



**ClearWay Minnesota<sup>SM</sup>  
Request for Qualifications  
Demonstrating the Impact of Menthol Policies on Youth**

February 1, 2018  
March 1, 2018  
March 16, 2018  
April 1, 2018

Release Request for Qualifications  
Proposal Due  
Applicants Notified of Decision  
Earliest Date for Work to Begin

## **Request for Qualifications**

ClearWay Minnesota and the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (Blue Cross) are seeking a vendor to conduct qualitative evaluation of the impact of menthol policies on youth.

### **About ClearWay Minnesota<sup>SM</sup>**

Founded in 1998, ClearWay Minnesota is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to enhance life in Minnesota by reducing commercial tobacco<sup>1</sup> use and exposure to secondhand smoke through research, action and collaboration. We have helped reduce smoking in Minnesota to 14.4 percent, served more than 160,000 with quit-smoking services, advanced health policy like smoke-free laws and tobacco price increases, increased access to barrier-free cessation services, broken ground in research, partnered with diverse communities and created many innovative programs.

ClearWay Minnesota was created with 3 percent (\$202 million) of the state's tobacco settlement and given a 25-year lifespan. Because of its unique position as a life-limited organization, ClearWay Minnesota has established three Legacy Goals to guide our work:

1. Reduce adult smoking prevalence to less than 9 percent by 2023;
2. Reduce adult secondhand smoke exposure to less than 5 percent by 2023; and
3. By 2023, advance the science of eliminating tobacco-related health disparities.

For additional information, visit [www.clearwaymn.org](http://www.clearwaymn.org).

### **About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota**

Blue Cross is a diversified health company dedicated to making a healthy difference in people's lives. Blue Cross serves a membership of more than 2.7 million members and employs approximately 4,000 people. There are approximately 3,000 agents representing Blue Cross within the state of Minnesota. The corporate headquarters is located in Eagan, Minnesota. In the last decade, Blue Cross has successfully evolved into a diversified organization with 22 affiliated companies. Blue Cross is a nonprofit independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. See [bluecrossmn.com](http://bluecrossmn.com) for more information.

The Center for Prevention at Blue Cross leads a long-term statewide public health initiative to reduce preventable chronic disease by tackling its root causes: commercial tobacco use, physical activity and unhealthy eating. Our team of public health professionals apply proven and promising practices to lead policy initiatives, community engagement, health equity work, and public-private partnerships that yield measurable progress in disease prevention. Funded with \$241 million from Blue Cross' historic lawsuit against the tobacco industry, the Center's work employs policy, systems and environmental change to advance health equity, transform communities and create a healthier state. For more information, visit [centerforpreventionmn.com](http://centerforpreventionmn.com).

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<sup>1</sup>Tobacco in this document refers specifically to the use of commercial tobacco products. *Commercial tobacco* is used to differentiate cigarette smoking and other tobacco use from the sacred and traditional use of tobacco by American Indians and other groups.

## Purpose

Menthol flavored tobacco products are a growing public health concern. Menthol cigarettes have been disproportionately targeted to certain populations, including African Americans, LGBTQ community members and youth. The availability of menthol cigarettes increases smoking initiation and decreases smoking cessation, particularly among African Americans. On August 4, 2017, the Minneapolis City Council voted to restrict sales of all menthol, mint, and wintergreen tobacco products to adult-only tobacco shops and liquor stores. The change will go into effect on August 1, 2018. A similar restriction was passed in Saint Paul on November 1, 2017, with implementation going into effect one year later, on November 1, 2018. Both Minneapolis and Saint Paul currently restrict sales of other (non-menthol) flavored tobacco products to adult-only tobacco shops. The city of Duluth is also considering a similar restriction for all flavored tobacco products (including menthol). A policy was proposed on January 22, 2018, and as of this writing, a vote is scheduled for February 12, 2018.

Because young people are more likely to use menthol tobacco products than older adults, these policies are intended to impact youth (under age 18) by reducing access to menthol tobacco products and exposure to tobacco marketing. However, no previous research has examined the impact of menthol restrictions on youth. Stakeholders involved in passing the policies seek to qualitatively assess the impact of these menthol policies.

The purpose of the evaluation is to document the change in youth access to menthol tobacco products, tobacco use behaviors and marketing exposure as a result of the menthol restrictions. Key questions to be answered include:

- What are the changes to youth access to menthol tobacco products following policy implementation?
- What are the changes to youth exposure to menthol tobacco advertising following policy implementation?
- What are the changes in youth tobacco use following policy implementation?
- What are the changes in youth menthol tobacco use following policy implementation?

