Office of the Illinois State Treasurer
Michael W. Frerichs

Request for Proposals
Program Effectiveness and Impact Research Consultant
370-200-27-022

Addendum 1
August 6, 2026

Below are the questions received by the Office of the Illinois State Treasurer ("Treasurer") and the Treasurer's responses. But for the removal of identifying information, the questions listed herein are intended to be accurate representations of the questions received; as such, any errors in usage or spelling have not been corrected. Any capitalized terms that are not defined herein have the meaning set forth in the Request for Proposals Program Effectiveness and Impact Research Consultant 370-200-27-022 ("RFP") published by the Treasurer on July 17, 2026.

1. In addition to the planning recommendations and sample templates, does the Treasurer expect the contractor to provide any other deliverables, such as datasets, crosstabs, dashboards, or additional reports?

    As suggested by Section III.B.5 of the RFP, the Treasurer reserves the right to define in the future reports that may be necessary. Those reports may include, but may not be limited to, the items included in the question.

2. What is the anticipated annual budget or spending range for this engagement?

    A specific budget has not been established for this project. Respondents are encouraged to provide scalable pricing options that reflect different levels of service, scope, and support. Proposals should clearly describe the Services, deliverables, and costs included at each level so the organization can evaluate the options and determine the best overall value.

3. Has the Treasurer previously conducted research for these programs? If so, is there a current or recent incumbent consultant performing this or similar work?

    The Treasurer has previously performed intermittent research related to the Programs, including an agreement for data analytics research previously awarded to Civis Analytics, Inc.

4. Given that costs can vary significantly depending on the specific details of a project, can the Treasurer confirm that providing hourly rates is sufficient for the cost proposal?

    Provided the Cost Proposal otherwise complies with Section IV.C of the RFP, including that the Proposal incorporate all fees and costs, a Proposal containing hourly rates is acceptable.

5. For each Program, how many distinct survey instruments are being developed and deployed? Is there a separate Program Participant survey that will be developed in addition to the Resident and Business surveys?

While no specific survey instruments are currently being developed, the Treasurer indeed anticipates participants as well as residents and businesses.

6. Will each survey be conducted on a quarterly or annual basis? Or would it vary by program?

   This could vary by Program.

7. If the surveys are conducted quarterly, for every re-deployment would each survey instrument need to be revised with new message testing and/or questions? Or would it be asking similar questions across all iterations?

   The Treasurer anticipates that goals may remain similar across quarters, but specific questions would be refined and improved over time to obtain information that is most helpful in improving Program effectiveness and outreach.

8. If there is a separate Program Participant survey, will the Treasurer provide the list of Program participants' email addresses so they can receive a survey link? Are there any additional participant data fields that can be provided? If the Treasurer is unable to provide the selected vendor the Program participants' email addresses, will the Treasurer and its partners help facilitate outreach to that survey population?

   The Treasurer will coordinate with the Contractor, either through a list of participants or through the Treasurer's facilitation of outreach, to ensure the Contractor is able to successfully conduct any surveys.

9. Will all five Treasurer-administered programs listed be included in every survey wave, or will the Treasurer prioritize specific programs by year?

   Please note that the Programs listed in Section I of the RFP do not represent an exhaustive list for which surveys may be needed. However, specific surveying needs for each Program will likely vary, and at times could prove unneeded in any specific wave of issued surveys.

10. What are the type(s) of report deliverables expected?

    The Treasurer reserves the right to identify its specific reporting needs, but, in general, is seeking results of surveying and other research as well as the Contractor's guidance and recommendations based on those outcomes.

11. How many focus groups are expected to be conducted?

    This will be ultimately determined by the Treasurer following consultation with the Contractor.

12. Are any of the focus groups expected to be conducted in Spanish?

    Yes, it is likely that this will be necessary.

13. What does the post-learning implementation and training entail? Does that require in-person training? What would the training be expected to cover? How many training sessions are expected to be held and over what period of time? What does “as needed” implementation support and training mean for pricing purposes?

    The Treasurer would generally anticipate that training could be conducted remotely (e.g. via videoconference), but would reserve the right to require in-person training if an in-person training proves most beneficial in meeting the goals established in the RFP, including Section III.D.2 thereof. The Treasurer would anticipate consulting with the Contractor on specific training timing, frequency and format, and for planning purposes would welcome Proposals that Respondents feel best meet the Program goals established in the RFP.

14. Should focus group recruitment incentives be included in the Cost Proposal? If so, does the Treasurer have preferred incentive levels or restrictions?

    While this RFP does not specifically request incentives, if a Respondent proposes incentives in order to best provide the Services, the Respondent should include the estimated cost of those incentives in the Cost Proposal. The Treasurer reserves the right to approve in advance any use of incentives during the term of the Agreement, or decide not to use incentives.

