

**SOUTHERN VIRGINIA GO REGION 3
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR
MARKETING, COMMUNICATION AND BRANDING SERVICES
Issue Date: November 3, 2017**

Overview

The Southside Planning District Commission is seeking proposals from qualified Firms/Individuals to provide certain professional services related to the implementation of the GO Virginia initiative for Region 3. GO Virginia is a new initiative of the Commonwealth of Virginia intended to grow and diversify Virginia's economy and create jobs through state financial incentives for regional projects that encourage collaboration between private sector companies, workforce, education and government in each region. GO Virginia Region 3, also known as the Southern Virginia GO Region, consists of the localities in Planning District 12 (Counties of Patrick, Henry and Pittsylvania and the Cities of Martinsville and Danville); Planning District 13 (Counties of Halifax, Mecklenburg and Brunswick); and Planning District 14 (Counties of Charlotte, Buckingham, Lunenburg, Nottoway, Amelia, Prince Edward, and Cumberland). Regional Council 3 (COUNCIL) is charged with the implementation of the GO Virginia program for those jurisdictions.

Services to be Provided

The Southside Planning District Commission (PDC) has been designated by COUNCIL as its Support Organization and Fiscal Agent with the expectation and responsibility of entering into contracts, subcontracts, and other agreements, needed to carry out the responsibilities of the PDC in its capacity as the Support Organization and Fiscal Agent for the COUNCIL.

The primary objective of this RFP is to effectively partner with a firm to provide professional marketing, public relations, media planning and placement, and overall communications strategy for the Region 3 Southern Virginia GO Council. The firm must be experienced in public relations and communications effectiveness, tracking outcomes, and developing strategic communication plans. This RFP will initially complete the marketing and communications plan and website within six (6) months and the contract for support services may be extended by mutual agreement for an additional two (2) years.

The Region 3 Council is interested in retaining an individual firm, or team of firms, who will design, develop and implement strategic communications and public relations campaigns that, in collaboration with Region 3 Council, will:

1. Increase the Region 3 profile as a lead organization of economic development strategy in the Region 3 footprint;
2. Build awareness about the Region 3 mission, programs, and community impact throughout the organization's 15-county region, to include identification of key target audience and tactics.
3. Support the cultivation of investors and partners for investment in projects that align with the Region 3 Growth & Diversification Plan.
4. Develop and implement brand standards and guidelines.
5. Support the development and implementation of the overall agency messaging and communications strategy.

Because one firm may not have expertise in all of the aforementioned areas, Region 3 is seeking a contractor that will manage a team of experts across the potential services as necessary. It is the preference of Region 3 to have a contract with one firm for the project and the contractor can either perform all tasks or subcontract for the services. It is acknowledged that some potential firms might only be interested in performing one or more components of the project. Firms are encouraged to enter into partnerships with other firms or organizations with complementary expertise to ensure that all qualifications are met. Proposals can be submitted for all or part of the project. Region 3 reserves the right to enter into a contract with one firm for the full project or multiple firms, each focusing on different scope of work components of the project. Proposals that include the use of subcontractor(s) must identify one lead firm and clearly identify, with an organizational chart, any and all subcontractors. Proposing lead firms must clearly define the roles and responsibilities for the lead and any and all subcontractor(s). The lead firm is solely responsible for any and all sub-contractual business arrangements.

Scope of Work

The selected Firm(s) will be expected to service the marketing and public relations needs of the Region 3 Council. The list below includes a sample of the required services.

