

All proposals must be emailed to:  
Director of Procurement,  
Chastity Jackson at  
[cjackson@eastersealschicago.org](mailto:cjackson@eastersealschicago.org)  
Monday, December 5, 2022, with  
subject line of the email:  
"PROPOSAL MARKETING AND  
COMMUNICATION" no later than  
2:00 P.M.

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**Part I - Questions, Responses and Clarification of Information:**

- Question 1.** Can you tell us more about previous recruitment efforts? Please provide some background on your current marketing strategies? How have you historically used marketing to support business initiatives generally and Head Start/Early Head Start enrollment?
- Answer:** Over the last five years, we have created social media channels and regularly post on those. We also print materials such as flyers and tear sheet posters, large grommet, and flag banners for our 35+ centers, and we placed google ads. Over the last two years we have promoted our services on the PACE buses and some shelters. We have a website with resources and information that serves as a great marketing tool for us, as well, but we are currently not directing traffic to it through online ads. We also do grassroots advertising by partnering with other agencies that serve our population. We also did a large 30k+ postcard mailing in early September and early November to DHS families who would be eligible and a good fit for the program so that was a large direct mail campaign. We also have an e-newsletter and blog that sporadically includes information on our centers. Worth noting that we have recently launched a podcast but have not recorded an episode on our early learning centers yet.
- Question 2.** Have you previously worked with an agency on similar marketing push? If so, why are you looking for a new agency?
- Answer:** We have not worked with an agency or firm in the past. This is our first effort.
- Question 3.** Can we get access to your platforms to perform audit?
- Answer:** We can provide access to our website and social media channels, but we would like to know what specific platforms you are hoping to access? We also have a Google AdWords account and have money through TechSoup to create Google Ads and would like an expert to work on this with the funds we have in our account for this.
- Question 4.** What organizations or other influences compete with Easterseals Head Start/Early Head Start sites and your ability to be successful with your efforts?
- Answer:** Our largest competitor is Chicago Public Schools Head Start Program. There are other smaller agencies who have small Head Start programs, but they do not have much visibility within the community, so our main competitor is CPS.
- Question 5.** To help us approach this assignment from the most strategic context, can you

please share your key target audiences (beyond eligibility)?

- *Historical Learnings: Do you have any audience research, learnings or personas you are able to share?*

**Answer:** **Our DHS audience is confidential, but we can tell you this program is for low poverty families under the poverty guidelines threshold who have children from birth through age 5 in Cook County.**

- *Specific Audience Opportunities: Are there any client and/or child age ranges that from a marketing perspective are higher priority, or have historically presented more of a challenge than others?*

**Answer:** **See answer above.**

- *Over Income Prospects: Should awareness and lead generations focus primarily or solely on reaching eligible participants or is there still a need to raise awareness of opportunities for over income participants?*

**Answer:** **See answer above**

**Question 6.** As we leverage hyper-local targeting strategies:

- *Are there specific locations that you wish/need to focus on?*
- *Do you have any specific regulatory or other geographic restrictions?*
- *Are the two centers you directly operate higher priority than your partnership programs? Or should they be treated differently from a messaging or targeting perspective?*
- *Regarding Home Based Care, are there any geographic priorities, restrictions or client preferences/patterns for home-based care?*

**Answer:** **Locations are found here:** [Center-Based Location Interactive Map - Google My Maps](#)

**Question 7.** What channels if any are you currently running and how are they performing?  
Direct mail, print advertising, PACE bus advertising, social media, and website marketing.

**Answer:** **Over the last five years, we have created social media channels and regularly post on those. We also print materials such as flyers and tear sheet posters, large grommet, and flag banners for our 35+ centers, and we placed google ads. Over the last two years we have promoted our services on the PACE buses and some shelters. We have a website with resources and information that serves as a great marketing tool for us, as well, but we are currently not directing traffic to it through online ads. We also do grassroots advertising by partnering with other agencies that serve our population. We also did a large 30k+ postcard mailing in early September and early November to DHS families who would be eligible and a good fit for the program so that was a large direct mail campaign. We also have an e-newsletter and blog that sporadically includes information on our centers. Worth noting that we have recently launched a podcast but have not recorded an episode on our early learning centers yet.**

