



## Request for Quotes: 2021-003

### Messaging and Communications Strategy for Good (Living) Wages Initiative

Indianapolis Private Industry Council, Inc., d/b/a EmployIndy is seeking quotes from qualified vendors to design a research methodology for analyzing audience and partner attitudes and perceptions associated with the Good (Living) Wages Initiative.

#### Background

EmployIndy guides the local workforce ecosystem and makes strategic investments to remove barriers to quality employment for underserved and underrepresented residents. Our vision is for all Marion County residents to have access to the services and training necessary to secure a livable wage and grow in a career that meets employer demand for talent. As the workforce development board for Marion County, guided by 25 business, civic, education and non-profit community leaders, EmployIndy will invest \$30 million in public, private and philanthropic funds for both youth and adults in program year 2021.

To ensure high-quality career opportunities and an inclusive workplace that enables Indianapolis residents to achieve economic prosperity, EmployIndy partners with Marion County businesses to provide tools and technical assistance in job quality practices. Currently, recognition of these businesses is being formalized into a network of Choice Employers which will include a certification framework rooted in four core practices:

1. Good (Opportunity) Jobs that pay at least \$37,440 per year, or \$18 per hour, on a full-time, year-round basis, and provide employer-sponsored health insurance.
2. Culture and Diversity that creates an environment of value to both employee and employer through a dedication to respect, being heard, working conditions that are free from discrimination and harassment, and open communication. Inclusive hiring practices and internal strategies should support these values and result in stronger recruitment and retention.
3. Employee Resources that demonstrate an understanding of the barriers that employees, at all levels, experience and provide internal resources or partnerships that remove those barriers. This includes, but is not limited to, access to food, childcare, housing, transportation, financial services and supports, and other needs that promote a safe, stable, and healthy life.
4. Career Pathways that offer a plausible path to future careers within an employer's organization or industry and is shared with each employee based on their entry point and goals for growth. Employees should be provided with financial support, whether that is through internal or external funds, and coaching to move employees along that career path. The opportunities for growth should lead to meaningful work and job security for the changing economy.

Concurrent to EmployIndy's efforts to conceptualize Choice Employers and embark on a project development plan, a new Living Wages Initiative (LWI) was being designed by



a group of experienced Indianapolis leaders with extensive business, non-profit, government, and philanthropy backgrounds. The mission of LWI is to certify and promote employers paying living wages, and support those interested in achieving such certification. As LWI developed, EmployIndy, who serves as an intermediary partner to businesses and exercises substantial influence capital throughout the workforce ecosystem, was approached to serve as the backbone organization. This partnership has naturally enabled EmployIndy, along with its partners, to focus on operationalizing the Good Jobs pillar of the Choice Employers first. Together, our vision is that this initiative will catalyze community-wide change through a broad movement of organizations paying a living wage to reduce poverty in Indianapolis.

We believe that the Marion County economy can thrive with workers earning sustaining wages and businesses able to employ needed talent. Higher availability of such employment will lower the rate of poverty and all its associated societal costs. Workers who earn sustaining wages have higher job engagement, and improved health. Their children's educational outcomes improve. Benefits to businesses from certification include increased employee retention, lower training costs, higher productivity, decreased absenteeism, shorter time-to-fill for open jobs, and an improved reputation with consumers.

However, these benefits are not widely understood, and businesses need support to make this transition. We desire to have the support and endorsement of key community leaders and prominent business organizations who are also able to influence positive practices of local businesses. Likewise, many people would like to support or work for employers that pay a living wage, but they have no means to know about such organizations. This initiative intends to change both circumstances, but we are keenly aware that this topic, and in particular the terminology around this topic (e.g., "living wage"), might be polarizing. To minimize opposition pending the outcome of the proposed research, EmployIndy has suspended the use of "living wage" and instead is leaning into "good wages" or "good jobs" language.

More information is available at [employindy.org/goodwages/](https://employindy.org/goodwages/).

### Project Scope and Specifications

EmployIndy is seeking audience research and analysis that will:

1. Inform clear messaging to the intended audiences and inform an initiative name that is research-based and derived through stakeholder buy-in;
2. Shape our business case to secure employer partners for certification, as well as support from consumers;
3. Enhance overall marketing strategies
4. Garner the support of critical stakeholders, the community and community influencers.



There is no preferred design for the research and EmployIndy seeks the expertise of the chosen vendor to make recommendations about the best methodology based on current and perceived challenges of this initiative.

The research and analysis should be delivered directly to the initiative's steering committee in both presentation and report form within 60 days of project kick-off which is anticipated to be on or before Wednesday, September 15, 2021.

### Project & Proposal Requirements

Please provide a complete written response to this RFQ which is double-spaced, does not exceed 10 single-sided pages, and includes all the following within the required page limit:

1. Company Overview
  - a. A brief company history and overview.
  - b. The experience and/or prior work that demonstrates expertise in executing and delivering the services described in this solicitation.
2. Project Execution Plan
  - a. The proposed methodology for achieving all the above-mentioned specifications.
  - b. A plan for implementing the proposed methodology.
  - c. A timeline for discovery, research, analysis, and deliverables.
3. Project Budget
  - a. A budget with specific project costs by line item or proposed activity.
  - b. A budget narrative explaining the estimated costs by line item or proposed activity.

### Proposal Process & Procedures

Applicants must submit one (1) electronic copy of the proposal. Please note that EmployIndy will not return any proposals it receives and will not reimburse applicants for any costs incur in developing their proposals.

All proposals should be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. EST, Tuesday, September 7, 2021, to Kate Ryan at [kryan@employindy.org](mailto:kryan@employindy.org).

Any questions should be submitted via email to Kate Ryan at [kryan@employindy.org](mailto:kryan@employindy.org) no later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 1, 2021. Answers to submitted questions will be made available on the [EmployIndy website](#) by close of business Thursday, September 2, 2021.