- Professional Branding
 - Develop Brand strategy
 - Develop Brand Identity
 - Develop Branding Guidelines for:
 - Video
 - Print
 - Digital
 - Broadcast
- Brand-Marketing/Public Relations
 - Create interactive website that promotes the brand, message and programs of the Region 3 Council.
 - Create marketing campaigns (print, broadcast, etc.) by presenting a strategic communication plan, which include objectives, target audience description, strategies, tactics, budgets and measurements of success.
 - Develop creative strategy and design for both Regional image and mission and for Project Solicitation campaigns
 - When authorized, negotiate, plan, and execute media buy and related added-value opportunities.
 - Perform campaign analysis within reasonable time of campaign ending.
 - Analyze performance and measure against objectives.
 - Perform ROI analysis and include recommendations to improve performance.
- Public Relations
 - Develop a strategic plan that encompasses the unique position Region 3 Council has as an organization within the diversity of economic development partner organizations in Southern Virginia.
 - Build messaging that can be used in various channels including earned media, paid traditional media, social media
 - Drive mission awareness and educate on key actions, specifically in promoting the Project Solicitation process.

- Create messaging to drive interaction and build excitement through sharing relevant content and providing opportunities to engage with community leaders and organizations, influencers, businesses, and the communities at large
- Develop and present plan and goals for obtaining earned media and pitching storylines.
- Develop press releases, fact sheets and Council highlights to the media
- Support in writing and producing success stories, featuring organizations which have successfully demonstrated progress toward the Region 3 Growth & Diversification Plan goals.
- Support the design, development and print Annual Regional Council Report.
- Design and implement communication efforts (i.e. eNewsletters, etc.) as needed.
- Develop and maintain targeted media lists (local, trade and national).
- Strengthen relationships with community and media partners.
- Coordinate media interviews and press conferences.
- Provide information when requested on the outcomes of the public relations and communications strategy.
- The selected Agency(s) must demonstrate ability to strategically plan, integrate, manage and execute an assortment of marketing projects. New and emerging technology opportunities are consistently being introduced and the selected Agency(s) must be able to identify, evaluate, recommend, develop and execute, and/or manage the execution of these opportunities.

Timing of Performance

Work will begin immediately upon award of contract.

Response Requirements

The Agency’s proposal shall include the items listed below in the following sequence, noted with the appropriate heading as indicated below. If the Agency utilizes another Agency, provide the same information for both the Agencies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Should be limited to two (2) pages and shall include a statement of:

- Agency’s understanding of the scope of work to be accomplished.
- Agency(s) proposal to accomplish and perform these services.
- Description of Agency’s strategic process.
- Description of Agency’s process and staffing capacity to serve the needs of the Region 3 Council, including any partner or subcontractor relationship and how the agencies plan to work together.

RESPONDENT QUESTIONNAIRE: Use the Form found in this RFP as Attachment A.

REFERENCES FORM: Use the Form found in this RFP as Attachment B.

RFP CRITERIA: Sections to respond to are listed below and found in this RFP as Attachment C.

- BACKGROUND & QUALIFICATIONS: Attachment C-1.
- STRATEGIC PLANNING: Attachment C-2.
- RELEVANT EXPERIENCE: Attachment C-3.

- CREATIVITY: Attachment C-4.
- MEDIA: Attachment C-5.
- PUBLIC RELATIONS: Attachment C-6.
- COST/PRICING: Attachment C-7.

PROOF OF INSURABILITY: Submit a letter from insurance provider stating provider’s commitment to insure the Agency(s) for the types of coverages and at the levels specified in this RFP if awarded a contract in response to this RFP. Respondent may submit a copy of their current insurance certificate if the requirements are already in place.

SIGNATURE PAGE: Agency(s) must complete, sign and submit the Signature Page found in this RFP as Attachment D. The Signature Page must be signed by a person, or persons, authorized to bind the entity, or entities, submitting the proposal. Proposals signed by a person other than an officer of the corporate firm or partner of partnership firm shall be accompanied by evidence of authority. Agency(s) is/are expected to examine this RFP carefully, understand the terms and conditions for providing the services listed herein and respond completely.

FAILURE TO COMPLETE AND PROVIDE ANY OF THESE PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS MAY RESULT IN THE AGENCY(S)’ PROPOSAL BEING DEEMED NONRESPONSIVE AND THEREFORE DISQUALIFIED FROM CONSIDERATION.

