

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Podcast Production and Support

I. Summary Information

Purpose: The purpose of this RFP is to obtain competitive proposals from qualified proposers to lead and support *the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)* podcast portfolio.

Proposal Due Date and Time: August 29, 2025

Selection Announcement Date: September 26, 2025

Maximum Funding Amount: \$125,000

Estimated Period of Performance and Final Report Date: November 1, 2025 – October 30, 2026

Eligibility: All consultants eligible to receive federal funding, registered with the federal System for Award Management (SAM), and in good standing with ASTHO are eligible to apply.

ASTHO Point of Contacts: Stephanie Rhodes, Director, Media & Public Relations
Paula Lumsden, Director, Promotions

II. Description of RFP

Purpose

ASTHO seeks a qualified contractor to provide comprehensive production services for its podcast and supplemental episodes. The selected contractor will be responsible for reimagining the existing program, executing all production phases, and ensuring consistent, high-quality audio content delivery, along with accompanying transcripts and video.

Background

This project focuses on enhancing ASTHO's capacity to deliver timely and impactful public health information through its daily podcast and supplemental episodes. The project involves producing a consistent 8-12 minute program, with two 15-30 minute supplemental episodes each month, designed to inform and engage state and territorial health officials and the broader public health community.

This initiative is a key area of focus for state public health because effective and rapid communication is paramount in today's dynamic health landscape. Leveraging accessible audio formats like podcast allows ASTHO to disseminate critical updates, provide expert insights, and highlight best practices, directly supporting state public health agencies in their efforts to protect and improve the health of their communities.

Project activities

Provide a general description of project activities in the order of occurrence. Include information on the following:

1. **Program Reimagination and Strategy**
 - a. **Show Reimagination:** Collaborate with ASTHO to strategically reimagine the current daily podcast and supplemental episodes. This includes, but is not limited to, proposing

new segment ideas, sound design elements, and overall show structure to enhance listener engagement and achieve ASTHO's communication objectives.

- b. **Content Curation Process Development:** Develop and implement a robust process for curating ASTHO interviews and stories, identifying relevant ASTHO experts for interviews, and sourcing other content suitable for integration into the daily podcast offering.
- c. **Editorial Calendar Management:** Assist ASTHO in the maintenance and optimization of its editorial calendar (e.g., Trello, Monday.com, or other designated platform) to ensure a streamlined and efficient content pipeline for both the daily podcast and supplemental episodes.

2. Daily (Monday – Thursday) Podcast Production

- a. **Network Process Development & Maintenance:** Develop and consistently maintain the necessary network processes to publish an 8-12 minute ASTHO-focused podcast, Monday through Thursday except for Federal holidays, the week of July 4th and the period between Christmas and New Years. This includes ensuring access to and maintenance of suitable studio facilities, optimizing talent capabilities, and implementing efficient production techniques to meet daily publication deadlines.
- b. **Interviewing:** Conduct professional conversational interviews with ASTHO experts and other relevant individuals, ensuring adherence to ASTHO's guidance document for streamlined and efficient communication with guests.
- c. **Content Editing:** Edit raw audio content to extract compelling soundbites and assemble them into a cohesive narrative.
- d. **Scriptwriting & Show Notes:** Write concise and engaging scripts for each episode, as well as comprehensive show notes for publication alongside the audio.
- e. **Audio Recording & Editing:** Record high-quality audio and perform all necessary post-production editing, including mixing, mastering, and sound design, to meet ASTHO's audio quality standards and daily morning publication deadline. Provide all raw audio assets of each interview.
- f. **Transcript Generation:** Produce accurate, time-coded transcripts for all daily podcast episodes.
- g. **Video Generation:** Record and provide all raw video assets of each interview.
- h. **Quality Assurance:** Ensure all podcast episodes adhere to ASTHO's brand guidelines, editorial standards, and the provided guidance document.

3. Supplemental Podcast Episode Production (2 episodes/month)

- a. **Network Process Development & Maintenance:** Develop and consistently maintain the necessary network processes to publish a 15-30 minute ASTHO-focused news program. This includes ensuring access to and maintenance of suitable studio facilities, optimizing talent capabilities, and implementing efficient production techniques to meet daily publication deadlines.
- b. **Interviewing:** Conduct in-depth, conversational interviews for longer-form bonus podcast episodes, aligning with the reimagined show strategy and ASTHO's content objectives.
- c. **Content Cutting & Structuring:** Cut and structure longer-form interview content into engaging 15-30 minute supplemental episodes, incorporating diverse segments as agreed upon during the reimagination phase.
- d. **Scriptwriting & Show Notes:** Develop detailed scripts and show notes specifically tailored for the extended format of the bonus podcast episodes.