**Question 8.** What has been most and least effective?

- Answer:** Most effective is direct mail to DHS families and going to certain community events in the target location areas. We believe that TV and radio ads, which we have never done, could be dramatically useful and effective in getting the word out to our target audiences.
- Question 9.** Can you share any innovative or non-conventional approaches you may have tried previously and how they performed?
- Answer:** Direct mail and bus advertising have worked well. Tear sheet posters around the community cannot be measured easily, so not sure that's effective. Going to different targeted community events has had mixed success.
- Question 10.** What are the Head Start/Early Head Start marketing goal for this year? What are your overall business goals for the year?
- Answer:** Our overall goal is filling empty seats within the program at over 35+ locations. We need to enroll children in all locations and fill empty seats. If possible, we should provide the percentage of our seats that are currently not filled and if there are areas where we need more help than others. The Head Start team should have this information.
- Question 11.** Can you share any specific goals and KPI's by channel?
- Answer:** Goal is to enroll children in the program. We do not have KPI per channel as we do not have a large communications department to perform this.
- Question 12.** Can you please share more details as the overall media budget, and any historical or proposed allocation between channels?
- Answer:** We currently do not have a specific budget for media, and we are looking to experts to create this based on our needs and goals. We also want to see the ballpark costs for tv, and radio placement included in the proposals, acknowledging that this will be done through a partnership with the creative team and outside advertisers.
- Question 13.** Are there any location-specific budget allocations or requirements?
- Answer:** Location budget is for Chicago and Cook County South, Southwest, and Western Suburbs.
- Question 14.** Is there a specific format you would prefer the proposal in (Word, Power Point, etc)
- Answer:** No
- Question 15.** Will all or select participants have an opportunity to present their proposal? If so, would you prefer that presentation be in person or virtual?
- Answer:** Once the committee review each proposal submitted, we will invite four vendors to participate in the oral presentations. Please note that we have virtual team members, so they should be ready to present via Zoom or if, in person, to have some people watching via Zoom.
- Question 16.** Can you share more about your reporting needs, specifically?
- How are you measuring performance?
  - How do you measure ROI?

- *What is your source of truth for digital measurement?*
- *What are your current reporting gaps in terms of format, data, frequency, etc?*

**Answer:** We measure performance through online applications and visits to our website. We also measure performance through phone calls to our call center. We measure ROI through enrollment in the program. Online applications – truth for digital measurement. We do not currently have reporting gaps. We measure every phone call and application that comes in.

**Question 17.** Do you have specific awareness/recruitment goals?

- *How are you measuring awareness, what mechanisms are in place to measure any awareness lift or loss?*

**Answer:** We measure awareness through the traffic on our ELS page of our website and the online applications and phone calls that come into our program.

**Question 18.** What are the current enrollments into the targeted programs?

**Answer:** HEAD START TO ANSWER THIS PLEASE

**Question 19.** What do you want to increase to?

**Answer:** We want to increase the number of children attending the Head Start/Early Head Start program that we offer at Easterseals Serving Chicagoland and Greater Rockford. Perhaps Head Start folks can give us a more quantifiable number like increase by 50% or whatever that number is.

**Question 20.** Are there specific, quantifiable goals?

**Answer:** Yes, measurable increase in online applications and children enrolled in our HS/EHS centers

**Question 21.** What specific locations that you will be targeting?

**Answer:** Cook County – Chicago and surrounding suburbs on the South, Southwest and near West side. A list of our center locations can be found on our website here: [Center-Based Location Interactive Map - Google My Maps](#)

**Question 22.** Beyond geographic targeting, are there specific demographic of these locations that you are targeting?

**Answer:** Yes, low-income families with children ages birth through five

**Question 23.** Who are the primary audiences you are targeting, demographically (average age, income, ethnicity, gender, etc.?)

**Answer:** Low-income, below poverty threshold in Cook County, the city of Chicago and surrounding suburbs. Families with children birth through age five and expectant families.