Evaluation and Award of Contracts

Selection Process Schedule:

- On November 1, 2017, on behalf of the Region 3 Council, the Southside Planning District Commission will issue the RFP.
- Proposal deadline December 1, 2017
- Review by Communications Committee in early December 2017
- Interview finalists Date TBD
- Estimated Region 3 Council approval of contract December 20, 2017

Evaluation:

The Region 3 Council will conduct a comprehensive, fair and impartial evaluation of all Proposals received in response to this RFP. The Region 3 Council may appoint a selection committee to perform the evaluation. Each Proposal will be analyzed to determine overall responsiveness and qualifications under the RFP. Criteria to be evaluated may include the items listed below. Additional information may be requested from the Southside Planning District Commission at any time prior to final approval of a selected Agency(s). Region 3 reserves the right to select one, or more, or none of the Agencies to provide services. Evaluation criteria will include:

- Background & Qualifications
- Strategic Planning
- Relevant Experience
- Creativity – Design and Storytelling
- Public Relations
- Analytical Reporting
- Cost

Agency(s) shall submit one original, signed in ink, and one copy of the proposal on USB drive containing an Adobe PDF version of the entire proposal clearly marked with "Region 3 GO Virginia Communications Brand, Marketing & Public Relations Services RFP" on the front. Please include instructions on how to access your online portal to view your marketing portfolio showcasing your expertise in branding, creative, print campaigns, storytelling and public relations in your cover letter.

The Southside PDC is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Southside PDC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. Firms/Individuals will not be compensated for time spent preparing responses to this RFP. Questions regarding this RFP shall be directed to Gail Moody, Executive Director, Southside PDC at gmoody@southsidepdc.org or calling 434.447.7101.

Proposals are due **Friday, December 1**, at 2:00 p.m. to the address listed below:

Gail P. Moody
Executive Director
Southside Planning District Commission
200 South Mecklenburg Avenue
South Hill, Virginia 23970
gmoody@southsidepdc.org

The Southside Planning District Commission intends to select one or more firms to provide these services using the competitive negotiation procedure defined in Section § 2.2-4302.2. of the Virginia Public Procurement Act.

This RFP does not commit the Southside Planning District Commission to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal for this project, or to procure or contract for services.

The Southside Planning District Commission reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, to negotiate with any qualified firm, or to modify or cancel in part or in its entirety the RFP if it is in the best interest of the Southside PDC and the Southern Virginia GO Region 3 Council.

The Southside PDC does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by state law relating to discrimination in employment.

Minority, small, and women-owned businesses are encouraged to submit a proposal.

RFP ATTACHMENT A RESPONDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

General Information and References

1. Agency(s) Information: Provide the following information regarding the Agency(s). (NOTE: If this proposal includes two (2) agencies, provide the required information in this attachment for each Agency by attaching a separate page. Sub-contractors are not considered partnering agencies.)

Respondent Name: _____ (NOTE: Give exact legal name as it will appear on the contract, if awarded.)

Principal Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone No. _____ Fax No: _____

Website address: _____

Year established: _____ Provide number of years in business under present name: _____

Business Structure: Check the box that indicates the business structure of the Respondent.

Individual or Sole Proprietorship (List Assumed Name, if any: _____)

Corporation If selected, check one:

For-Profit Nonprofit

Also, check one:

Domestic Foreign

Partnership

Other: If checked, list business structure: _____

Printed Name of Contract Signatory: _____

Job Title: _____

Provide address of primary office from which this project would be managed:

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone No. _____ Fax No: _____

Annual Revenue: \$ _____ Total Number of Employees: _____

Total Number of Current Clients/Customers: _____

2. Contact Information: List the one person who Region 3 Council may contact concerning your proposal or setting dates for meetings.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone No: _____ Fax No: _____

Email: _____

3. Does Respondent anticipate any mergers, transfer of organization ownership, management reorganization, or departure of key personnel within the next twelve (12) months? Yes No

4. Is Respondent (or partnering agency) considered any of the following categories?

Small business Veteran-owned Minority Woman-owned

5. Is Respondent (or partnering agency) associated with any member of the Region 3 Council?

Yes No

6. Bankruptcy Information: Has the Respondent ever been declared bankrupt or filed for protection from creditors under state or federal proceedings? Yes No

Elaborate on the response if desired: _____

7. Citations or Legal Action: Has the Respondent ever received any citations, notices of violation, legal proceedings, disciplinary action, or any pending disciplinary action, from any regulatory bodies or professional organizations? If "Yes", state the name of the regulatory body or professional organization, date and reason for action. If there are no violations, provide a statement of such.

