PaintCare New York Program Advertising Agency RFP Queries

**Do you have an end date for the initial contract?**
As noted in the RFP the first year is a little unusual in that we phase in public outreach slowly, so the needs during the first year will be a little less, lower budget overall, and will center more on earned media/PR based efforts as the program will be newsworthy. The budget will increase in following years as more paid activities are ramped up statewide to ensure we are reaching out to the broad public and pushing awareness of paint recycling opportunities and program details. We anticipate needing year-round support on an ongoing basis for years to come with no end date in mind (our most mature state programs at ~10 years in still require significant outreach support).

**How many vendors are responding to this RFP, and do you know how many are based in NYC?**
I don’t know how many vendors will respond, and I have not received any proposals yet. I have received inquiries and questions from a handful of agencies. I know that a larger number of agencies are aware of it. I think many competitors will be based in NY since we promoted the RFP mostly to NY-based agencies with only a few exceptions.

**Of the $3 mil budget, do you have a sense of how much you would like to spend on paid media or is this based solely on the selected agencies’ strategic plan?**
After year 1, paid media tends to be the lion’s share of our outreach costs in our other states because that field of options enables the most control, ability to reach our large target audience, analytics, and measurability, and so on. We’re flexible and open to strategic recommendations, open to fluctuating over time as we check what works. But it’s difficult to envision effectively meeting our goal without heavy reliance on a variety of paid media.

**Are you looking for strategic or creative consultation, or both, on your organic social media projects?**
Primarily strategic, and it will likely be a small portion of the whole. There are occasionally paid social media campaigns or other campaigns developed and trafficked by our agency partners that inevitably require integration with organic social media, so I like to include this item in there, so it has been covered at some level. Or a new social media tool or platform comes along, and we need some support and POVs for getting set up and using it or need some help using organic social to promote an event, that kind of things. It’s a bit sporadic, hence the generic-ness of this in the RFP.

**Our company does not offer that service, but we have partners who we work with for other clients that need that service. Can we subcontract services that we do not have in house?**
Yes, we are comfortable with using subcontractors for specialty areas like this.

**Is there a communication and budget priority for these targets? Or should media tactics and spending be spread evenly across?**
Roughly prioritizing target audiences and the spend for each is a good idea, and we do that in our largest states where we have the funds to do so effectively. I expect New York to rank among those after Year 1, so we can do that prioritizing together with the selected agency during media strategy and can bring in learnings from other states as well. Not all of those audiences may need to be addressed in that context – primarily households, painting contractors and other businesses, trade groups. For example, we might say let's devote 75% of time and resources to households based on that being a very large, broad audiences (and one that also includes business owners). Some specialty audiences
like HHWs and retailers will be receiving information and face-to-face outreach directly from PaintCare staff.

**Can people cross state lines to dispose of paint at these locations?**
It gets a little complicated, especially now with more PaintCare states neighboring others. You will not be allowed to buy paint in Pennsylvania with no PaintCare fee added, and then carry it into New York and drop it off for recycling. The fee is meant to be collected in one state, to be used for paint collection and recycling in that state. We'll try to make people aware of that, but we also don't usually do any ID checks or enforcement of that sort at drop-off, so some of that may happen anyway. I think we're good if you purchase paint in Connecticut where there is a PaintCare program and drop it off in NY, so that border will be easier. New Jersey passed the paint stewardship legislation in 2019, but it was not signed by the governor. It’s making its way through again now, so perhaps it will be a PaintCare state in the future.

**Is the problem greater among personal (DIYers) or professional (Contractors)?**
Good question. I believe from the minimal amount of research I've seen on this that the volume of leftover paint is much larger national among households, simply because of the sheer scale of the numbers of them and leftover house paint being such a common waste material. Contractors are much more adept at using up and giving away paint, because they generate a lot of leftovers. They have larger volumes than most households and feel the burden of it more acutely in general. They also may not be happy to pay a fee as they purchase a lot of paint! But once they learn that we will provide them free large-volume pickups (100 gallons or more minimum) they tend to see the benefit outweighs the cost.

**Will large retailers such as Home Depot and Lowes be participating in the program?**
"Big box" retailers historically have not participated as drop-off sites in other states. They do participate in terms of charging the fee, which is required for all retailers, and they are willing to post minimal signage to inform customers – we work with them on that at the corporate level. They are encouraged to volunteer as drop-off sites and we are ready to support them, but they have not done so except in one California county which passed a county ordinance that requires all retailers to serve as drop-off. In NY the state DEC, our oversight agency, has said they want to see participation from those stores and will encourage them to try it. We’re not sure yet what effect those efforts will have.

**You state that year one will primarily consist of outreach through press coverage and earned media as well as direct mail to paint retailers, would there be any other tasks required of the agency in year one?**
We will ask the agency’s help in presenting a kick-off event for media to attend. We can invite stakeholders and legislators that supported the bill to speak. That event will likely serve as a good milestone for early press outreach, as was the case in our recently launched Washington state program. That one was a virtual event, we'll hope to hold an in-person one with virtual component for NY. It is likely that by second half or Q4 of 2022 we’ll want to be planning out and beginning to prepare statewide paid media in advance of year 2 (2023). We may also ask for support in researching target audiences in the state in year 1, that will be a good time to lay some groundwork for later efforts.