**Question 24.** Are there any existing barriers and drivers that move them to sign up for early education programs?

**Answer:** Cost. An important message would be that Head Start is subsidized based on income. Location

**and ease of access. We have 35+ locations and are likely to have one close to them. High quality education that prepares children for kindergarten and life. Research is clear on the value of early education. They are long lasting and far reaching.**

**Question 25.** Can you provide the current demographic makeup of current participants of the Early Head Start/Head Start programs?

**Answer:** **HEAD START CAN ANSWER THIS AS THEY HAVE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF CHILDREN ENROLLED.**

**Question 26.** How and why were the media channels in the scope selected?

**Answer:** **We are currently not marketing in this way and would like to see if this will be effective. We have a considerable sum to work with to pay for expensive but high value, high yield media in the form of TV and radio.**

**Question 27.** Is there an existing brand identity framework style guide that we should be working off?

**Answer:** **Yes. We have brand guidelines and a campaign that is currently running so we have stock images and content to work from.**

**Question 28.** How does this campaign work with the messaging of the larger national network?

**Answer:** **This campaign is not a part of the National Network. This is only for our affiliate: Easterseals Serving Chicagoland and Greater Rockford.**

**Question 29.** Can you share creative and media elements used for these efforts?

**Answer:** **Yes. We can share branding guidelines, stock imagery, and copy that has been used for recent campaigns.**

**Question 30.** Why is Easter Seals looking for an agency to help drive awareness of the Head Start/Early Head Start at this point in time?

**Answer:** **We have a significant goal to increase the number of children in our Early Learning Programs and a skeleton team of scrappy consultants and providers. It's time for a more dedicated, strategic approach to outreach and marketing.**

**Question 31.** Do you have an enrollment goal that are you are hoping to achieve?

**Answer:** **Yes, we have a large enrollment goal we are hoping to achieve. We need to provide them with something more concrete here, such as, over our 35+ centers, we would like to see a 50% increase in enrolled seats or whatever that goal is.**

**Question 32.** What obstacles are in the way of you reaching this goal?

**Answer:** **Possible competition from Chicago Public Schools. We are a non-profit so we have budget constraints. We also do not have a large communications team to implement these campaigns so those are current obstacles. Until now, there has not been budget to partner with an agency to use new and different outreach techniques such as radio and TV.**

**Question 33.** Who are the similar competitors in the Early Learning education space?

**Answer:** **CPS is our main competitor**

**Question 34.** Do you have any research to share on your audiences?

**Answer: HEAD START CAN PROVIDE DEMOGRAPHICS**

**Question 35.** Are the funds already allocated for 20223 or will you require grants to fund this project?

**Answer: We have the funds to support this campaign.**

**Question 36.** What is the timing of your campaign launch?

**Answer: We would like this work completed as soon as possible if the quality remains excellent. We're requesting that all work is completed by March 31, 2023.**

**Question 37.** Does it coincide with an event or milestone?

**Answer: No, it does not.**

**Question 38.** How do you measure success of the campaign?

**Answer: Online applications into our program, phone calls to our call center, and ultimately, seats filled in our program at partner locations.**

**Question 39.** What are you looking for in terms of deliverables for the RFP due on December 5? You have asked for a description of the work in Section C. Are you looking for the agency to submit credentials and approaches for each scope, or a full creative proposal for Easter Seals?

**Answer: YES, we are looking for a firm to submit credentials and their approach to what we are looking for. We do not need a full creative proposal currently. If you feel a creative proposal will better position you in this process, please feel free to provide.**

**Question 40.** What other campaigns/brands do you admire that have been successful in driving enrollment or awareness, similar to your ask?

**Answer: We do not currently have a team to do research on other successful campaigns. This may be an important part of your proposal.**

**Question 41.** How many agencies have you invited to this search process?

**Answer: We have invited six agencies and advertised this RFP in the Chicago Sun-Times.**

**Question 42.** How long is the contract with the agency?

**Answer: We're requesting that all work is completed by March 31, 2023.**

**Question 43.** How long do you envision the campaign to run?

**Answer: We have enrollment goals to fill seats in our program, so it depends on the outcomes of the campaign and the effectiveness of the work produced by the firm we choose.**

**Question 44.** Has this proposal been previously awarded?

**Answer:** This is the first time we have sent out an RFP for this type of work.