

**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 consecutive one year calendar periods for up to three years total.

**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 the Council's 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) 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 a proposal of services that can be provided at a cost not to exceed an average cost on a monthly basis of \$10,500.00. 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 , as well as an estimate of reimbursable costs, if any. A typical month will include two 5-6 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 three 8.5" x 11" typed pages, exclusive of the budget. 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 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 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."

9. 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. A sworn affidavit listing all persons with an ownership interest in any proposed subconsultant to be used.

In addition, those individuals/firms which 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. 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 Wednesday, November 9, 2011 at 2:00 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, Tuesday, November 22, 2011 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 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 month of December 2011.

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 Conflict 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 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 2-1120 of the Code of the City of New Orleans, relative to the Office of the Inspector General provided 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.”