We are currently planning to evaluate the impact of menthol policies on youth in two cities: Minneapolis as well as a second city – either Saint Paul or Duluth – to be determined depending on resources and policy timing. For purposes of this RFQ, the vendor should develop a proposal that plans for evaluation in Minneapolis and Duluth. Please note that the selected vendor may be asked to adjust the scope of work and budget if Saint Paul is substituted for Duluth.

## Scope of Work

The chosen vendor will be responsible for working collaboratively with the ClearWay Minnesota and Blue Cross evaluation team on the following duties as they relate to measuring the impact of the menthol policies on youth:

1. Methods: The evaluation team recognizes that a variety of methods could be used; we are relying on the vendor to propose the most effective method for answering the key evaluation questions based on their expertise. This may include youth focus groups, youth interviews, or any other method that fits this request. Interactive methods such as concept mapping or other innovative ways of engaging youth may also be considered. It is anticipated that the qualitative

data collection will involve 45 youth in each of the two cities; two months pre- and two months post-policy implementation in each city. We are interested in youth aged 14-17 but will rely on the vendor's expertise to select the appropriate age range.

2. Instrument: The vendor will design the data collection protocol. The selected vendor should allow ample time for edits and comments from ClearWay Minnesota and Blue Cross to be incorporated into the final instrument and protocols.
3. Institutional Review Board (IRB) submission: The vendor will complete and submit IRB review materials to the Minnesota Department of Health.
4. Sample: The vendor will recruit youth participants. Partners of Clearway Minnesota and Blue Cross who were involved in policy passage may be able to assist in recruitment. Vendor will provide recommendations on stratification by tobacco use and/or age; recruitment; and additional human subjects protections when working with youth.
5. Analysis: The selected vendor will be responsible for analyzing the data.
6. Reporting: The selected vendor will produce a final summary report that outlines the methods, findings and recommendations.

### **Timing**

Data collection will be in two cities with Minneapolis being the first and the second to be determined as outlined above. Selection of the second city will be made by ClearWay Minnesota and Blue Cross in consultation with the evaluation vendor once contracting begins. Anticipated timing in each city is as follows:

- Recruitment begins – Three months pre-policy implementation
- Initial data collection – Two months pre-policy implementation
- Follow-up data collection – Two months post-policy implementation

### **Qualifications**

Applicants should:

- Have experience conducting qualitative data collection with youth from a variety of backgrounds;
- Demonstrate prior experience with successful recruitment and retention of youth;
- Be culturally competent;
- Have knowledge of tobacco control;
- Have knowledge of best practices in conducting research with youth;
- Be able to work collaboratively;
- Be able to plan, execute, synthesize and create recommendations based on data collected;
- Have financial and administrative capacity to manage the contract; and
- Have technical expertise to successfully implement the full range of duties outlined in this RFQ.

In their response to this RFQ, applicants should detail their recommendations and plans for adequately performing the following activities:

1. Qualitative data collection from youth, detailing the most appropriate and effective method;
2. Instrument development;
3. IRB submission to the Minnesota Department of Health, including obtaining parental consent for youth participants;

4. Participant recruitment;
5. Data management and security; and
6. Final report development.

#### **Initial contract terms and budget parameters**

The anticipated project period is April 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019 with funding not to exceed \$65,000. One vendor will be selected under this RFQ. Funding will be shared between ClearWay Minnesota and Blue Cross. Applicant will be asked to work with both funders in the contracting process. Thus, two contracts will be awarded to the same evaluation vendor.

#### **Application Process and Instructions**

Proposals must be submitted via email to [jdsilva@clearwaymn.org](mailto:jdsilva@clearwaymn.org) by **4:30 P.M. (CT) MARCH 1, 2018**.

Proposals must not exceed five pages, must be in 12-point font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins or greater, and must follow the format outlined below:

1. **Qualifications (one page):** Applicants must comply with ClearWay Minnesota's Policies and Directives (see Appendices). Proposals should also include a brief history of experience conducting qualitative evaluation with youth.
2. **Detailed Workplan (four pages):** Provide a detailed workplan and timeline that identifies all major activities and deliverables. This narrative should also address each activity and product defined in the scope of work and deliverables.
3. **Project Administration (no page limit):** CVs or resumes should be included for key project staff.
4. **Budget:** The proposal should include costs for each major project task and deliverable. Applicant is free to itemize project task areas as appropriate to their proposal and present budget options as applicable. All cost estimates will be considered as "not to exceed" quotations. The proposed budgets are subject to change during contract award negotiations.
5. **Application Forms:** Applicant must complete the attached forms: (1) Application Form, (2) Contractor (Vendor) Acknowledgement of Application Terms and Conditions. Please contact ClearWay Minnesota Senior Research Program Manager Joanne D'Silva at [jdsilva@clearwaymn.org](mailto:jdsilva@clearwaymn.org) for an editable version of the forms.
6. **Appendices (no page limit):** Applicant may include appendices that support the proposed methods or provide examples of similar work.

