

ADDENDUM ONE QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

Date: May 24, 2021

To: All Bidders

From: Dianna Gilliland, Buyer
AS Materiel State Purchasing Bureau (SPB)

RE: Addendum for Request for Proposal Number 6528 Z1 to be opened June 1, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. Central Time

Questions and Answers

Following are the questions submitted and answers provided for the above-mentioned Request for Proposal. The questions and answers are to be considered as part of the Request for Proposal. It is the Bidder's responsibility to check the State Purchasing Bureau website for all addenda or amendments.

Question Number	RFP Section Reference	RFP Page Number	Question	State Response
1			What is the length of the campaign period?	This is an ongoing campaign that will adapt as consumer habits and preferences change and communication methods/technologies evolve. Campaign will also evolve based on creative input from selected ad agency in collaboration with the NCB Director of Communications. The contract term is for an initial one-year period, with five optional one-year renewals.
2			What is your strategy and creative budget?	Although this has not been established by the Board of Directors for the 2021-2022 fiscal year, previous annual strategy and creative budgets have been set ranging from \$200,000 - \$290,450.
3			What is your media budget?	Annual media budgets are set each year by the Nebraska Corn Board's Board of Directors with guidance from the board's Director of Communications

				and the board's advertising agency, so varies from year-to-year. In the last four years, the total amount for media services has ranged from \$1.4 - \$1.7 million per year.
4			Would you be open to a retainer scenario?	No.
5			How many firms is this RFP open to? Would you be willing to share the list?	This RFP is publicly posted.
6			Do you have any guidance regarding the budget and what has been committed for this consumer awareness initiative for the coming fiscal year?	Refer to questions 2 and 3.
7			What percentage of your total marketing budget will go toward consumer outreach vs. farmer / sellback outreach?	This is something that varies with each year, but a vast majority of effort and budget goes toward consumer outreach compared to farmer sellback (estimated 85% consumer outreach and 15% sellback).
8			How are you measuring success with current efforts and how do you plan to measure success with this consumer awareness initiative?	We're always looking for ways to improve how we measure overall success. Currently, we use a wide variety of analytics reporting tools from Google and various vendors.
9			Throughout the RFP, language refers to partner(s), contractor(s), etc. in several sections. Will this be awarded to a single vendor or split up?	The State's intent is to award to a single contractor. Refer to RFP Section I.W. AWARD.
10			What are the current internal communication strategies that focus on consumer outreach?	NCB currently implements a variety of consumer-focused initiatives. NCB releases a consumer-focused newsletter three times a year that is distributed and inserted to newspapers across the state. There is a digital component to this. NCB utilizes native advertising, transit advertising, OTT, print, broadcast and digital strategies to educate the public on issues important to

			How do you plan to incorporate these into a new strategy?	<p>Nebraska's corn growers. Issues typically addressed range from sustainability, biotechnology, biofuels, etc.</p> <p>While there may be instances where current efforts may be incorporated into a new strategy, the purpose of this RFP is not to necessarily utilize what has been done in the past, but rather identify opportunities for future consumer outreach that may trigger more effective engagement. This may be an entirely new strategy, or a hybrid of old and new based on the recommendation and advisement of the selected contractor.</p>
11			Will this contract act as an agency or record agreement?	Yes, this contract will act as an Agency of Record Agreement.
12	NA	NA	What do you see as the most successful and least successful initiatives in your current marketing plan?	<p>Most successful:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CornsTalk: our consumer-focused publication (and digital supplemental elements) issued three times each year focused on a specific topic of importance. 2. UNL88 national and local campaign. <p>Least successful:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Renewable Fuels Month General ethanol messaging.
13	NA	NA	Based on your current communication and marketing plan, what are your current KPIs do you use to gauge success?	<p>NCB utilizes a variety of quantitative and qualitative metrics to determine success. Analytics reports on digital campaigns/outreach efforts are utilized some to measure overall performance and impressions.</p> <p>NCB also uses qualitative or anecdotal information to see how consumers are reacting to messaging and possibly changing behavior on issues</p>

