



Request for Proposals

Shifting the Public Perception of Child Sexual Abuse to a Preventable Public Health Issue and Mobilizing Texans to Take Action to Prevent It

Overview

Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas (CACTX) is building a future where all children are free from sexual abuse. Through collaborative partnerships and visionary, evidence-based strategies, we are working to stop child sexual abuse (CSA) before it starts. CACTX is pleased to make funds available through this Request for Proposal (RFP) to partner with a social change and/or communications agency to conduct research and discovery efforts to inform how to shift the public perception of CSA from inevitable to preventable and from a criminal justice issue to a public health issue, and how to motivate Texans to take action to prevent CSA. The findings will inform a multi-year strategic plan to achieve social change as well as a messaging framework to serve as a foundation for future messaging.

The three outputs to be achieved through this partnership include:

- **Research and discovery** to better understand our target audiences and how to mobilize them to prevent CSA.
- The development of a **multi-year strategic plan** that sets long-term strategic goals and priorities, including a tactical approach to shift the public perception of CSA to a preventable public health issue and to mobilize all Texans to take action to prevent it.
- The development of a **messaging framework** based on research, surveys, focus group feedback, and/or strategy to serve as the foundation for future messaging.

Definitions

Children's Advocacy Center (CAC): A safe, child-friendly environment that ensures access to safety, justice, and healing for children impacted by abuse. CACs provide a multidisciplinary team (MDT) approach that improves the response to these crimes while thoroughly addressing the emotional well-being of children and their non-offending caregivers impacted by trauma.

Multidisciplinary Team (MDT): The dedicated professionals that make up the MDT include law enforcement, local district/county attorneys and prosecutors, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, medical providers (doctors, nurses, and hospital staff), mental health professionals (psychologists, counselors, and psychiatrists), and victim advocates. Together these professionals can better facilitate case coordination, medical evaluations, mental health services, forensic interviews, victim advocacy, and MDT case review.

Messaging Framework: A messaging framework is a foundation that identifies objectives; defines a position on the issues that affect the work; identifies audiences and decision-makers to understand their core concerns and motivators; and establishes a clear messaging path to articulate our organization's core message(s).

Public Health: The science of protecting and improving the health of communities through education, policy, and research.

Social Change: Changes in human interactions and relationships that transform cultural and social institutions.

About CACTX

At CACTX, we believe in a future free of CSA, achievable through a universal understanding of the dynamics of CSA and a shared responsibility to prevent it. Through research, education, and evidence-based strategies, CACTX is taking action to find solutions that make the most impact for individuals, families, and communities across Texas to eradicate CSA.

Since 1995, CACTX has served as the membership association for the state's 70 local CACs, ensuring access to safety, justice, and healing for all Texas children impacted by abuse. Originally established to help grow Texas' CAC network and support their needs for training, technical assistance, and funding, CACTX continues to evolve by investing resources towards public awareness, education, intervention, and primary prevention strategies.

As the membership association for all CACs, CACTX provides a range of services and guidance to support the implementation of the CAC model across the state with fidelity to and per the Texas Standards for Children's Advocacy Centers and the Texas Family Code Chapter 264, Subchapter E.

Our Texas CAC network brings together

- Over 1,400 dedicated CAC staff professionals
- Over 1,000 law enforcement jurisdictions
- More than 230 district and county attorneys
- More than 300 medical and mental health professionals
- Every Texas Department of Family and Protective Services region in the state, including Child Protective Investigations, Child Care Investigations, and Adult Protective Services

Goal and Key Areas of Interest

Our society has historically viewed CSA as a criminal justice issue in which action is only taken after a crime has occurred and a child has experienced harm. This unfortunate reality is fueled by the misconceptions that CSA is inevitable and that nothing can be done to prevent it from happening in the first place. Research, however, suggests that CSA is largely preventable. These and other misconceptions about the dynamics of CSA prevent the public from taking action to prevent, recognize, and report it.

Shifting the perception of CSA from a criminal justice issue to a public health issue acknowledges that prevention is possible and that resources should be invested, and action taken to stop CSA from occurring in the first place.

CACTX wants to achieve lasting social change. We envision a future in which individuals, families, and communities across Texas have a universal understanding of the dynamics of CSA, and every person feels a shared sense of responsibility and takes meaningful action within their role to prevent it.