#### **Questions**

Please direct any questions regarding this RFQ to:

Joanne D'Silva, M.P.H.  
Senior Research Program Manager  
ClearWay Minnesota<sup>SM</sup>  
Phone: 952-767-1434  
Email: [jdsilva@clearwaymn.org](mailto:jdsilva@clearwaymn.org)

## Evaluation of Proposals

The proposal will be reviewed by ClearWay Minnesota and Blue Cross staff. ClearWay Minnesota's financial staff will conduct a thorough review based on the proposed budget, workplan, methods and experience. ClearWay Minnesota and Blue Cross reserve the right to request an in-person or virtual meeting with finalists during the week of March 12. All applicants will be notified in writing when a decision has been made.

### **Advisory warning to applicants submitting materials containing proprietary information**

ClearWay Minnesota complies with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. Ch. 13, and the Open Meeting Law, Minn. Stat. Ch. 13D. Under these laws, any information submitted to ClearWay Minnesota is a "public record" unless it is the kind of information that falls into a specific statutory exception. All contracts under this RFQ will be discussed and awarded at a ClearWay Minnesota Board Meeting, which will be open to the public. All applications are non-public until recommended for funding by the ClearWay Minnesota Board, at which time the submissions will be public except to the extent they contain classified information under the Data Practices Act.

### **Right to amend**

ClearWay Minnesota reserves the right to amend or supplement this RFQ without liability.

### **Right of rejection**

This RFQ does not obligate ClearWay Minnesota to complete the proposed project. ClearWay Minnesota may cancel the solicitation if it is not considered to be in its best interest. ClearWay Minnesota expressly reserves the right to reject all proposals or portions thereof without reason, cause or explanation.

### **Funding not guaranteed**

No person or organization has a right to or expectation of such funding, except as provided in a fully approved and executed contract agreement. Approved funding may be withdrawn (or project approval may be rescinded) if the parties fail to reach agreement during the contract negotiation process.



Is your organization/agency a:

- IRS 501(c)(3) (nonprofit organization)
- IRS 501(c)(6) (professional or trade organization)
- Local unit of government
- Tribal Government
- For Profit
- Other:

Federal Tax ID number:

State Tax ID number:

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Checks to be made payable to:

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip

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**ClearWay Minnesota<sup>SM</sup>**  
**Contractor (Vendor) Acknowledgement of Application**  
**Terms and Conditions**

Contractor must read, complete and acknowledge the following items by signing and dating this form on Page 12.

As the undersigned, you represent, on behalf of an organization applying for a contract from ClearWay Minnesota<sup>SM</sup>, that you have the authority to execute this and related contract agreements on behalf of the applicant organization. You further acknowledge and agree to the following in applying for a contract with ClearWay Minnesota:

**The Application Process**

- Applicant represents and warrants in submitting a proposal that it has complied with and/or shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations for businesses in their industry.
- No application for funding will be considered unless it is complete and fully complies with criteria set forth in the applicable Request for Proposals/Applications/Qualifications.
- No application for funding will be considered unless and until this Acknowledgment of Application Terms and Conditions is signed and returned to ClearWay Minnesota's authorized representative.
- This Request for Proposals/Applications/Qualifications) may be withdrawn or modified by ClearWay Minnesota at any time during the application process.

**The Review Process**

Applicant acknowledges that:

- Proposals submitted become public information, subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, at the time they are presented to the ClearWay Minnesota Board of Directors. Pricing and service agreements of proposals are considered public information, unless Applicant can demonstrate that the information is a "trade secret" or "non-public business data" as defined by the Act
- Any attempt to contact a review panel member to discuss the application under review during the review process will disqualify an Applicant from receiving funding.
- ClearWay Minnesota has the sole right and discretion to select or reject proposals for any reason.
- No person or organization has a right to or expectation of such funding, except as provided in a fully approved and executed contract agreement. Funding may be withdrawn (or project approval may be rescinded) if the parties fail to reach agreement during the contract negotiation process.
- If Applicant is an existing or prior ClearWay Minnesota contractor, ClearWay Minnesota may provide the review panel information about previous experience with Applicant.