- e. **Audio Recording & Editing:** Record high-quality audio and perform all necessary post-production editing, including mixing, mastering, and sound design, to meet ASTHO's audio quality standards and daily morning publication deadline. Provide all raw audio assets of each interview.
- f. **Transcript Generation:** Produce accurate, time-coded transcripts for all bonus podcast episodes.
- g. **Video Generation:** Record and provide all raw video assets of each interview.
- h. **Quality Assurance:** Ensure all daily podcast episodes adhere to ASTHO's brand guidelines, editorial standards, and the provided guidance document.
- 4. **Technical Management & Distribution** – ASTHO is open to considering all podcast production platforms.
 - a. **RSS Feed & Backend Management:** Develop and maintain the RSS feed and all other necessary backend technology to ensure smooth and reliable distribution of both the daily and supplemental episodes to all digital channels.
 - b. **PodPage Integration:** Ensure seamless integration and linking of all audio content and their corresponding transcripts with ASTHO's integrated PodPage webpage as well as optimization.
- 5. **Reporting & Consultation**
 - a. **Monthly Performance Analysis:** Provide ASTHO with a comprehensive monthly analysis of performance, including listener metrics, download trends, and engagement data.
 - b. **Best Practices & Trend Reporting:** Routinely provide updates on industry best practices, emerging trends in the digital audio space, and relevant new technologies to ensure ASTHO remains current and competitive.
 - c. **Guest Feedback & Insights:** Compile and share relevant guest feedback and insights to inform future content strategy and production improvements.
 - d. **Recommendations:** Offer ongoing recommendations for optimizing content, improving reach, and enhancing the overall listener experience.
- 6. **Collaboration & Communication**
 - a. Maintain open and consistent communication with ASTHO's designated project manager and relevant team members throughout the project lifecycle.
 - b. Participate in regular check-in meetings to discuss progress, address challenges, and plan upcoming content.
- 7. **Deliverables**
 - a. Daily 8-12 minute episodes, Monday-Thursday (audio files, scripts, show notes, video and transcripts).
 - b. Two monthly 15-30 minute supplemental episodes (audio files, scripts, show notes, video and transcripts).
 - c. Monthly performance reports and trend analyses.
 - d. Real-time editorial calendar.
 - e. Documentation of developed processes (e.g., content curation process, network processes).
 - f. All audio and video assets.

Expected Outcomes/Expectations and Deliverables

This project aims to significantly elevate ASTHO's digital audio presence, enhancing its ability to deliver timely, expert-driven public health information and engage key audiences effectively. Our

primary goals include reimagining and modernizing ASTHO's audio content through a refreshed daily podcast and the introduction of compelling supplemental podcast episodes. We also seek to establish efficient production workflows encompassing content curation, interviewing, audio editing, scriptwriting, show notes creation, and accurate transcript generation, ensuring a consistent and professional output.

Ultimately, we expect to achieve seamless and reliable publication across all digital channels, driven by optimized RSS feed functionality and smooth integration with ASTHO's PodPage. This initiative will not only streamline our internal processes but also provide actionable insights through comprehensive analytics, allowing us to continuously refine our content, expand our listenership, and deepen engagement within the public health community.

Availability of Funds

ASTHO intends to award one agency up to \$125,000 for the activities described in this RFP. The project duration will be from November 1, 2025 through October 30, 2026. All applications must be received by 5pm EST on August 29, 2025.

*Selected applicant(s) will be notified by September 26, 2025.
Awards will be made through a fixed price agreement.*

Evaluators

Carolyn Mullen- Senior Vice President, Government Affairs & Public Relations
Khalilah LeGrand - Vice President, Communications & Public Relations
Stephanie Rhodes – Director, Media & Public Relations
Paula Lumsden – Director, Promotions
Jennifer Jean – Pierre – Director, Content Development

III. Requirements for Financial Award

Allowable Expenses

Funds may not be used for equipment purchases. Per HHS requirements, funds awarded under this RFP are prohibited from being used to pay the direct salary of an individual at a rate in excess of the federal Executive Schedule Level II.

