

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FOR

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Issued by the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership

Proposals Due By:

October 13, 2022, at 3:00 PM CST

St. Louis Economic Development Partnership

ATTN: Howl Bean II

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(314) 615-7663

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Introduction

The St. Louis Economic Development Partnership (the “Partnership”) is a nonprofit corporation, established under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code for the purpose of promoting and developing industry, commerce, and economic development in St. Louis County and the City of St. Louis, creating high-quality business and employment opportunities, and enhancing the quality of life by advancing long-term, diversified growth throughout the St. Louis region.

The Partnership issues this Request for Proposals (the “RFP”) for a qualified and experienced firm to provide strategic communications guidance and services to the Partnership and its affiliated entities for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023 (the “Services”), with two successive options for the Partnership, at its sole discretion, to renew for terms of one year each. The contract issued pursuant to this RFP may include a period of up to three (3) years.

Scope of Services

Pursuant to this RFP, the components of the Services shall include, but are not limited to:

1. **Crisis Communications**. The successful firm shall assist the Partnership and its affiliates with high level reputation management during emergencies, as identified by Partnership staff. During the emergency situation, staff may request the successful firm to:
 - Serve as a spokesperson for the Partnership;
 - Plan and provide strategic counsel for all communications;
 - Be available to attend outside meetings;
 - Field media calls and inquiries;
 - Draft internal and external communications; and
 - Work with senior leadership to provide guidance and communications strategy.

2. **Media Relations**. The successful firm shall assist the Partnership and its affiliates to manage messaging and relationships with media professionals. Staff may request the successful firm to:
 - Serve as a spokesperson for the Partnership in its relationships with media professionals;
 - Plan and provide strategic counsel and guidance for all communications with media professionals;
 - Maintain relationships with media professionals to represent the interests of the Partnership and its affiliates;
 - Field media calls and inquiries;
 - Draft internal and external communications regarding media inquiries; and
 - Work with senior leadership to provide guidance and communications strategy.

3. **Liaison Services with External Partners**. The successful firm shall assist the Partnership and its affiliates to manage relationships with external stakeholders. Staff may request the successful firm to:

- Serve as a spokesperson for the Partnership in its relationships with external stakeholders;
- Be available to attend outside meetings;
- Provide strategic communications guidance to executive leadership;
- Draft internal and external communications;

Core Competencies:

The successful firm will possess: (a) knowledge and understanding of the Partnership and its affiliates, as well as the economic development landscape in the St. Louis region; (b) an understanding and awareness of the Partnership’s stakeholders; (c) capacity to work collaboratively with Partnership staff, external stakeholders, and economic development partners; (d) experience in high-pressure situations; and (e) experience coordinating multiple stakeholders, including boards of directors and elected officials.

Proposal Content

Proposals must include, at a minimum, the following information:

1. Experience of Firm and Assigned Professionals. Provide a detailed description of the firm’s experience in providing similar services to those listed in this RFP. Include the type and number of clients served, as well as the size, scope, and nature of the projects involved. Identify any prior experience working with the Partnership or its affiliates. Upon request, staff will consider any prior qualifications submitted in response to a Request for Qualifications issued by the Partnership. **Specifically identify any projects or conflicts that may impact the Services.**
2. Availability. Provide a statement of the firm’s availability to provide the Services on an ongoing and immediate basis until September 30, 2023, and the ability to provide the Services during the optional renewal years.
3. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Provide a description of the firm’s approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion in providing the Services.
4. Proposed Fees/Expenses. Proposals shall clearly state all fees and expenses to be charged for the performance of the Services. **Pricing should be provided for a period of up to three (3) years, including the initial year as well as the two additional option years.** As applicable, identify the firm’s approach to fees for the engagement:
 - a. It is anticipated that a maximum not to exceed amount will be established for the Services.
 - b. If based on an hourly rate, provide the hourly rates (with any applicable nonprofit discounted rate) to be charged for each individual who would be assigned to this engagement, a general description of how billable hours will be allocated among key

personnel, and an estimate of the total fees required to perform the Services.

- c. Provide an explanation if fees will be calculated on any other basis. Itemize the type of expenses (other than fees) for which your firm would seek reimbursement.
- d. **A five percent (5%) proposal discount shall be applied to MBE firms during the evaluation process. The proposal discount shall lower the eligible MBE firm's price proposal but shall not reduce the contract award amount. In order to qualify for the proposal discount, the eligible MBE firm shall include with its proposal a copy of a current MBE certification approval letter issued by a federal, state, or local governmental entity.**

Selection Criteria

Proposals submitted will be reviewed by the Partnership's staff for completeness and qualifications. Selection of a firm will be made on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Qualifications, experience, and previous successes of the firm and individuals from within the firm, as identified in this submission as well as any prior qualification submissions retained by the Partnership;
2. Availability to provide the Services;
3. Approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion;
4. Cost, after application of any applicable MBE discount, as described above; and
5. Responsiveness of the firm to the RFP categories.

The St. Louis Economic Development Partnership actively encourages submission of proposals from disadvantaged business enterprises and companies owned by minorities, women, immigrants, and veterans. The Partnership does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ancestry, national origin, disability, or veteran status in consideration of this award. Equal Opportunity Employer.

Terms and Conditions

The following terms and conditions apply to all proposals:

1. The Partnership reserves the right to reject any and all proposals submitted; to select one or more responding parties; to void this RFP and the review process and/or terminate negotiations at any time; to select separate responding parties for various components of the scope of services; and to select a final party/parties from among the proposals received in response to this RFP. Additionally, any and all RFP project elements, requirements and schedules are subject to change and modification. The Partnership also reserves the unqualified right to modify, suspend, or terminate at its sole discretion any

and all aspects of this RFP process, to obtain further information from any and all responding parties, and to waive any defects as to form or content of the RFP or any responses by any party.

2. This RFP does not commit the Partnership to award a contract, defray any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP, or contract for any services. All submitted responses to this RFP become the property of the Partnership as public records. All proposals may be subject to public review, on request, unless exempted as discussed elsewhere in this RFP.
3. By accepting this RFP and/or submitting a proposal in response thereto, each responding party agrees for itself, its successors and assigns, to hold the Partnership, the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership and its affiliated entities, St. Louis County, the City of St. Louis, and all of their various agents, commissioners, directors, consultants, attorneys, officers and employees harmless from and against any and all claims and demands of whatever nature or type, which any such responding company, its representatives, agents, contractors, successors or assigns may have against any of them as a result of issuing this RFP, revising this RFP, conducting the selection process and subsequent negotiations, making a final recommendation, selecting a responding party/parties or negotiating or executing an agreement incorporating the commitments of the selected responding party.
4. By submitting responses, each responding party acknowledges having read this RFP in its entirety and agrees to all terms and conditions set out in this RFP.
5. Responses shall be open and valid for a period of ninety (90) days from the due date of this RFP.

Submission of Proposals

To be considered, proposals must be received no later than **October 13, 2022, at 3:00 PM CST. Proposals received after the deadline identified above may not be considered.**

Electronic proposals should be sent by email to hbean@stlpartnership.com.

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