



Request for Proposals

MARKET RESEARCH and BRAND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

RFP NO. CCDOH 26-007

RESPONSE IS DUE APRIL 6, 2026 NO LATER THAN 4:00 PM

Note: Responses received after this deadline will not be considered and will be returned to the bidder unopened.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THIS SOLICITATION **MUST** BE EMAILED TO amber.starn@maryland.gov – SUBJECT LINE MUST READ “QUESTION RFP CCDH 17-007” – QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION MUST BE SENT NO LATER THAN 4:00 PM ON MARCH 30TH.

Answers will be posted on our website as RFP-CCDOH 26-007 Addenda at www.charlescountyhealth.org

HAND-DELIVER/MAIL OR EMAIL SUBMISSION FORMS TO BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 4:00 PM ON APRIL 6TH TO:

AMBER STARN, CHARLES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH 4545 CRAIN HIGHWAY WHITE PLAINS, MD 20695 or by email at amber.starn@maryland.gov.



Project Timeline

Project Start Date: **April 22, 2026**

Estimated Project Duration:

Phase	Activities	Timeline
Phase 1	Project Kickoff & Research Planning	April 22 – May 6, 2026
Phase 2	Data Collection (Surveys, Focus Groups, Interviews)	May 7 – May 29, 2026
	Data Analysis & Findings Report	June 1 – June 19, 2026
Phase 3	Brand Strategy Development	June 22 – July 24, 2026
Phase 4	Visual Identity Development	July 27 – September 4, 2026
Phase 5	Implementation Planning & Training	September 7– October 7, 2026



I. Project Overview

The Charles County Department of Health (CCDoH) seeks proposals from qualified firms to conduct comprehensive market research and develop a cohesive, data-driven brand strategy for the agency.

The selected contractor will assess public perception, stakeholder awareness, service utilization barriers, and communication effectiveness. Based on research findings, the contractor will develop a modernized brand platform that reflects CCDoH's role as the trusted public health authority serving Charles County.

This initiative will strengthen community engagement, improve public trust, and enhance clarity and consistency across all agency communications.

II. Background

The Charles County Department of Health (CCDoH) serves as the local public health authority for Charles County, Maryland, operating under the Maryland Department of Health. CCDoH is dedicated to protecting, promoting and improving the health, safety and environment of Charles County residents. This mission is fulfilled through a broad range of public health services, health education initiatives, disease prevention programs and efforts to ensure a safe and healthy environment across the county.

The purpose of this branding project is to assess public perception, stakeholder awareness, service utilization barriers, and communication effectiveness, identify brand's strengths and areas of improvement, clearly define agency brand, and based on research findings develop a branding plan that reflects CCDoH's role as the trusted public health authority serving Charles County.

III. Project Goals and Objectives

The selected firm will:

1. Assess community awareness and perception of CCDoH programs and services.
2. Identify gaps in communication, access, and brand clarity.
3. Evaluate internal brand alignment and staff understanding of agency mission and messaging.
4. Develop a comprehensive brand strategy grounded in research findings.
5. Provide a visual and messaging framework that ensures consistency across platforms.
6. Deliver implementation guidance for sustained brand adoption.



III. Scope of Work

The contractor shall complete the following tasks:

Phase 1: Project Initiation & Planning

- Conduct kickoff meeting with CCDoH leadership and communications team.
- Finalize research design and project workplan.
- Identify priority audiences (e.g., residents, community partners, elected officials, healthcare providers, internal staff).
- Develop data collection tools (survey instruments, focus group guides, interview protocols).
- Submit finalized research plan for approval.

Deliverable: Approved Project Workplan and Research Plan

Project Specifications

1. Market Research & Data Collection

Develop and administer statistically valid community surveys. Conduct digital survey distribution and outreach strategy. Analyze demographic and behavioral segmentation data. Conduct focus groups with community members representing diverse populations. Conduct stakeholder interviews (community partners, healthcare providers, government officials). Conduct internal staff listening sessions.

Brand Audit

- Review current logo, messaging, website, social media, printed materials, and signage.
- Conduct competitive/comparative analysis of other local health departments and regional agencies.
- Evaluate brand consistency and clarity.

Deliverables:

- Research Summary Report
- Data Dashboard or Executive Research Brief
- Key Findings & Strategic Insights Presentation

Phase 3: Brand Strategy Development



Based on research findings, develop:

- Brand positioning statement
- Brand promise and value proposition
- Core messaging framework (key messages, audience-specific messaging)
- Brand voice and tone guidelines
- Tagline options
- Audience personas
- Brand narrative/story

Deliverable: Brand Strategy Report

Phase 4: Visual Identity Development

- Evaluate current logo and visual identity.
- Provide recommendations for refresh or redesign.
- Develop visual identity system including:
 - Logo concepts (minimum of three initial concepts)
 - Color palette
 - Typography system
 - Graphic elements
 - Image style guidelines
- Conduct stakeholder review process and refinement.

Deliverables:

- Final Logo Suite (all file formats)
- Brand Style Guide
- Visual Identity Toolkit

Phase 5: Implementation & Transition Support

- Develop phased brand rollout plan.
- Provide internal brand training session for staff and leadership.
- Provide templates (PowerPoint, letterhead, social media, report cover, flyer template).
- Provide external launch strategy and messaging plan.

