

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT**

The Council of the City of New Orleans is soliciting proposals from communications professionals to provide advice and assistance to the Council and to its committees on more effective ways to get important information to the public. The consultant may provide assistance to individual Councilmembers on issues or projects as long as each individual councilmember is provided such assistance in a uniform and non-discriminatory manner. A contract for twelve months is anticipated; assuming mutual satisfaction, the contract may be renewed for additional periods.

**I. Duties of communications consultant**

The contractor selected will assist the Council in development and execution of a strategy for effective, timely communication with the public. At the direction and under the supervision of the Council's Chief of Staff, the contractor will provide services to the Council as a whole, to its Committees and to individual councilmembers. Duties may include but not be limited to the following:

1) Develop strategy for consistent, informative communication from the Council to the public regarding issues coming before the Council and its committees and actions regarding such issues. The consultant must initiate ideas on when and how to inform the public.

2) Arrange for and coordinate media coverage of issues before the Council as a whole and its committees, including organizing press conferences and interviews and arranging appearances on appropriate media outlets.

3) Assist in development of educational materials, news stories, and briefing

documents on long term concerns, as well as current issues, to ensure the quality and consistency of information provided to the public. This will include writing technical information in easily readable and understandable form and issuing press releases prior to and following meetings.

4) Coordinate Council use of the Government Services Access Cable T.V. channel with the government services access provider.

5) Make recommendations to the Council on more effective and informative presentation of Council meetings on cable television.

6) Advise Councilmembers and Council staff on public notices and similar communications intended for the press and general public.

7) Maintain and recommend improvements to the Council's web site and ensure that items of public interest are consistently posted in a timely manner. Implement improvements after approval. Monitor hits on Council's website and provide statistics to the Council regarding constituent use of the website and electronic communications from the Council.

8) Develop and prepare the Council's Annual Report.

9) Assist with development and preparation of the annual legislative summary and agenda.

10) Coordinate communications for the Council during a declared emergency.

11) Provide a camera or other photographic equipment at each committee or council meeting staffed by the contractor in order to photographically document significant events and/or visiting dignitaries.

12) Address communication needs resulting from the Council redistricting as

required following the issuance of the 2010 census results.

13) Advise the Council on the development of social networking capabilities.

## **II. Qualifications/experience**

A Bachelor's Degree in Communications, Journalism, Public Administration, English, or Political Science is preferred.

A minimum of five years of professional experience in communications is required, including experience in the New Orleans area.

The proposal must include an indication that there will be sufficient depth of personnel that work load, absences or illness will not interfere with provision of services. Joint ventures are eligible.

## **III. Contents of proposal**

The Council requests draft proposals of services that can be provided at the following funding levels for communications services during the 12 month period.: \$60,000.00, \$80,000.00, \$100,000.00, \$125,000.00, and \$150,000.00. This is to include all fees and expenses of the consultant, including support staff and website support and maintenance. The proposal should include the following components:

1. Professional experience and resumes of partners, principals and employees in the firm who will be responsible for, and actively involved in, the provision of the professional services for the Council (key personnel), including any relevant experience and expertise of key personnel.

2. A concise but detailed narrative indicating the proposed approach to providing the required services, including a description of the types and quantities of

services which would be provided and a budget for a "typical" month showing what services can be provided in a "typical" month for the five (5) funding levels listed above, as well as an estimate of reimbursable costs, if any. Assume that the typical month includes two 6-hour Council meetings and one press conference. In addition, there will be an average of 1-2 Councilmember newsletters for posting to the website, news releases, and Council meeting and committee meeting notices and agendas to post to the website. The length of the narrative should not exceed two 8.5" x 11" typed pages, exclusive of the budget. A budget should be proposed for each of the five (5) funding levels stated above. It is anticipated that work will be performed for a flat monthly fee for the amount of the services agreed upon, with hourly billing for any additional services. Hourly billing rates for each professional should be provided.

3. A completed "Consulting Services Questionnaire" using the format that is attached. Any subconsultants proposed to be used must also submit a completed Questionnaire which must be attached to the prime firm's questionnaire. If an association or joint venture is contemplated, the expertise of each individual firm should be clearly defined as well as the level of involvement of each individual firm and the proposed means of coordination between firms. A joint venture will be considered a "firm".