**Can you share the how the proposals will be scored?**
We will not use a specific scoring tool for this RFP but will take into account all aspects of each competitor’s proposal to determine overall compatibility with PaintCare’s needs, as well as any follow up meetings with their teams.

*Are there priority markets/DMAs within the state? How many drop-off locations will there be?*
Not really, our charge is to promote the program to the whole state. If for some reason we don’t have sufficient drop-off opportunities in an area we may de-prioritize promotion there, but that is unlikely after the first 1-2 years. Number of individual drop-off sites is not yet known for certain. However, for context we have over 800 in California, 255 in Minnesota, 183 in Colorado, etc. – these are available by state on our site. I would guess around 400-500 in NY.

*Can you be more specific with “household” target, i.e., HHIs that may be more inclined to recycle their paint, etc.*
Yes, we try and focus efforts on households made up of adult paint consumers. We have narrowed the most effective ages a bit to ~25-65. However, it remains a very broad audience, and leftover paint is very common even among those who only purchase paint very rarely.

*Non-English speaker is listed; are there specific language-speaking targets you want to reach? Will materials be created in multiple languages?*
We may want to allot a small percentage of our resources for paid media to Spanish language. So far, we have not done much paid media in other languages but remain open to that and will look out for opportunities that seem feasible. Some of our previous research indicates that the number of people who speak other languages, including Spanish, but who prefer to consume their media in those languages, is very low. We do provide printed materials and hotline interpretation in around 20 other languages.

*What goals will the media plan will be evaluated on? Do you have metrics of success from other state level roll outs you can share?*
Yes generally, we can share all lessons learned from other state programs and rollouts, including a very recent one – we launched a new program in Washington state April 1 of this year. The law and program plan do not state specific goals/targets for public outreach, they only state our requirement to educate consumers about paint recycling opportunities and to measure our effectiveness in doing so.

Some specifics we use for measuring effectiveness:

- We conduct annual awareness surveys in our states to determine the effectiveness of our efforts to make people aware of paint recycling opportunities. We have several years of data in other states to look at and will take a baseline survey in NY this fall. This will help us determine if our outreach efforts are performing adequately.
- For “general awareness” media campaigns we expect to review analytics and performance with our selected media agency.
- For any campaigns related to drop-off events, we will be able to measure attendance and will survey attendees.
- Generally, our call-to-action in most materials will send consumers to our website-based may of drop-off sites. Visiting the map is our best-known indicator of whether a paint consumer intends to drop-off paint at one of our sites (there’s no way for us to determine if that individual actually
drops off anything later – this is as close as we get). Analytics on the map are a good way to measure whether we are effectively drive the population to seek paint drop-off.

**What has been the typical split between B2B and B2C?**
With our media agencies, much more focus on B2C – maybe 85%. A lot of our B2B outreach happens with other activities through our in-house staff. However, we are always looking for new avenues to reach our B2B targets including with our media agencies.

**What is the budget for the first year (research, outreach, PR, etc.)?**
We have not set it yet, but I'm planning to request 200-300K for our communications activities during the first partial year.

**Is there a seasonality component to the budget/flighting based on paint usage/sales?**
Yes. Our internal reporting year will almost certainly match the calendar year. That coincidently works well as a basis for our media activity schedule because paint sales tend to increase in the early part of the year, spring, and summer – the busy DIY and project season – and therefore increase media in the warmer months through to fall and wind down in the colder months and look closely at reporting and planning.

**What website analytics platforms are currently being leveraged, i.e., Google Analytics, Adobe, etc.?**
Google analytics.

**What other tracking systems, if any, are currently in place for existing programs?**
Our agency partners may use other 3rd party tracking programs on a per-campaign basis, but generally none.

**Aside from site traffic, are there any other KPIs or post-click actions, i.e., email sign-ups, that would be considered a contributing factor in the campaign's success?**
Unfortunately, we don’t currently have other actions or conversions to look at currently. We are not aware of any way to feasibly and comprehensively track who recycles their paint and when after seeing our media content and visiting our site.

**Do you want recommendations regarding how to allocate the budget? If so, would you like both the first-year budget, as well as the subsequent years?**
We do not require specific recommendations about how to allocate the budget at this stage. It would make more sense to work through that with the selected agency once up and running, and factoring in our learnings in other states, etc. If it’s helpful on your end to rough out budgeting, that is fine, and I won’t hold you to it down to the detail at this stage.

**It sounds like your in-house team will be creating the majority of the advertising materials for this initiative. Is that correct? And if so, how much additional support might you need for creative development?**
Correct. We typically don’t need a lot of additional support, but sometimes if creative needs get heavy, we may need some help resizing or making light changes to existing creative, or generating additional creative assets based on existing templates and guidance. We also appreciate receiving creative recommendations from our agencies who tend to have strong expertise. And sometimes we may
request special projects for developing new videos and photoshoots, but those are more occasional needs.

