



Request for Proposal (RFP) for State Legislative Lobbyist Services For the Iowa Mental Health Counselors Association:

IMHCA Response to Inquiries

The Iowa Mental Health Counselors Association (IMHCA) received the following inquiries related to the RFP for state lobbyist. Responses to each inquiry are noted below in **red**.

1. On page 3 in the tracking and reporting section bullet 2 talks about notification on “all proposed action” what is your definition of this?

IMHCA loosely defines of “all proposed action” as any bill, law, or suggested change to current Iowa code that is introduced in a committee and/or is up for consideration, acceptance, or action by either the House or Senate relating to matters relevant to the mental health counseling field.

2. On page 3 in the tracking and reporting section bullet 4, who is the contact who will distribute updates to the membership? Will the lobbyist have access to the membership list?

The lobbyist will submit the update to the president and the public policy chairs. IMHCA will distribute the submitted update to members after it is reviewed by the Board.

3. On page 3 in Relationship building bullet 1, when you say “local governments” who specifically is this? How many additional meetings would this entail?

“Local governments” can be stricken from this bullet. The addition of this group in the criteria was an oversight by the RFP’s authors. In general, it is not anticipated that this criterion (excluding local governments) would require a significant number of meetings on the part of IMHCA’s lobbyist. The expectation was more closely related to IMHCA’s lobbyist advancing our agenda through strategic alliances and recommended collaborations (for example, notifying IMHCA of particular action a group may be taking and encouraging us to reach out, while simultaneously encouraging the group on the hill to work with IMHCA as they move forward with their agenda).

4. Would the association consider a bid that provided for a contract through the end of 2020 to provide more consistency and a longer term for the work requested?

Yes. As noted in the RFP, “the lobbying contract would run approximately from December 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020 with possibility for renewal for FY20-21 (7/1/20 – 6/30/21).” Any extension beyond this point is up for negotiation.



5. On page 4, In services to be performed #1 bullet 4, Medicare is not a state issue, what do you envision the state doing to “help”?

It is not our expectation that the state deal with a federal issue. It is, however, our expectation that our lobbyist understands how state issues impact our ability to gain Medicare recognition at the federal level. Portability and a unified identity (changing licensed mental health counselor to licensed clinical mental health counselor in accordance with the national movement) are examples of two state level issues that continue to impact efforts at the national level.

6. Does the term “congressional members” mean the members of Iowa’s congressional delegation or all members of Congress?

This was an oversight by the RFP authors and should read "all state legislative members and staff." There will be no duties relating to members of Congress at the national level.

7. How many out of state trips are expected in order to complete the meetings with “all Congressional members and staff”?

See previous answer. No out of state travel is expected.

8. On page 5 in Special Events end of first paragraph, what does the last sentence mean? You want a lobbyist to take pictures? Of what types of events?

IMHCA members have consistently rated lobbying and advocacy efforts as one of the main reasons they pay dues to the association. By taking 1-2 pictures during bill signings (a common practice) and committee meetings when major pieces of legislation are being considered (the committee hearing on the infamous licensure bill two years ago comes to mind), IMHCA is able to engage with members through email and social media at a greater level.

In most cases a representative of IMHCA will also be present to manage this, but in situations when this is not possible, (assuming it is appropriate) snapping a photo with a cell phone and sharing the photo along with an update to members would be appreciated. Meetings with the governor and key members of the state legislature (again assuming it is appropriate) would be other examples of photos we could use to further publicize our lobbying efforts and influence. This is not required or expected of every event or meeting.

9. If successfully awarded the contract, would the association be again doing an RFP to solicit potential lobbyist representation at the end of the contract?



The Board has not yet discussed this matter. It is expected that the contract will be reviewed, and terms possibly amended upon its renewal, but there are no plans to issue another RFP unless it is deemed necessary.

10. Would the association consider a bid inclusive of drafting services to provide more expedient and consistent representation?

Yes, although providing a bid amount excluding drafting services is also advised.

11. Does the association anticipate that the lobbyist would arrange meetings with all newly elected legislators or is this a more targeted approach as to meeting with newly elected legislators who serve on key committees? Is the expectation that the lobbyist would participate in all those meetings or is this more for the leadership of the association?

This would be more of a targeted approach to ensure that newly elected officials serving on key committees are educated on the role mental health counselors play in Iowa's mental health system as they move forward in session. If necessary or deemed advisable by the lobbyist, it is expected that he/she review with the Public Policy Committee any recommended meetings IMHCA reps may want to schedule going into the session, but it is not expected that the lobbyist be present at all those meetings.

12. Is the component of educating key parties/stakeholders on the scope of practice and how LMHCs differ from other helping professions related to legislative efforts or a more general educational effort that would require activities separate from the lobbying component (which, by necessity would already include this)?

No additional educational component would be required here. The Board requested that this piece be included in the RFP to stress the importance of educating legislators on scope of practice for mental health counselors as we continue to face confusion on the part of lawmakers regarding how mental health counselors differ from social workers, specifically.

13. Bill signings can often be just informal signings without a coordinated public event that allows for participation by groups of interest. Does the association intend through this RFP that any bill of impact to LMHCs be a public bill signing event and expect the person to whom a contract is awarded to ensure that this occurs?

No. Only that IMHCA is notified of public bill signings (should they occur) if and when they pertain to legislation of interest and our contracted lobbyist is unable to attend.

14. Where will the answers to all questions submitted be posted?

All responses to the submitted inquiries are to be posted on IMHCA's website. A link will be distributed to respondents.