15. Should focus groups be assumed to be virtual, in-person, or a mix of both?

    While the Treasurer would determine this in consultation with the Contractor, for the purposes of the Proposal a mix likely makes the most sense.

16. Can an estimated budget be provided?

    Please see the response to Question #2.

17. **Questions/Diversity, 20-24.** Respondents are asked to provide demographic counts and percentages and to "cite with supporting data." Could the Treasurer please clarify what level of supporting documentation is expected? Is it sufficient to identify the source of the reported statistics (e.g., EEO-1 reporting, HR demographic records, employee self-identification data, supplier diversity records, or other internal reporting)?

    It is sufficient to identify those sources, yes, and please feel free to attach the relevant reports as well.

18. **Section VI.a.5.** “Bonding” is listed among the requirements a Respondent must have in place. Will the Treasurer confirm whether any bid bond, performance bond, or other surety is required for this engagement, and if so, specify the type, amount, and timing? If a bond is required, will the Treasurer confirm the acceptable forms of security and whether a Respondent's satisfaction of the requirement may be demonstrated at the time of award rather than at proposal submission?

    Proposals need not include any specific bond.

19. **Section VII.CC** broadly defines "AI Tools". Established survey-research and analytics practice routinely relies on statistical modeling (e.g., weighting, small-area estimation, regression, and automated text-coding of open-ended responses), often through commercial software that embeds such functionality. Please describe the process, criteria, and expected timeframe for obtaining approval to use such tools so that Respondents can assess potential impacts on project execution and scheduling. Will the Treasurer consider providing its prior written consent within the Agreement itself (for example, an approved-use schedule identifying the Contractor's standard methods and tools), so that the successful Respondent can perform the Services without interruption from the outset?

    While the Treasurer reserves the right to reject any general or particular use of AI Tools, a Respondent is welcome to include within its Proposal any planned use of AI Tools and the Treasurer may consider certain approval as part of any resulting Agreement.

20. **Sections VII and V.** Will the Treasurer confirm that the successful Respondent will have the opportunity to negotiate the terms and conditions of the Agreement during the post-award negotiation phase, including the provisions of Section VII?

    A Respondent may include in a Proposal exceptions to those stated terms and bases for any such exceptions; however, the Treasurer is under no obligation to agree to any such exceptions.

21. What is the annual budget for this program?

    Please see the response to Question #2.

22. Has this program been conducted in the past? If so, can you share the reports?

    There are no specific, available reports; however, if helpful for reference, please note that the Treasurer previously awarded a contract in 2020 to Civis Analytics, Inc. resulting from an RFP for a Data Analytics Research Consultant.

23. What survey research companies have the Treasurer office worked with in the past 12 months? If there is a research partner, are they the incumbent of this Program Effectiveness and Impact Research?

    The contract referenced in the response to Question #22 currently remains in place.

24. To assist the development of survey sampling frame and recruitment strategies, will the Treasurer Office be able to share contact information for current participants with any or all of the programs? If so, what type of contact information is available?

    Please see the response to Question #8.

25. Does the Treasurer Office prefer virtual or in-person focus groups?

    Please see the response to Question #15.

26. Would Illinois send out a list of organizations that attended the teleconference?

The following entities attended the teleconference:

Aeffect, Inc.
The Bridge at NORC
Ernst & Young LLP
M. Davis and Company

27. Is there a length limit on the Answers to Questions section of the response? What about the Service Team section? Subcontractors?

Only those limitations specifically stated in the RFP apply; for other Sections, while the Treasurer would welcome brief, targeted responses, no specific limitation applies.

28. Are incentives allowable for survey and focus group participants?

The Treasurer will consider Proposals that contain incentives.

29. Section VII.CC addresses the use of Artificial Intelligence tools. Could the Treasurer clarify whether there are any AI tools, use cases, security standards, or approval processes that would be permitted under this engagement with prior written consent?

Please see the response to Question #19.

30. Given that the scope and timing of individual research projects may vary, could the Treasurer clarify how Respondents should structure and present pricing to facilitate consistent, one-to-one comparisons across proposals? Specifically, are hourly rates by labor category sufficient, or would the Treasurer prefer some other standardized format?

The suggested format is acceptable and the Treasurer is comfortable it can ensure consistent scoring across Proposals that may include varying cost structures.

31. Should the rates proposed in the Cost Proposal remain fixed for the entire four-year initial term, or may Respondents propose annual rate adjustments?

Provided the Cost Proposal otherwise complies with Section IV.C of the RFP, including that the proposal incorporate all fees and costs, a Proposal containing adjustments during those four (4) years is acceptable if clearly defined.

