



NEWS RELEASE

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California Releases Request for Innovative Ideas for COVID-19 Specimen Collection and Transport

SACRAMENTO — Today the California Department of Public Health, along with the California Department of General Services and the California Department of Technology, announced the release of a competitive procurement to support the state's response to COVID-19. The state is seeking an innovative solution to support the collection and transportation of COVID-19 specimens to a state laboratory for processing. The solution should result in a better user experience that is seamless, timely, cost-effective, and convenient.

"The ability to identify and track cases of COVID-19 is dependent upon rapid testing and reporting of results," said Dr. Mark Ghaly, California Health and Human Services Secretary. "Our goal is to create a solution that is both culturally and linguistically competent, and meets the client or patient where they are so that testing becomes more accessible and equitable for both individuals who are disproportionately impacted by the virus as well as those who are at greater risk for the virus."

The state continues to increase diagnostic testing capacity for COVID-19. However, as flu season approaches, the need to build additional capacity that is timely, equitable, and cost-effective is critical. Symptoms for the flu are similar to COVID-19, and as a result, healthcare providers will test for both, only further increasing the demand for testing. To that end, the state is aiming to [stand up a laboratory facility](#) and begin processing tens of thousands of additional tests by November 1 and up to an additional 150,000 tests by no later than March 1, 2021. Through this innovative procurement, the state will be able to collect specimens from across California and transport the specimens to the new state laboratory. The goal is to reach individuals in various locations including workplaces, congregate living settings, schools, churches, and under-resourced community settings.

"By using this innovative procurement approach the state is able to capitalize on California's innovation economy, better inform the state's investment of taxpayer dollars, and find solutions that are in the best interest of the people of California," said Yolanda Richardson, Government Operations Agency Secretary.

The Request for Innovative Ideas (RFI2) is a competitive procurement approach introduced by Governor Gavin Newsom in January 2019 that seeks to engage innovators, entrepreneurs, scientists, vendors, and experts to collaborate on designing leading-edge solutions. The Request for Innovative Ideas for COVID-19 Test Specimen Collection and Transport announced today is

available [here](#). Instead of asking for a particular product or service, the state is identifying the problem and is seeking solutions to yield comprehensive and effective results. The goal is to identify and deploy the solution by early November of 2020.

For more information on testing and COVID-19 visit [COVID19.ca.gov](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19.aspx).

[About the California Department of Technology](#)

The California Department of Technology is committed to partnering with state, local government and educational entities to deliver digital services, develop innovative and responsive solutions for business needs, and provide quality assurance for state government Information Technology (IT) projects and services. The Department's "Vision 2020" Strategic plan is to create one digital government delivered securely by a dynamic workforce.