

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

### **COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT**

The New Orleans City Council seeks proposals from marketing, public relations and/or communications professionals to assist the City Council as a whole and its various committees in informing the press and general public of the Council's work in an effective, timely and concise manner. The contractor selected will be responsible for the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy that should include, but may not be limited to, marketing, public relations, social media, and image and position management. The contractor may provide assistance to individual Councilmembers on issues or projects, as needed and as resources allow, so long as the assistance is distributed among the individual Councilmembers in a more or less equal manner. A contract for one year is anticipated; assuming mutual satisfaction, the contract may be renewed for consecutive one year calendar periods for up to five years total.

#### **I. Duties of Communications Consultant**

The contractor selected will assist the Council in the development and execution of a strategy for effective and 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 strategies for consistent, informative communication from the Council to the public regarding issues coming before the Council and its committees, and the Council's actions regarding such issues. It is important that the consultant monitor trends and initiate ideas on

when and how to inform the public, and work with the Council to implement these recommendations as appropriate.

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. The contractor should be available to provide talking points, speeches and briefings as needed.

3) Assist in the 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, New Orleans Access Television, Inc. (NOATV). This may include assisting individual Councilmembers with developing content and image management for NOATV-produced shows, as needed and as resources allow, so long as the assistance is distributed among the individual Councilmembers in a more or less equal manner.

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

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

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

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

9) Develop and maintain the Council's social network accounts with current news, photos, updates and items of public interest. Build social media audience and influence.

10) Ensure consistency in full-Council and individual-Councilmember communications, including but not limited to collateral materials and digital design elements such as email signatures, Power Point templates, brochures, newsletters, logos, and letterhead.

11) Assist the Council with website support. The Council is currently considering plans to migrate its current website content and transfer hosting responsibilities to NOLA.gov. In the meantime, and through the transition, the contractor will be asked to provide support to the Council in various ways, including, but not necessarily limited to:

a) Advise and assist Councilmembers and staff with updates to the Council's web pages. Recommend and coordinate updates to the Council's homepage and relevant news features as necessary, and facilitate postings and updates with the Council's hosting and/or design firm.

b) If necessary, lead the Council through its website merger with NOLA.gov by working closely with Council staff to provide high-level design, editorial, content and image consultation in a way that best represents the Council as a whole. During the transition, the contractor will be responsible for both maintaining the current website and leading the transition.

## **II. Qualifications and Experience of Partners and Principals**

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, and experience in the New Orleans area is preferred;

A demonstrated ability to perform in fast-paced communications role with complex issues and tight deadlines is preferred;

Experience in managing and working within a budget is preferred;

Strong oral and written communication skills, including the ability to effectively present complex information in a concise way, are required;

Experience in media planning, media pitching, and producing press or special events is preferred;

Computer literacy, including knowledge of basic software applications and familiarity with the internet and email communications, is required. A demonstrated ability to efficiently perform computer-related tasks is preferred.

A sufficient depth of personnel is required, such that work load, absences, or illness will not interfere with the provision of services. Joint ventures are eligible.

### **III. Contents of Proposal**

The Council requests a proposal of services that can be provided at an annual cost not to exceed \$120,000, including all fees and expenses of the consultant, including support staff. Pricing is a key consideration for selection. 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, as well as an estimate of reimbursable costs, if any. A typical month will include two 5-hour Council meetings, one press conference, an average of 3 individual Councilmember newsletters, 4-5 news releases, and general editing as needed. The length of the narrative should not exceed three 8.5" x 11" typed pages, exclusive of the budget. The budget should include hourly billing rates for each professional who may be responsible for the provision of the professional services for the Council. Note that some months will require more service, including during crises or budget hearings and adoption.

3. A completed "Consulting Services Questionnaire" using the format that is attached. Any sub-consultants proposed to be used must also submit a completed Questionnaire which must be attached to the prime firm's questionnaire. The proposal must indicate that there will be a sufficient depth of personnel such that work load, absences or illness will not interfere with the provision of services. If an association or joint venture is contemplated, the qualifications 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 firm, including printed public information materials and related work plan(s) for typical project(s).