Deliverables:

- Brand Launch Plan



- Implementation Toolkit (PowerPoint, letterhead, social media, report cover, flyer template)
- Staff Training Session

Final Deliverables Due: October 7, 2026

V. Contractor Qualifications

The selected firm must demonstrate:

- Experience working with public sector or public health organizations
- Demonstrated expertise in market research methodology
- Experience facilitating community engagement in diverse populations
- Brand development experience for government or mission-driven organizations
- Ability to manage projects with multiple stakeholder groups
- Strong graphic design and brand identity capabilities

VI. Budget Considerations

Proposals should include:

- Detailed cost breakdown by phase
- Optional add-on services (if applicable)
- Payment schedule tied to deliverables

VII. Reporting and Coordination

The contractor will report to the CCDoH and work closely with agency leadership and designated project team members. Monthly progress reports and milestone presentations will be required.



GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PROPOSERS

2.1 Reservations

The Charles County Department of Health (CCDoH) reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time after issuance, to reject, in whole or in part, any and all proposals received, to waive minor technicalities in proposals, to accept or reject any item or combination of items and to negotiate with responsible Proposers in any manner necessary to serve its best interests.

2.2 Addenda

Any necessary additions or corrections to this RFP will be made by addenda. Any Addenda will be posted on the Health Department's website at www.charlescountyhealth.org. It will be the responsibility of the Proposer to monitor the website for all addenda. Addenda become part of the RFP and should be acknowledged by each Proposer; failure to acknowledge any addenda shall not relieve Proposers of compliance with the terms thereof. The CCDoH assumes no responsibility for oral instructions.

2.3 Oral Presentations

The CCDoH will not require Proposers to make oral presentations of their qualifications or proposals.

2.4 Preparation

Proposals should be prepared as simply and economically as possible while providing a straightforward, concise description of Proposer's ability to satisfy the requirements of this RFP.

2.5 Incurred Expenses

Proposers are responsible for proposal preparation and submission costs, as well as travel costs incurred in performing any other activities related to this solicitation.

2.6 Acceptance of Terms and Conditions

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the Proposer accepts the terms and conditions set forth herein.

2.7 Public Information Act Notice



Proposers shall identify any portions of their proposals deemed to contain confidential or proprietary information or trade secrets, and provide justification of why such material, upon request, should not be disclosed in accordance with the State under the Access to Public Records Act, State Government Article, Title 10, Subtitle 6, and Annotated Code of Maryland.

2.8 Evidence of Proposer Responsibility

The CCDoH may require Proposers to submit additional information regarding financial responsibility, technical expertise, and other qualifications, and may consider any information otherwise available concerning those qualifications. The CCDoH may make such investigation as it deems necessary to determine Proposer responsibility.

2.9 Verification of Registration and Tax Payment

Before a Corporation can do business in the State, it shall be registered and in good standing with the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT), State Building, Room 803, 301 West Preston Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201. It is strongly recommended that any potential Proposer complete registration and ensure that it is in good standing prior to the due date for receipt of proposals. A Proposer's failure to complete registration and being in good standing with SDAT may disqualify an otherwise Successful Proposer from final consideration and recommendation for Contract award.

2.10 Award Without Discussions

The CCDoH reserves the right to reject any bids for the best interest of the agency and shall be the sole judge as to whether any bid complies with the intent of these specifications. The contract shall be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder determined by the department offering the product which will be most beneficial to the department. Experience, past performance, exceptions, parts availability, service policies & procedures and the total cost will be considered. The decision will be solely determined by the department.

2.11 Contractor Responsibilities; Subcontractors

Proposer will be responsible for all products and services required by the RFP. Subcontractors, if any, must be identified in the proposal, with a complete description of their role relative to the Proposer.

2.12 Conflicts of Interest



The Proposer shall identify any actual or potential conflicts of interest that exist, or which may arise if the Proposer is recommended for award and propose how such conflicts might be resolved.

2.13 Anti-Bribery Affidavit

Section 16-202, State Finance and Procurement Article requires that each Proposer seeking a contract submit an affidavit stating whether the entity or any of its officers, directors, or partners, or any of its employees directly involved in obtaining contracts with the State, have been convicted of bribery, attempted bribery, or conspiracy to bribe under the laws of any state or the federal government. The affidavit form that must be returned with each proposal is included with this RFP and should be submitted with the technical proposal.

2.14 Compliance with Laws

By submitting a response to this solicitation, the Proposer represents that it is not in arrears in the payment of any obligation due and owing Charles County or the State of Maryland, including the payment of taxes and employee benefits, and that it shall not become so in arrears during the term of any contract arising from award of this RFP.

2.15 Governing Law

The laws of Charles County and the State of Maryland, and where applicable, federal law and regulation, will govern the contract awarded pursuant to this RFP.

2.16 Applicable Standards/Guidelines

The Contractor will be required to perform all services in accordance with all applicable Federal, State and local codes.

2.17 Business Agreement/Liability Limits/Indemnification

The Successful Proposer would be required to enter into a Business Agreement with the Health Department. This agreement would include agreeing to stated liability limitations on the part of the Health Department for claims and indemnification of the health department against any loss, cost, damages or expense arising from the performance of services under this agreement.

2.18 Contract Monitor



The Contract Monitor will manage and coordinate this project. All communications related to this project shall be directed to: Amber Starn, Charles County Department of Health 4545 Crain Highway, PO Box 1050 White Plains, MD 20695 301-609-5748.