**Conditions for Funding**

Applicant acknowledges and will comply with the following ClearWay Minnesota policies and directives if awarded a contract:

Smoke-Free Workplaces

Organizations receiving funding from ClearWay Minnesota must provide smoke-free worksites, unless they are specifically exempt from an applicable smoke-free policy.

As the undersigned, you represent that you have reviewed ClearWay Minnesota's Smoke-Free Workplaces Policy and that the organization is (please check one):

Smoke-free.

Specifically exempt from an applicable smoke-free policy.

#### Contractor Interaction With Tobacco Companies

ClearWay Minnesota will not contract with a tobacco company, or with its parent or subsidiaries.

ClearWay Minnesota will actively seek to contract with organizations that have no present or anticipated relationships with tobacco companies, their parents or subsidiaries.

ClearWay Minnesota generally will not contract for mission-related services with an individual or company that currently provides, has provided in the previous 12 months or would provide during the ClearWay Minnesota contract's lifetime, mission-related services to a tobacco company, its parent or its subsidiaries. Mission-related services include cessation, research, marketing, public relations, advertising, legal, consulting and educational services.

ClearWay Minnesota may choose to contract with a Project Lead with an organization that currently receives funding from a tobacco company, or from its parent or subsidiaries if the Project Lead working on the ClearWay Minnesota project is clearly and demonstrably free of any current or anticipated involvement with tobacco-related funding, and if the quality of service is deemed significantly better than that provided by competitors.

Because the tobacco industry has targeted, manipulated or sought to exploit certain populations, ClearWay Minnesota may choose to contract with an organization that has received funding from a tobacco company, or from its parent or subsidiaries, if the ClearWay Minnesota funding is clearly and demonstrably used for work unrelated to that done with the tobacco funding and if the organization is deemed uniquely better qualified than its competitors to use the ClearWay Minnesota funding.

For the purposes of this Policy, *tobacco* is defined as commercially manufactured products containing tobacco and does not include sacred and traditional tobacco use by American Indians and other cultures.

As the undersigned, you represent that you have reviewed ClearWay Minnesota's Policy on Contractor Interaction With Tobacco Companies and that the organization (check all that apply):

- Will comply with ClearWay Minnesota's policies and directives concerning relations with tobacco companies and related businesses, if awarded funding.
- Will disclose any relationship of which it is aware by Applicant and its proposed subcontractors with any tobacco company, affiliate or subsidiary of any tobacco company.
- Has no present or anticipated relationships with tobacco companies, their parents or subsidiaries or that the individuals working on the ClearWay Minnesota project have not worked directly with such entities in the last 12 months, and agree that they will not work directly with such entities while working with ClearWay Minnesota.

#### Contractor Compliance with Minnesota Government Data Practices Act

ClearWay Minnesota complies with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 and the Open Meeting Law, Minn. Stat. Ch. 13D. Under these laws, any information submitted to ClearWay Minnesota is a "public record" unless it is the kind of information that falls into a specific statutory exception.

Contracts that are recommended for funding will be discussed at a ClearWay Minnesota Board Meeting, which is open to the public. All applications – both recommended and not recommended for funding - are considered

“non-public” until final funding decisions are made by the ClearWay Minnesota Board. Once the Board has approved funding for contracts, all documents submitted under this RFP are considered “public” except for materials identified as “classified information” under the Data Practices Act.

Applicants are required to mark any specific information contained in their application that is not to be disclosed to the public or used for purposes other than the evaluation of the application. Label each page of information you consider “trade secret” or “nonpublic business data,” as defined in the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

Pricing and service elements of any proposal are considered public information unless labeled “trade secret” or “nonpublic business data,” as defined in the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. Applicants are solely responsible for defending “trade secret” or “nonpublic business data” status if challenged by an individual or entity requesting data under the Minnesota Data Practices Act.

As the undersigned, you represent that you have reviewed ClearWay Minnesota’s requirement for compliance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and the organization is:

Willing to comply with this requirement.

Contractor Compliance with ClearWay Minnesota’s Conflict of Interest Policy

Applicant warrants that no member of its staff or board of directors is, or during the term of any agreement will be, a member of the staff or Board of Directors of ClearWay Minnesota. ClearWay Minnesota will not enter into contracts with a ClearWay Minnesota Board Member or a ClearWay Minnesota employee or the family members of either while the person is serving ClearWay Minnesota and for one year after the person ceases to be a Board Member or employee of ClearWay Minnesota.