32. Should Respondents assume that focus groups may be conducted virtually, in person, or through a combination of formats? If in-person research is anticipated, are there specific locations or regions of Illinois in which the Treasurer expects activities to occur?

Please see the response to Question #15. Please note, the Treasurer would determine in consultation with the Contractor any specific locations or regions on which to focus as well.

33. Although the timing and scope of individual research projects may vary, can the Treasurer provide an estimate of the anticipated number of research projects or assignments per year, or the number completed under the prior contract?

    This will be ultimately determined by the Treasurer following consultation with the Contractor.

34. Can the Treasurer provide examples of the approximate scopes and durations of research projects completed under the prior contract?

    There are no such records available as part of this RFP.

35. A description of the Service Team is required, per page 6, item 6. So that we can recommend an appropriate number of staff members for this team who will provide research and consulting services to the Illinois State Treasurer's Office—and to "right-size" your consulting team--can you please provide an estimate of the volume of studies expected each year by program, and/or the amount the office spent in the past year on this type of work? (e.g. three quantitative surveys, two qualitative studies, spent $1.2 million in 2025, etc.)

    Please see the response to Question #22, and please note that as stated elsewhere in this Addendum the timing of any specific surveying and other research Services would be determined by the Treasurer in consultation with the Contractor.

36. Can you please describe the major IMC campaign initiatives for Illinois Treasurer's Office? How much is spent on creating and placing these campaigns? Do you currently have marketing agencies, marketing and communication plans, audience segmentations, tracking studies, etc.?

    The Treasurer awarded in 2024 a contract to Lopez Martin & Associates, Inc. dba Purple Group resulting from an RFP for Marketing Services. Moreover, the Treasurer works with a variety of marketing agencies with specific scopes of work related to College Savings, Illinois ABLE, My Illinois Savings, and the Treasurer's Student Empowerment Fund.

37. What internal resources does the Treasurer's Office have for managing data and analytics?

    The Treasurer's office includes a Data Analytics and Business Intelligence team, which partners closely with the office's Digital Services and Information Technology teams. Together, the teams have developed in-house capabilities to manage, report on, and develop tools related to large data sets. The Treasurer anticipates that these teams may participate in implementing action plans and other recommendations included in the Services.

38. Will this contract involve social media monitoring, research with influencers, etc.?

    While the Treasurer may reserve the right to discuss such services with the Contractor, this is not currently a planned Service pursuant to this RFP.

39. Is there an incumbent contractor for this contract? What vendor(s) has provided these services to the Treasurer's Office in the past?

    Please see the responses to Questions #22 and 23.

40. Bonding is mentioned on page 13, item 5. What type of bonding is required for this contract? We typically don't see requirements for bonding when it comes program effectiveness research, however, we are sometimes asked to demonstrate that professional liability insurance is in place.

    Please see the response to Question #18.

41. An interview is mentioned on page 15, item 7. If conducted, how will the interview be evaluated? That is, how will you decide whether participating bidders get 1 point, 10 points or somewhere in between?

    In the event interviews are conducted, scoring may depend on the specific format of interviews, with the Treasurer determining as needed whether any such interviews take on more of a presentation or question-and-answer format, or another format entirely. However, in general, scoring will be based on clarity of communication and responses.

42. Are there any BEP set-aside requirements for this contract?

    The Treasurer's contracting goals for businesses owned or managed by minorities, women, veterans and persons with disabilities ("MWVD") are established in Section 30 of the Illinois State Treasurer Act, 15 ILCS 505/30. While there is no specific subcontracting goal in this RFP, as stated in Section VI.C.3 of the RFP MWVD status of a Respondent or of any proposed subcontractors will result in a higher score for diversity.

43. Is the Treasurer's Office interested in all types of qualitative research, or more narrowly, only "focus groups," as mentioned in the RFP? Would you want the focus groups to be in-person, online, or by phone? If groups are to be held in-person, would you provide facilities where the groups would be held, or would the contractor arrange for focus facilities/locations around the state?

    Please see the response to Question #15, and please note that the Treasurer would be able to provide space as needed but would also coordinate any such facility needs with the Contractor. The Treasurer would be open to qualitative research Services that a Respondent may feel could best serve the Programs.

44. In addition to the planning recommendations and sample templates, does the Treasurer expect the contractor to provide any additional deliverables, such as datasets, crosstabs, dashboards, or additional reports?

    Please see the response to Question #1.

45. What is the anticipated annual budget or spending range for this engagement?

    Please see the response to Question #2.

46. Has the Treasurer previously conducted research for these programs? If so, is there a current or recent incumbent consultant performing similar work?

    Please see the responses to Questions #22 and 23.

47. Given that costs can vary significantly depending on the specific details of a project, can the Treasurer confirm that providing hourly rates is sufficient for the cost proposal.

    Please see the response to Question #4.