

## REQUEST FOR COMMUNICATIONS FIRM QUALIFICATIONS



### Communicating the Value of Coverage: Maximizing ACA Enrollment in Central Texas During Open Enrollment 6

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## About St. David's Foundation

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St. David's Foundation is a health foundation funding in a five-county area surrounding Austin, Texas, with a total population of about two million residents. Through a unique partnership with St. David's HealthCare, a Malcolm Baldrige award-winning hospital system in Central Texas, the Foundation reinvests proceeds from the hospital system back into the community, with a goal of building the healthiest community in the world. St. David's Foundation also operates the largest mobile dental program providing charity care in the country and runs the largest healthcare scholarship program in Texas.

Committed to creating healthier lives for all Central Texans by addressing the region's top health challenges, the Foundation's strategic priorities include:

- Providing Central Texans with the healthiest care in the world,
- Creating the healthiest places for Central Texans to live, and
- Helping Central Texans become the healthiest people they can be.

Learn more about St. David's Foundation at [www.stdavidsfoundation.org](http://www.stdavidsfoundation.org).

## Issue Background: The Need for Health Insurance Enrollment in Central Texas

Under its Healthiest Care Strategic Priority, the Foundation maintains a focus area that aims to maximize Health Insurance Enrollment and Use.

The Foundation’s goal for this work is to help enroll Central Texas residents in the existing publicly funded coverage programs for which they are eligible – such as the Marketplace, Medicaid, Children’s Health Insurance Program, and women’s health programs – and to provide them with the resources necessary to use their insurance for the care they require. While not a hard line, St. David’s Foundation’s priority populations generally earn below 200% of the federal poverty level.

To date, the Foundation has made a small number of grants to organizations providing in-person outreach and enrollment assistance in community settings. For the 2019 Open Enrollment period (OE6), St. David’s Foundation intends to expand into the role of supporting an Affordable Care Act (ACA) communications campaign, and learn from the results.

The Foundation views health insurance as a building block on which access to vital medical, dental, and behavioral health care is rooted. For low to middle income consumers, quality health insurance bolsters prevention while reducing avoidable emergency department use and affordability barriers to care.

Through the ACA, Texas has seen an increase in its insured population, yet the state maintains the highest uninsured rate in the nation. Only one-half of Texans receive health insurance from their or a family member’s job.

Central Texas Uninsured Rates by County  
Source: 2018 County Health Rankings

National	Bastrop	Caldwell	Hays	Travis	Williamson
14%	23%	24%	20%	19%	13%

Uninsured rates are higher among young adults, communities of color, immigrants, women of childbearing age, and in rural communities. Detailed research on Texas coverage data is available at <https://bit.ly/2Pt5Bho>.

Texas uses the federally facilitated marketplace, [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov), and is not a Medicaid expansion state.

While the ACA is still the law of the land, there are changes in the broader environment that make covering people with quality, affordable health insurance increasingly challenging. Notably, federal funding for state-based in-person navigation assistance has been cut 86%, the tax penalty for forgoing health insurance will be lifted in 2019, newly offered association health plans may be more affordable in the short term, but at the cost of critical benefits (e.g., may omit maternity care or treatment for substance use disorder), and premiums continue to rise.

During the 2018 Open Enrollment period (OE5), however, despite reduced federal funding for consumer assistance and a timeline that was half as long as the four that came before it, Texas saw a 5% increase in the number of people who activated their ACA plan, many with financial assistance. This increase demonstrates the enduring need and demand for health insurance in the individual market in Texas.

## Request for Communications Firm Qualifications

### Communicating the Value of Coverage

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## Request for Qualifications

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St. David's Foundation seeks the qualifications of experienced communications firms to rapidly design and implement a non-partisan, factual, and action-oriented campaign that is grounded in messaging evidence during OE 6. This campaign is a core element of the Foundation's focus area to increase the rate of insurance coverage in the five county Central Texas region (Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis and Williams counties), and will amplify the Foundation's belief that insurance is a key tool for population health improvement. The envisioned campaign would use social/digital media and influencers, and may include traditional media, to reach residents in Central Texas communities with high uninsured rates.

A successful campaign would:

- 1) convey factual information to mitigate consumer confusion and
- 2) provide audiences with practical information about existing resources for signing up/renewing health insurance coverage.

### Phases of Work

- 1) **Research:** Getting to know the Central Texas landscape for enrollment communications work, as well as extracting data to inform the strategy and plan.
- 2) **Planning:** Meeting in-person and by phone with St. David's Foundation staff and community collaborators to plan an effective campaign that will fill gaps, bolster efforts, and facilitate collaboration. The consultant and Foundation will jointly segment priority audiences based on need, opportunity, and budget.
- 3) **Implementation:** Executing the campaign plan during the six weeks of OE6 (November 1- December 15). Implementation would include both direct campaign implementation as well as coordinating with aligned collaborators.
- 4) **Refining:** Using analytics as well as on-the-ground feedback to adapt the campaign plan in real time.
- 5) **Reporting and reflecting:** Using data and analytics to evaluate the contributions of the campaign.