				like biofuels, biotechnology, modern agriculture, etc. NCB is open to assistance and advisement in better establishing and understanding performance metrics.
14	NA	NA	What is the impetus behind this review?	NCB has been reaching consumers in a similar and consistent fashion for several years. While these methods may have worked in the past (and they may still work), NCB finds it necessary to reassess its efforts to make sure campaigns/marketing initiatives are working as innovatively, efficiently, and effectively as possible. The RFP provides an opportunity to identify the best strategic partner with the best plan to reach consumers to help NCB achieve its promotional and educational goals.
15	NA	NA	What is the largest challenge you are facing today regarding your marketing efforts?	There is a lot of misinformation regarding modern agricultural production spread through a variety of media. It is a constant challenge to combat the negative attention received. Additionally, with the plethora of media options available, identifying appropriate channels to target an increasingly diverse audience is a challenge.
16	NA	NA	How has the pandemic affected your business and objectives?	Typically, NCB is active in traditional media, digital media and also educates and promotes at in-person events. With the pandemic, a greater allocation of the budget has moved away from in-person events and focused more on digital technologies, such as native advertising, video streaming platforms and general online delivery.

17	E. Scope of Work	27	We see ourselves as an extension of our clients' marketing departments; in addition to expertise and capabilities, what types of intangibles do you look for in an agency partnership?	NCB looks for a partner to provide honest feedback, strategic and innovative thinking. NCB expects the selected agency to take an active role in message development, creative and content research, bold design, and implementation. High quality work is expected with little to no mistakes.
18	G. Deliverables	29	While we understand there is fluidity with your budget, do you have an expected annual budget range? If so, what is it?	Refer to questions 2 and 3.
19	NA	NA	If you could get the general public to remember/repeat/act on one single idea, what would it be?	Nebraska's corn farmers are positive stewards of the land and their resources.
20			Is the incumbent agency participating in this RFP? How long has the incumbent had this account? What services did the incumbent agency provide during the last contractual period?	The RFP is available for any and all bidders. The incumbent has had this contract since July 1, 2019. The incumbent is a full-service agency that provides print, broadcast, digital, out-of-home services along with media buying.
21			Are there any similar industry bodies/organizations that have strategy and communication plans that the Nebraska Corn Board feels are good examples of innovative, unique or compelling? If so, could you please provide examples.	Bidders should provide the best response to the RFP.
22			Can the Nebraska Corn Board provide any information from previous years communication strategies, tactics and metrics?	NCB utilizes a variety of tactics to reach consumers each year, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Radio 2. Television 3. Print 4. Digital/social 5. Transit/Out of Home 6. Etc. Success is typically measured through analytic reports, impressions, anecdotal feedback, etc. NCB seeks a partner to help

				improve upon established metrics to ensure goals are reached.
23			Would there be any concerns raised by the Nebraska Corn Board if the vendor submitting a response also worked with similar industry bodies such as the Nebraska Soybean Board on the same activities mentioned in the RFP?	No concerns as long as there is no conflict of interest. There may even be ways to collaborate with like-minded organizations.
24			What geographies does the Nebraska Corn Board reach for their media placements? What geographies would need to be included in the development of this strategic plan?	NCB typically reaches high population, urban areas in Nebraska to help people better understand modern corn farming and agricultural production, as these audiences are typically further removed from the farm. Additionally, people in urban areas may be seeing increased choices at the gas pump, so helping them understand their options is critical. This said, NCB will be open to the advice and recommendations of the selected contractor.
25			How are you evaluating success as it pertains to the goals outlined?	Success is typically measured through analytic reports, impressions, anecdotal feedback, etc. NCB seeks a partner to help improve upon established metrics to ensure goals are reached.
26			Is it expected that finalized pricing or pricing guides be included in the vendor response?	Yes. A portion of the RFP will be scored based on the cost proposal form.
27			Can the Nebraska Corn Board provide their annual budget for marketing and communications activities?	Our budget is public record and is online: https://nebraskacorn.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/20-21Budget.pdf
28			How will success be measured during, and after the duration of the work?	Success is typically measured through analytic reports, impressions, anecdotal feedback, etc. NCB seeks a partner to help