If a family member or relative of a ClearWay Minnesota Board Member is (or becomes) affiliated with an organization that has a grant or contract with ClearWay Minnesota, that organization must:

- a) Certify in writing to ClearWay Minnesota that the family member or relative will not solicit, supervise, manage, administer or have a financial interest in the ClearWay Minnesota grant or contract for the duration of that grant or contract;
- b) Submit the certification within 30 days of the disclosure of the relationship to the affiliated organization or of a written request from ClearWay Minnesota; and
- c) Promptly update the certification if the status of the family member or relative changes.

“Family members” of a person are the person’s spouse or domestic partner, parents, stepparents, siblings, children, stepchildren, and spouses or domestic partners of the person’s children and stepchildren. “Relatives” of a person are the person’s aunts and uncles.

**This is a link to ClearWay Minnesota’s website, which contains a list of ClearWay Minnesota Board Members and staff:**

<http://www.clearwaymn.org>

**Please review the list and disclose if your organization is affiliated with either a Board or staff member of ClearWay Minnesota.**

As the undersigned, you represent that you have reviewed ClearWay Minnesota’s Conflict of Interest Policy and the list of ClearWay Minnesota Board Members and staff and your organization (check one):

Has no affiliation with a ClearWay Minnesota Board Member or a ClearWay Minnesota employee.

Discloses an affiliation with a ClearWay Minnesota Board Member or a ClearWay Minnesota employee. (See attached Disclosure.)

▪ **Contractor Liability and Insurance Requirements**

Contractor shall be solely responsible for obtaining, and for any expense in obtaining, worker’s compensation, medical, dental, life, liability and all other insurance for Contractor for the Term. Contractor understands that it is not covered by the insurance policies of ClearWay Minnesota. Contractor is responsible for obtaining, at Contractor’s sole expense, licenses and permits usual and necessary for performing the Services.

▪ During the period of time that Applicant’s proposal is under consideration for funding by ClearWay Minnesota, Applicant agrees to inform ClearWay Minnesota immediately of any material change affecting the capacity of the applicant organization to meet the requirements and responsibilities outlined in the Request for Proposal as submitted.

▪ Proposals are subject to a financial due-diligence process. Funding will be contingent upon the successful review of the Applicant Financial Questionnaire and related documents.

Willing to comply with this requirement.

**Withholding of Funds or Termination After Contract Execution**

ClearWay Minnesota, at our sole option, also may terminate contract agreements at any time if:

- Contractor breaches the conditions set forth in the Contract agreement.
- At ClearWay Minnesota’s sole discretion, ClearWay Minnesota believes that Contractor becomes unable to meet ClearWay Minnesota’s needs.

By checking this box, you represent that you have the authority to execute this and related contract agreements on behalf of the contracting organization and agree to the application terms and conditions stated above.

**Name** (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** (month/day/year):     /     /

**Title:**

**Representing** (organization’s legal name):

**ClearWay Minnesota<sup>SM</sup>**  
**Affiliation Disclosure Form**  
**(Only complete if applicable)**

1. Legal Name of Organization:

2. Name of ClearWay Minnesota Board Member or employee affiliated with the organization:

3. Answer the following questions.

a. Does the ClearWay Minnesota Board Member or employee named above have an affiliation with or financial interest in the organization?

Yes

No

If yes, describe the circumstances.

b. Does a relative or family member of the ClearWay Minnesota Board Member or employee named above have an affiliation with or financial interest in the organization?

Yes

No

If yes, describe the circumstances.

c. Does the ClearWay Minnesota Board Member or employee named above or his or her relative or family member have any influence in seeking grants or contracts for the organization or any involvement in managing grants or contracts for the organization?

Yes

No

If yes, describe the circumstances.

d. Are there any circumstances that could create a perception that the ClearWay Minnesota Board Member or employee named above is not able to make a fair, objective and independent decision regarding funding the organization?

Yes

No

If yes, describe the circumstances.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date (month/day/year):**    /    /

**Title:**

**Representing (organization's legal name):**

## Definitions

ClearWay Minnesota Board Members or employees are “**affiliated**” with an organization (and have an “**affiliation**” with an organization) if they or their family members are officers of, directors of, employed by, independent contractors for, or receiving proceeds from a ClearWay Minnesota grant or contract, or have a financial interest in the organization.

A person has a “**financial interest**” if the person has, directly or indirectly, through governance, business or investment:

a) An existing, foreseeable or recent (within the past year) ownership interest of more than 2 percent in any entity with which ClearWay Minnesota has, or is negotiating, a grant, contract or other arrangement; or

b) An existing, foreseeable or recent (within the past year) compensation arrangement with ClearWay Minnesota or with any entity or person with which ClearWay Minnesota has, or is negotiating, a grant, contract or other arrangement