4. Not more than five samples of work done by the professionals who would be assigned to this contract, including printed public information materials and related work plan(s) for typical project(s). Not more than two of the samples may be prospective documents which the consultant would suggest to the Council, rather than work completed in the past.

5. This Request for Proposals states that "assuming mutual satisfaction, the

contract may be renewed for additional periods". Please include as a section of the proposed budget the terms under which the consultant would be willing to renew for each of two subsequent 12 month periods.

6. Funds are not provided in the Council's budget for paid media except for the standard "public notice" type advertising which is placed and paid for by Council staff. Costs of paid media advertising should not be included in any of the consultant's budget proposals .

7. A sworn affidavit listing all persons with an ownership interest in the respondent. An "ownership interest" shall not be deemed to include ownership of stock in a publicly traded corporation or ownership of an interest in a mutual fund or trust that hold an interest in a publicly traded corporation. This affidavit is a public record.

8. A list of all persons, natural or artificial, who are retained by the respondent at the time of the application and/or who are expected to perform work as sub-contractors in connection with respondent's work.

In addition, those individuals/firms which are certified as disadvantaged business enterprises must submit proof of such certification.

#### **IV. Evaluation criteria**

1. Experience of the key personnel and other professional personnel in the New Orleans area, particularly with public officials/agencies or issues similar to those addressed by the City Council.

2. Quality of work samples presented.

3. Scope and appropriateness of services proposed; clear understanding by the applicant of work to be performed.

4. Capability of providing consistent, timely responses, as determined by the availability of "back up" staff if principals are unavailable and by information requested from references.

5. Involvement in the proposal at the professional level, within the firm, of minorities, women, and New Orleans domiciliaries and/or involvement of certified disadvantaged business enterprises.

6. Costs for services

7. Work performed for political candidates, public officials, and/or public agencies, especially in Louisiana, since December 1, 2005.

#### **V. Proposal process**

A preproposal conference will be conducted by the Council staff committee on Monday, October 25, 2010, at 3:00 p.m. in Room 2W16, City Hall; all questions of potential proposers will be addressed at that time. **No other written or oral communications from potential applicants regarding this proposal shall be made to any Councilmember or Council staff person during this Request for Proposal process.**

Fifteen (15) copies of the final proposal, including samples of work products, must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on, Monday, November 15, 2010 to the City Council Chief of Staff, Room 1E06 City Hall, 1300 Perdido St., New Orleans, La. 70112. In addition, an electronic version of the proposal should also be submitted to the Council Chief of Staff, Evelyn F. Pugh, at [evelynfpugh@cityofno.com](mailto:evelynfpugh@cityofno.com).

An evaluation committee composed of the Chief of Staff, the Research Officer, and

the Council Fiscal Officer will review and evaluate the proposals, selecting up to five for referral to the Council Competitive Selection Committee. For each proposal selected for referral, the staff committee will contact one or more of the persons suggested as references.

The report of the evaluation committee will be provided to the Council's Competitive Selection Committee, comprised of three (3) Councilmembers and an alternate member. The Competitive Selection Committee may interview one or more of the respondents selected by the evaluation committee. The Council Committee may make a recommendation to the City Council. The contractor must be selected by Motion of the Council. It is anticipated that the selection process will be completed during the months of November and December 2010.

## **VI. Additional information**

The City of New Orleans is not liable for any costs incurred prior to entering into a formal written contract. Any costs incurred in the preparation of the proposal, interview, or other precontract activity are the responsibility of the proposer.

All proposals submitted become the property of the City and as such are public information.

The contractor will invoice the City Council on a monthly basis during the term of the contract.

Section 9-1120, Chapter 2 of the Code of the City of New Orleans, relative to the Office of Inspector General, provides in part as follows:

“Every city contract and every bid, proposal or solicitation for a city contract, and every application for certification of eligibility for a city contract or program shall contain a statement that the corporation, partnership, or

person understands and will abide by all provisions of this Chapter.”