				improve upon established metrics to ensure goals are reached.
29			How many decision makers or contact points will be involved in offering up final approval on deliverables?	The primary point of contact will be the Nebraska Corn Board's Director of Communications with input from other staff members. Depending on the scale of the project, the 9-member board of directors may be consulted for input.
30	I. Procurement Procedure	2	What is the intended purpose of and is there a requirement for submitting organizations to attend the proposal opening Zoom meeting scheduled for June 1 at 2 PM?	The RFP Opening isn't a required attendance. Bidders are welcome to join.
31	I. Procurement Procedure	5	The RFP requires signatures using an indelible method. Because this RFP is being submitted electronically, will an electronic copy of the signed document satisfy requirements?	Form must be signed manually in ink or by DocuSign. A copy of the signed manually in ink document is acceptable.
32	V. Project Description and Scope of Work	34	What is the primary pain point you are trying to alleviate? And/or what quantifiable goals have you established that designate success?	NCB consistently produces and releases content to help educate consumers, yet oftentimes it doesn't feel like NCB is gaining much traction. Issues like biotechnology, animal agriculture and ethanol continue to receive strong negative reactions. One main purpose of this RFP is to reevaluate current strategy and identify a partner that can help refine goals and assist in the achievement of the goals.
33	Cost Proposal	1	You cost proposals shows optional renewal up to four years. Is it limited to four years? We also understand the previous RFP for similar related work was two years ago. Is it your intention to put this work up for bid very two years or is it your desire to establish a	The term of this RFP is one year with an optional renewal of up to four years (up to five years total). It is required by the State of Nebraska to reassess contracts to be rebid on occasion, which is why this contract would be limited to up to five years before being required to go through the RFP process again.

			longer -standing relationship with a partner?	The intention of this RFP would be to seek a long-term partner to serve as an agency of record for consumer outreach/engagement initiatives rather than putting this up for bid every two years.
34	General		Can you provide any existing research/information on current consumer perception of NCB and its products or services?	NCB hasn't conducted a brand perception survey in recent years to provide an up-to-date response to this question.
35	General		How has the market changed recently? Been affected by COVID-19 or other economic shifts? Created new opportunities?	<p>The market is constantly changing, which may impact Nebraska's corn farmers. Whether it's the introduction of more electric cars, which displaces the need for ethanol, or environmentally-conscious influencers encouraging people to reduce their consumption of meats to reduce GHG emissions, there are always opportunities to correct misinformation and share factual content to help consumers make more informed choices.</p> <p>COVID-19 has impacted Nebraska's corn industry. For example, due to the pandemic, motorists weren't driving much initially. This greatly impacted the state's ethanol industry, which is vital to corn farmers. Additionally, the pandemic made more people aware of how the food supply chain works, which may present opportunities for education and public discussion.</p>
36	General		Can you elaborate on any key demographics of your target audience?	NCB presently has a broad target audience. Because corn is used in so many products (food, fiber, fuel) and because people are becoming further removed from the farm, modern corn

				farming (and related industries like animal agriculture and ethanol) often get bad reputations. NCB's overall goal as a checkoff is to enhance demand for Nebraska's corn industry now and into the future, so NCB is constantly working to promote the industry and build consumer trust.
37	General		Are there specific areas within your market that show opportunity for growth?	We see a huge opportunity to promote ethanol and its benefits to drivers locally and nationally. With a new Administration's increased focus on environmental issues, there is an increased potential to focus on cleaner-burning, air friendly, reduced emissions messages.
38	General		Are there other marketing initiatives which have already taken place? And would they be ongoing while this campaign is running?	The result of this RFP process would be identifying and partnering with a communication/marketing agency to help craft and implement an ongoing consumer engagement campaign. This campaign may utilize current strategies, if they make sense, or pivot to more efficient/impactful methods of building consumer trust. One ongoing initiative would be NCB's national Unleaded88 campaign airing on the Big Ten Network.
39	General		Can you describe any current internal NCB team resources for areas outlined in this RFP – including marketing, communications, public relations and social media?	The NCB Director of Communications regularly works directly with selected advertising agency, as well as internal NCB staff to achieve marketing/communication outreach goals.
40	Social Media		What social media channels are most heavily used by your members?	The Nebraska Corn Board primarily focuses on consumers and has no membership. In social media outreach, our audiences are

				targeted through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.
41	Social Media		What social presence would be preferred for this campaign – brand awareness only or additional subsets?	<p>NCB uses Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube primarily regarding social outreach. This is a mixture of brand awareness and content messaging.</p> <p>To avoid limiting selected advertising/marketing agency's creativity and expertise, NCB will rely on the advisement and recommendations of selected advertising/marketing agency to help identify and utilize best media platforms to use in reaching consumers with key messages.</p>
42	Social Media		Since social media is not explicitly mentioned in the technical section of the RFP, would it be appropriate to simply include a question if they are open to expanding the media planning/buying to incorporate more digital tactics including organic social media, paid social media and digital media?	<p>Social media is very important to NCB and is mentioned in the technical requirements, RFP Section V.F.5.</p> <p>NCB is looking for a partner in an advertising agency to help guide an efficient and impactful consumer messaging effort.</p>
43	Newsletter		For the Cornstalk newsletter, what is the frequency of publication?	Three times a year. CornsTalk is constantly being evaluated regarding is this the BEST way to reach consumers, or do we refocus our efforts into a more efficient strategy.
44	Newsletter		Target audience? Any priorities?	Consumers that may impact Nebraska corn demand through their purchases (consumers that may purchase/use food, fuel, fiber derived from corn).
45	Newsletter		Geographic distribution?	Primarily in the state of Nebraska but some campaigns may extend beyond the state (for example, promoting biofuel/ethanol in