CACTX seeks to partner with a social change and/or communications agency to develop a multi-year strategic plan to shift the public perception of CSA to a preventable public health issue and to mobilize all Texans to take action to prevent it. To inform the development of the multi-year strategic plan, the vendor selected will engage in research and discovery efforts to better understand our target audiences and what will motivate them to take action to prevent CSA. Additionally, a messaging framework to serve as the foundation for future messaging will be developed utilizing inputs from the research and discovery.

Eligibility of Applicant

This RFP is open to all social change and/or communications agencies (e.g., small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women-owned business enterprises) with experience and capabilities in strategic communications and creative services. By submitting a response to this solicitation, the applicant certifies that it and its principals are not suspended or debarred from doing business with the state of Texas or federal government as listed on the State of Texas Debarred Vendor List maintained by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts and the System for Award Management (SAM) maintained by the General Services Administration.

Proposal Submission Guidelines

Proposals must be submitted by 5 p.m. on September 30, 2022. Late proposals will not be accepted. Proposals should be submitted in PDF format to communications@cactx.org.

Required Components of Proposal

Competitive proposals will address the following:

- The agency's relevant areas of expertise (e.g., market research; strategic planning and implementation; strategic messaging creation)
- The agency's available services (creative, digital media, etc.)
- The agency's prior and/or current experience working with clients similar to CACTX (i.e., nonprofit organizations; organizations working to affect change at the state level; and/or organizations involved with criminal justice, child welfare, and public health issues)
- The agency's prior and/or current experience working on campaigns advancing change in the public health, public safety, prevention, criminal justice, and/or child welfare space
- One or more case studies highlighting the applicant's past success(es), addressing the following:
 - What problem the applicant was brought in to help solve
 - How they approached the work
 - What the outcome was
- The agency's use of evidence-based strategies to achieve results
- Agency's team structure and process for working with clients
- Whether any services would be subcontracted (versus provided in-house) and if so, a description of the proposed relationship between the agency, the subcontractor, and CACTX
- Agency fees, payment structure, and a line-item budget based on the total available budget provided below

- Proposed estimated project timeline (All work must be completed between December 1, 2022 and August 1, 2023)
- Whether any members of your existing client base would present a potential conflict of interest related to the work proposed by CACTX
- Whether your agency has concerns in working with an organization with potential requirements related to public funding (e.g., technical requirements, performance dates/schedules)
- How the agency considers and addresses issues related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in their company culture and in their work
- Whether the agency is a small business and/or a minority-owned or woman-owned business
- The agency's company values, if applicable
- The agency's connection to Texas, if applicable

Contract Period

The contract period will begin on or around 12/1/2022 and will conclude on 8/15/2023.

Timeline

The expected RFP timeline is outlined below.

Issue Date	9/1/22
Informational Session	9/12/22
Proposals Due	9/30/22
Review & Negotiations	October/November
Award Announced	11/1/22
Contract Finalized	11/30/22
Contract Period Begins	12/1/22
Contract Period Ends	8/15/23

To RSVP for the informational session, please email any questions and interest to communications@cactx.org by Thursday, September 8, 2022 (5 pm CT). Attendance is optional for the 9/12/22 informational session.

Application Review Process

CACTX seeks to contract with one agency that demonstrates a commitment to partnering with the organization to advance social change in the prevention of CSA. During the review process, applicants may be contacted to discuss the project in more detail, provide additional information, discuss potential revisions to the proposal, and/or discuss revisions to the budget for the project.

Requests will be reviewed on a competitive basis. The following equally weighted criteria will be considered by reviewers:

1. The agency's prior and/or current experience working with clients similar to CACTX (i.e., nonprofit organizations; organizations working to affect change at the state level; and/or organizations involved with criminal justice, child welfare, and public health issues)

2. The agency's prior and/or current experience working on campaigns advancing change in the public health, public safety, prevention, criminal justice, and/or child welfare space
3. The agency's relevant areas of expertise (e.g., market research; strategic planning and implementation; strategic messaging creation)
4. The agency's commitment to evidence-informed strategy development
5. The agency's ability to demonstrate through the proposal a solid understanding of CACTX's needs and goals
6. The agency's ability to meet the full scope of CACTX's needs for the project, including the completion of all deliverables outlined above, by August 15, 2023
7. Cultural and values alignment between the agency and CACTX
8. The agency's costs and value to CACTX

Budget and Payment Schedule

The budget for this project is approximately \$300,000 - \$400,000. All services must be rendered, and fees incurred by August 15, 2023.

CACTX Contacts

Questions regarding this RFP or the proposal submission guidelines may be directed to:

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