### Milestones and Expected Deliverables

- 1) Participation in an in-person kick-off meeting with St. David's Foundation and collaborating partners.
- 2) Campaign plan to be approved by St. David's Foundation with one to two revisions. Plan should include clearly defined target audiences, evidence-based messages, paid/earned/organic plan for reaching audiences, roles and responsibilities of collaborating partners, detailed budget for direct costs (e.g., paid media), and monitoring and evaluation framework. It is envisioned that the consultant would leverage existing messaging research and shared messages prioritized at state and national levels among those advancing enrollment during OE6.
- 3) Development and dissemination of sharable creative services and content. Final messages and materials must be cleared through the Foundation.
- 4) Consultant will directly manage paid media within approved budget.
- 5) Final report, including segmented analytics, lessons-learned, and future recommendations.

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## Timeline

The project is on a rapid timeline of approximately four months, including planning and final reporting.

<b>August 31, 2018:</b>	RFQ Release
<b>September 21, 2018:</b>	Qualifications due
<b>September 28, 2018:</b>	Selection made, all bidders notified of outcome
<b>October 1, 2018:</b>	Contract period begins
<b>October 1-October 12, 2018:</b>	Kick off meeting, background research, and planning
<b>October 19, 2018:</b>	Campaign plan due to St. David's Foundation
<b>October 26, 2018:</b>	Campaign plan finalized
<b>November 1-December 15, 2018:</b>	Campaign implementation with weekly or every other week check-in calls
<b>January 15, 2019:</b>	Final report (qualitative and quantitative) due to foundation in both written and slide formats
<b>By February 15, 2019:</b>	Debrief and reflection meeting in-person or by videoconference

## How to Submit Qualifications

Interested parties should submit the following by e-mail, ***no later than 12 p.m. Central Time on Friday, September 21, 2018.*** Late qualifications will not be considered.

- 1) Description of the firm's mission, structure, experience, and competitive advantages.
- 2) Description of firm's approach to working with diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 3) Examples of the firm's experience designing and implementing campaigns involving behavior change with underserved audiences and respective outcomes.
- 4) Examples, as applicable, of experience with ACA communications and respective outcomes. Description of how the firm stays abreast of the evolving ACA landscape and communications best practices.
- 5) Description of how the firm would approach rapidly designing and implementing a coverage campaign. What existing information and resources would be leveraged and what would need to be developed? How would the firm meet the needs of and resonate with diverse audiences in a way that converts? How would the firm use analytics?
- 6) An estimate for an all-inclusive fee. The estimate should include staff time (including hourly rates and personnel hours by title or blended rate and total hours), travel to Austin (as relevant), and direct costs (e.g., paid media, creative services, subcontracted work).
- 7) Staff roles and bios. If applicable, description of roles and bios for any key subcontractors.
- 8) Three client references for issue or social marketing campaigns completed within the last five years. Each reference should describe the project, dates of work, and a name, title, email address, and phone number.
- 9) Attach sample(s) of or links to relevant work .

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## Response Format

All responses must be:

- Page numbered with the respondent's name on each page
- Organized according to the list above
- Formatted for 8.5 x 11 inch paper
- In font size 12 point for normal text and no less than 10 point for any graphics
- No more than six (6) pages, excluding bios, work product examples or other attachments
- All elements of the response must be contained in a single PDF file

## St. David's Foundation Point of Contact

St. David's Foundation single point of contact for this RFQ and the delivery point for all responses and correspondence is:

**Elizabeth Krause**, Senior Program Officer, Health Insurance Enrollment and Use

512-879-6586

ekrause@stdavidsfoundation.org

cc: **Vanessa Rocha**, Grants Coordinator

vrocha@stdavidsfoundation.org

## Review and Selection

The Foundation has established a Coverage Campaign Steering Committee, composed of staff with ACA and communications expertise. External collaborating partners may be invited to participate. The Steering Committee will be responsible for qualifications review and firm selection. A contract is expected to be awarded based on the written qualifications given the timeline, but the Steering Committee may request additional information by e-mail or phone.

To hit the ground running and leverage resources, the ideal candidate will have experience with ACA enrollment communications from a prior Open Enrollment period while remaining tapped into evolving national ACA messaging research. Prior ACA work in a Federally Facilitated Marketplace state or region is a plus. The ideal candidate will have experience reaching and communicating with diverse audiences, including Spanish speaking audiences. Additionally, strong candidates will demonstrate savvy use of analytics to drive strategy and tactics. While knowledge of Central Texas communities is a plus, it is not a requirement and bidders from outside the state/region are welcome to submit qualifications. While St. David's Foundation prefers to work with one lead firm, bidders may propose to subcontract with others that round out the strengths needed to implement a successful campaign. Both non-profit and for-profit communications firms are welcome to apply.

***The contract specifications and submission deadline are necessitated by the nature of the RFQ and Open Enrollment. No incumbent nor a preferred vendor has been identified by the Foundation.***

## Cost of Services

The contract range is \$100,000 - \$200,000, all inclusive. The cost of services will be determined by the final accepted scope of work.

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