				environmentally conscious states, like California or Colorado).
46	Newsletter		Do you offer digital and print versions?	Yes. NECornsTalk.com.
47	Newsletter		Number of pages?	8-16 has been the historical range of the newsletter printed piece, but NCB is open to revising how messaging is released to reach consumers.
48	Newsletter		Dimensions/specifications?	<p>NCB will rely on advisement from advertising agency on the future of a printed consumer-focused newsletter, but historically, roughly 10.5 inches x 11 inches).</p> <p>While this is the current format, one of the main reasons for this RFP review is to identify the best consumer outreach strategy/campaign, which may or may not include a newsletter/printed piece as has historically been done.</p>
49	Newsletter		Is there a designated point of contact to assist with identifying themes and potential sources for stories?	NCB Director of Communications.
50	Newsletter		What is the current process for creation and distribution of the newsletter? Number of contributors? Collaborators? Reviewers? Approvers?	<p>The current process begins with an idea brainstorm between NCB and the current advertising agency. From there, a theme is developed, along with individual story ideas and potential content experts. Advertising agency begins research, conducts interviews and prepares content and design for newsletter, which is then reviewed and approved by NCB staff.</p> <p>While this is the current model, one of the main reasons for this RFP review is to identify the best consumer outreach strategy/campaign, which</p>

				may or may not include a newsletter/printed piece as has historically been done.
51	Newsletter		Amount of time desired for internal review/approval of each edition?	Two to three weeks estimated before printing and distribution.
52	Newsletter		Does NCB have any current agreements for stock photography or other graphic assets?	Currently, NCB has a library of stock photography, video and other assets. This is an expanding library that continues to grow.
53	Earned Media		Does NCB have a designated spokesperson? Or more than one? Please describe.	Media requests go through NCB's Director of Communications. From there, requests may be answered by the Director of Communications, corn farmers serving on NCB, or other staff members (depending on the topic).
54	Earned Media		How are media experts currently identified?	Based on availability, location (in proximity to a reporter) and expertise. For example, some farmers are more versed in trade, while others may be more versed in ethanol.
55	Earned Media		Do any require media training?	Yes.
56	Earned Media		How are media inquiries currently handled by NCB?	Typically, all media requests are directed to NCB's Director of Communications, who takes the request and delegates to the best individual(s) to handle the request.
57	Earned Media		Are there specific niche audiences that are most important to reach?	This depends on messaging. For example: If talking GMOs and helping consumers make informed purchases at the grocery stores: NCB targets young moms who are busy but want to make the best purchases for their families. If talking ethanol, NCB may target motorists who are passionate about vehicle performance, the environment or saving money.

58	Earned Media		Any geographic regions of particular importance?	<p>NCB typically focuses on Nebraska audiences but occasionally will partner with other states for a national consumer campaign (i.e. national Unleaded88 campaign on the Big 10 Network).</p> <p>Through the Big 10 campaign. NCB is leading an effort partnering with other corn states to advertise Unleaded88 nationally, where UNL88 infrastructure aligns nicely with Big 10 alumni.</p>
59	Earned Media		Key influencers? Individuals or organizations?	<p>NCB is always looking to expand reach by partnering with influencers that make sense and share similar values. For example, food bloggers with large consumer followings can be beneficial when discussing biotechnology and food safety. Mechanics can be important allies in discussing the benefits of ethanol.</p>
60	Earned Media		Are any mediums most popular with target audience and/or members (ex: radio, social, print, etc.?)	<p>NCB's target audience is fairly diverse. Consumers of corn and corn products (food, fuel, fiber, etc.) are vast and varied. Because NCB is working with different demographics and psychographics, a variety of media platforms are utilized to reach audiences. It's difficult to "be all to all people," so NCB will rely on selected advertising and marketing agency to help set priorities.</p>
61	Earned Media		Does NCB have an established point of contact/role for partnering on media relations?	<p>Point of contact for media relations is NCB's Director of Communications.</p>

This addendum will become part of the Request for Proposal and should be acknowledged with the Request for Proposal response.