Period of Performance

November 1, 2025 through October 30, 2026

Reporting Requirements

Monthly

Additional Requirements

SAM.gov Certification

IV. Required Proposal Content and Selection Criteria

Proposals may not exceed 10 pages in length, excluding CVs and budget, and should be single-spaced in 11-point font. Proposals are required to have Cover Letter(s), Proposed Approach, Prior Experience, Organization Capacity, Budget & Narrative, References, and Response to Draft Contract.

To be considered for evaluation, please provide the following:

- A. Cover Letter (5 pts):** Include the names of the lead programmatic and fiscal/contractual contacts (name, address, e-mail, telephone number).
- B. Proposed Approach (30 pts):** Provide a brief outline of the approach and strategy to accomplishing the requested project activities. Detail a work plan which includes activities, timeline, goals, and milestones to achieve the deliverables and meet the expectations noted above.
- C. Prior Experience and Performance (15 pts):** Describe experience and quality of performance on recent work completed with similar scope. Include information about familiarity with and understanding of public health. Describe ability to represent ASTHO well in interactions with state and territorial health agency staff and other governmental, private sector, non-profit stakeholders and/or other thought leaders
- D. Organization Capacity (25pts):** Include information about the company and address ability and capacity to perform the services required within the specified timeframe. Describe staff qualifications and provide a CV for key personnel/staff lead.
- E. Budget & Budget Narrative (15pts):** Provide a detailed budget, including projected costs for the monthly completion of the project. Specifically, the budget must breakdown the monthly cost of the daily podcast/newscast, supplemental podcast/newscasts, video components, and any software licenses.

The maximum award range is \$125,000.

Attachment A outlines the general format in which the budget should be presented. Applicants may use Attachment A as a template or simply as a guide to inform development of the project budget. A budget narrative must accompany the budget and indicate the costs associated with each proposed activity.

- F. Response to ASTHO Contract Terms and Conditions (5 points):** ASTHO and selected applicant(s) will enter into a fixed price agreement. A copy of ASTHO's general contract terms and conditions is available in **Attachment B. Applicants must review the terms and conditions with their legal team or contracts officer and confirm that if selected, you will enter into this agreement.** Any proposed changes to the terms and conditions **must be identified and submitted with your proposal for negotiations.** Proposed changes submitted after the application period has ended and/or submitted during the contracting stage **may not be accepted.** ASTHO reserves the right to accept or decline any proposed changes to the terms and conditions. Significant proposed changes, which could affect the agreement's timely execution, may impact your selection as a successful applicant.
- G. References (5 points):** Attach at least one example of recent (within the last two years) work completed of similar scope and three current references we may contact.

Additional Selection Considerations

ASTHO staff must maintain access to all software and podcast/platforms used to produce and promote deliverables.

V. Submission Information

Application Procedure

Please submit an electronic copy of the application to ASTHO Staff at pr@astho.org.

Incomplete applications or applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

Timeline

- July 22, 2025: RFP released
- August 29, 2025, by 5:00 p.m. ET: Deadline for submission of proposals
- September 26, 2025: Contract award announced
- November 1, 2025: Contract period commences
- April 10, 2026: Mid-project report due
- October 30, 2026: Final report due

Applicant Questions and Guidance

ASTHO will support interested applicants to offer guidance and address specific questions about the RFP. A bidder's conference call will be held on (list date, time, call-in information). Interested parties may contact ASTHO staff via e-mail pr@astho.org to set an exploratory call or to have specific questions answered. Q&A will be posted regularly on the RFP page.

Disclaimer Notice:

This RFP is not binding on ASTHO, nor does it constitute a contractual offer. Without limiting the foregoing, ASTHO reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any or all proposals; to modify, supplement, or cancel the RFP; to waive any deviation from the RFP; to negotiate regarding any proposal; and to negotiate final terms and conditions that may differ from those stated in the RFP. Under no circumstances shall ASTHO be liable for any costs incurred by any person in connection with the preparation and submission of a response to this RFP.

ASTHO will retain sole ownership of all assets, including but not limited to audio, video and other materials produced under this contract. The awarded contractor may not use any of these materials for self-promotion, agency award submissions, social media, press releases, or any other external communications without prior written permission from ASTHO.