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 narrative the terms under which the consultant would be willing to renew for each of four subsequent one-year periods.

6. Funds are not provided in the Council's budget for paid media except for the standard "public notice" type of 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 will be a public record.

8. A sworn affidavit that no other person holds an ownership interest in the respondent via a counter letter.

9. A sworn affidavit acknowledging that the respondent is aware that Section 2-1120, Chapter 2 of the Code of the City of New Orleans, relative to the Office of Inspector General, provides in part as follows:

[E]very bid, proposal, application or solicitation for a city contract, and every application for certification of eligibility for a city contract or program shall contain the following statement: "It is agreed that the contractor or applicant will abide by all provisions of City Code § 2-1120, including, but not limited to, City Code § 2-1120(12), which requires the contractor to provide the Office of Inspector General with documents and information as requested. Failure to comply with such requests shall constitute a material breach of the contract. In signing this contract, the contractor agrees that it is subject to the jurisdiction of the Orleans Parish Civil District Court for purposes of challenging a subpoena."

10. 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, and a sworn affidavit listing all persons with an ownership interest in any proposed sub-consultant to be used.

11. Those individuals/firms who are certified as disadvantaged business enterprises must submit proof of such certification. Certification must be by the City of New Orleans, the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board, or the New Orleans Aviation Board.

#### **IV. Evaluation Criteria**

1. Costs for services.
2. 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. Work performed for political candidates, public officials, and/or public agencies, especially in Louisiana, since January 1, 2010.

#### **V. Proposal Process**

Two pre-proposal conferences will be conducted by the evaluation committee. **Respondents are required to attend at least one pre-proposal conference.** Pre-proposal conferences will be held on Wednesday, October 15, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. and on Monday, October 20, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 2W16, City Hall, 1300 Perdido Street, New Orleans, LA 70112; 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.**

Ten (10) copies of the final proposal, including samples of work products, must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 5, 2014 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 [efpugh@nola.gov](mailto:efpugh@nola.gov).

An evaluation committee composed of the Council Chief of Staff, the Council Research Officer, and the Council Fiscal Officer will review and evaluate the proposals, selecting up to five for referral to the Council's Governmental Affairs 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 Governmental Affairs Committee, comprised of five (5) Councilmembers. The Governmental Affairs 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 or December 2014.

The Inspector General shall be notified in writing prior to any meeting of a selection or negotiation committee relating to the procurement of goods or services by the City, including meetings involving third party transactions. The notice required shall be given to the Inspector General as soon as possible after a meeting has been scheduled, but in no event later than twenty-four hours prior to the scheduled meeting. The Inspector General may attend all city meetings relating to the procurement of goods or services as provided herein, and may post questions and raise concerns consistent with the functions, authority and powers of the Inspector General. An audio recorder or court stenographer may be utilized to record all selection or negotiation committee meetings attended by the Office of the Inspector General.

#### **VI. Potential Conflicts of Interest**

Any firm providing a response to this RFP shall disclose the following:

1. Any work performed for any public body in the Parish of Orleans within the past three years.
2. Any work performed within the past three years, or being currently performed (whether compensated or not), on behalf of any Councilmember or other elected official in the Parish of Orleans.

For any such work performed, the respondent shall indicate the scope of the engagement, the time frame, and why the respondent deems such work to be or not be in conflict with the

interests of advising the Council. The Council shall make the final decision as to whether any conflict exists.

## **VII. 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 pre-contract activity are the responsibility of the proposer.

All proposals submitted become the property of the City and as such will be public records.

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

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

[E]very bid, proposal, application or solicitation for a city contract, and every application for certification of eligibility for a city contract or program shall contain the following statement: "It is agreed that the contractor or applicant will abide by all provisions of City Code § 2-1120, including, but not limited to, City Code § 2-1120(12), which requires the contractor to provide the Office of Inspector General with documents and information as requested. Failure to comply with such requests shall constitute a material breach of the contract. In signing this contract, the contractor agrees that it is subject to the jurisdiction of the Orleans Parish Civil District Court for purposes of challenging a subpoena."