*We traditionally report on paid advertising campaign performance on a monthly basis. As part of this campaign, will reporting be needed on a more frequent basis?*

We prefer most general awareness reporting done at the end of the year, or maybe half year – at least in terms of the more comprehensive presentation of results we’re accustomed to receiving. We would be open to receiving a monthly report of the kind you describe, particularly in a new program state. But no, it is very unlikely we would ask for anything more frequent.

*Are you anticipating running New York-based content through your primary brand social media handles, or starting NY-specific accounts on social?*

As of now we intend to use our main, “national” social media profiles and not set up new state-specific ones – we don’t use state specific ones elsewhere currently.

*Did you have any sort of cadence in mind for social media consulting? Are you thinking some sort of weekly, monthly, or quarterly type of check-in on strategy and tactics or more ad hoc?*

More ad-hoc. This tends to be minimal, but I like to include it because it comes up. Usually, it may be that we’re doing a paid social media activity with an agency, and there’s a need to extend that into organic posts as well for example. Or there may be a need to set up some organic social posts with a recommendation of boosting them. That kind of thing. On occasion there may be a new opportunity or platform where an agency’s is able to offer POVs or recommendations for our staff to set up something new, which is appreciated.

*Do you want full resumes, or will bios and work summaries suffice? If you want full resumes, do those count as pages toward the 25-page limit or can they be added in an appendix?*

Bios will suffice.

*For the annual communications budget, especially in year two, do you have any specific, suggested, or desired budget allocation divided among, “in-house Communications staff (such as mailings, printing, consumer research, etc.), fees for the selected media agency’s services, and all advertising costs”?

We typically hold back about 10% of total comms budget for all in-house activities, so most of the budget will be available for all activities that the agency will be directly involved in.*

*Are you open to smaller media buys that could happen in year one as pilots to build initial awareness and audience data and inform a larger buy for year two?*

Possibly yes, but it depends on certain factors. For example, in Washington state we launched a new program on April 1 of this year. As of now, we are receiving even more paint at our sites than anticipated for a first year. Any additional advertising would overwhelm our new drop-off sites and generate negative sentiment with our site staff. Therefore, we would have to enter into campaigns of that sort carefully. It is possible in NY, there will not be as much program anticipation as in Washington, which worked on passing the law for a decade or more. In that case, there could be more media activity need during Year 1.

*How many paint drop-off sites will there be in New York?*
This has not been determined yet, but you can view our drop-off site numbers in other states on our website to get a sense: 820 in CA, 150-ish in CO, 250-ish in MN, etc. I expect 400-500 in NY at full capacity. The NY Program Plan also comments on this topic.

**Are there specific reporting requirements agencies need to adhere to given the state funding affiliated with the PaintCare program?**
I'm not aware of any specific reporting requirements, however an agency supporting the program could be subject to inclusion in an audit of the program by the state. Not our standard, annual financial audit but rather an overall program audit performed by the state department which will provide oversight (DEC).

**Who, if any, are the “other media agencies retained by the client” mentioned in the RFP?**
Civilian (San Diego), C+C (Seattle), Winter PR (Denver), and any others we retain.

**Do you have a preference or any stipulations for vendors/partners that are M/WBE certified?**
No

**Do you have any identified spokespeople you’d like to position for earned media opportunities?**
Yes. Myself, our president, Marjaneh Zarreparvar, and our New York based program staff leader who has not yet been hired.

**Do you anticipate translation services will be needed for communications collateral?**
We usually allot a small percentage of paid media activities to Spanish language and may need translation unless we already have creative secured in Spanish. Thus far we have rarely placed paid media in other languages but are open to it and may spot opportunities worth pursuing.

**Do you handle website development, maintenance, and creative updates in-house?**
Yes

**We know one-day collection events in New York are TBD and you would be looking for direct-mail to support those. Are you looking for other types of support with event activation and/or recommendations on how to amplify those events? Do you have New York staff who staff drop-off events?**
Direct mail is our most effective tool for promoting drop-off events to local households/businesses, but we typically ask agencies for a comprehensive recommendation. We often use newspaper, paid Facebook, and direct mail, and occasionally other tactics depending on the area, capacity limits, and budget. Other than promotion, I don't expect we'll need additional support on these. Our field staff will set up and operate the events.

**Does PaintCare have a current/preferred Project management/CRM software?**
We use Redbooth internally on our communications team for project management, but it’s not required that we integrate that activity with our media agencies.

**Does PaintCare have a preferred Social Media Management system/software?**
We have no preference as to what our contracted agencies use for this purpose.
Are there media platforms that have produced better results than others?
Yes – direct mail has been particularly effective, along with programmatic digital, online video, broadcast TV, streaming audio.

Has your organization run programmatic media campaigns in the past?
Yes, we can provide some detailed information to the selected agency about programmatic campaigns in other PaintCare states.