented quality control procedures to ensure the accuracy and reliability of test results.

4.5 Confidential and Data Security: The vendor has measures in place for handling and storing personal health information, ensuring confidentiality and compliance with data protection laws. Data transmission should be encrypted and shared via a secure platform.

4.6 Kit Safety and Usability: The vendor should offer test kits that are user-friendly, safe and comply with safety standards.

4.7 Error Handling and Dispute Resolution: Concise procedures for addressing testing errors and result discrepancies. The Vendor shall have responsibility to work with the patient whose specimen was unsatisfactory as identified under this clause.

4.8 Reporting Requirements: Regular reporting on program metrics (e.g., overall test kit return and positivity rates by specific accounts; etc.).

4.9 Insurance and Liability: The vendor must possess adequate insurance and define liability responsibilities.

5. Instructions for Submission of Proposals

5.1 General Instructions

- 5.1.1 RFP proposal should be submitted electronically via the NCS D website.
- 5.1.2 Alternative RFP proposal form or format will not be considered or allowed for full consideration.
- 5.1.3 RFP Submission form should be completed before or by the deadline for full consideration. Any applications that are incomplete will not be considered.

5.2 Timeline

*The timeline is subject to change dependent on RFP development progress.

Pre-Proposal RFP Submission		
Form Title	Description	Due Date
Questions and Answers	Questions vendor has for NCS D	Friday, March 29 th 12pm EST (noon)
Publicized Questions and Answers from NCS D	Compiled questions from vendors with NCS D responses	Friday, April 5 th , 12pm EST (noon)
Expression of Interest	Intention to submit proposal form	Wednesday, April 10 th 12pm EST (noon)
Proposal Form	Official form for program consideration	Wednesday, April 17 th 12pm EST (noon)

Post-Proposal RFP Submission		
Description	Considerations	Due Date
Evaluation Process	Proposals that meet general requirements including submission deadline, format, and completeness of responses	Wednesday, July 10 th , 2024
Vendor Selection	Board of Directors involved in selecting vendor based on final evaluation and enter to contract negotiations	Wednesday, August 7 th , 2024
Vendor Award	Formally award contract to selected vendor	Wednesday, August 14 th , 2024
Program Development	Establish and execute a strategy for new accounts including the development of a webpage for test orders	Monday, September 16 th , 2024
Program Kick-off/Onboarding	Onboard new accounts	Monday, October 21 st , 2024

6. Evaluation

6.1 Detailed process for evaluation of RFP Form Submission

6.1.1 Initial Screening

6.1.1.1 Review all submission of RFP proposals to ensure they meet the basic requirements stated in the RFP, such as submission deadline, format, and completeness of response.

6.1.2 Evaluation Committee Formation

6.1.2.1 NCSO will form an evaluation committee comprised of staff and members of the organization who have expertise in public health, legal and financial aspects to evaluate the RFP proposals as well as external specialists and industry leaders.

6.1.3 Scoring System and Due Diligence

6.1.3.1 The evaluation committee team will develop a scoring system based on the evaluation criteria outlined in the RFP proposal form. The committee members will assign weights to each of the criteria based on its importance.

6.1.3.2 Conduct other responsibility reviews under the discretion of the evaluation committee.

6.1.4 Detailed Review

6.1.4.1 The evaluation committee will review and score the proposal submission independently based on the scoring criteria that was developed.

6.1.5 Consensus Meeting

6.1.5.1 The Evaluation Committee will convene and discuss the proposals and arrive at a consensus on the scores.

6.1.6 Vendor Presentation

6.1.6.1 Invite a shortlist of vendors to present their proposal and answer questions from the evaluation committee, Board of Directors, and Check Yourself program staff.

6.1.7 Final Scoring

6.1.7.1 After vendor presentations have been completed, a final scoring round will be conducted based on the RFP proposal form and the presentation.

6.1.8 Selection and Negotiation

6.1.8.1 Select the vendor based on the final evaluation (highest number of points) and enter contract negotiations.

6.1.9 Award Vendor

6.1.9.1 Formally award the contract to the selected vendor.

6.2 Evaluation Process Timeline

*The timeline is subject to change dependent on RFP development progress.

Process	Deadline
Initial Screening	Wednesday, May 1st, 2024
Scoring System and Due Diligence	Wednesday, May 8th, 2024
Detailed Review	Wednesday, May 15th, 2024
Consensus Meeting	Wednesday, May 29th, 2024
Vendor Presentation	Friday, June 28th, 2024
Final Scoring	Wednesday, July 10 th , 2024
Selection and Negotiation	Wednesday, August 7th, 2024
Award Vendor	Wednesday, August 14 th , 2024