8. Previous Contracts: Has the Respondent or officer or partner ever failed to complete any contract awarded? Yes No

If "Yes", state the name of the organization contracted with, services contracted, date, contract amount and reason for failing to complete the contract.

RFP ATTACHMENT B REFERENCES

Provide three (3) references, that the firm has provided services to within the past three (3) years. The contact person named should be familiar with the day-to-day management of the contract and be willing to respond to questions regarding the type, level, and quality of service provided.

Reference 1:

Firm/Company Name: _____
Contact Name: _____ Title: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Telephone No. _____ Email: _____
Date and Type of Service(s) Provided: _____

Reference 2:

Firm/Company Name: _____
Contact Name: _____ Title: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Telephone No. _____ Email: _____
Date and Type of Service(s) Provided: _____

Reference 3:

Firm/Company Name: _____
Contact Name: _____ Title: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Telephone No. _____ Email: _____
Date and Type of Service(s) Provided: _____

RFP ATTACHMENT C-1

BACKGROUND & QUALIFICATIONS

Prepare and submit responses to the following items.

Firm Facts - Please provide the following basic facts about your agency:

1. Gross billings for 2015, 2016 and a forecast for this year (2017). Note: If unable to share the exact information at this time, please provide ranges.
2. Identify your agency's departments and specify whether the functions are performed in-house or outsourced. Also, include the number of full-time personnel assigned to the Region 3 account, their tenure with the agency and breakdown according to function.
3. Describe your agency's unique business case within the following:
 - Position in the marketplace
 - Strongest capabilities or service niches
4. Active client list.
5. Identify your agency's current distribution of work product by media type (social media, radio, outdoor, newspaper, direct response and other traditional types). Provide rough spend figures and percentages by media type.

Other

1. Describe your agency's billing policy frequency of billing to the client, terms of payment, billing time increments less than one hour (e.g., 15 minutes, 30 minutes), billing cost per hour for various marketing services (account management, copywriting, art direction, etc.).
2. Describe your accounting and internal auditing procedures.
3. Outline the process through which your agency resources are drawn upon and coordinated to create integrated advertising campaigns across agency disciplines. Indicate who is responsible for this coordination and how the effort is implemented.
4. Identify any additional skills, experiences, qualifications, and/or other relevant information about the Agency's qualifications.
5. List any third-party resources utilized to develop client reporting or measure engagement (i.e. media monitoring, activity reporting, etc.).

RFP ATTACHMENT C-2

STRATEGIC PLANNING & EVALUATION

1. Describe your agency's approach to strategic planning and the evaluation measures that are imposed during the process to ensure that the thinking generated and solutions presented best serve the interests of the client. (Limit to one page)
2. Provide an explanation of how your agency measures/determines the effectiveness of advertising/marketing programs and campaigns including return on investment (ROI). (Limit to one page)

RFP ATTACHMENT C-3

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Prepare and submit responses to the following items.

1. Describe examples of your agency's experience in promoting a non-profit's mission, public/private partnerships, and campaign promotions. Include the scope of work for each example. In addition to outlining the scope of work for each example, also highlight your agency's ability to generate relevant strategy and effective communications that speaks to relevant audiences, particularly as it relates to your understanding of the primary audiences for Region 3 GO Virginia.
2. Describe your familiarity with the Region 3 footprint.
3. Describe 2-3 examples of your agency's experience in marketing the same service or program across multiple stakeholders and your ability to generate effective communications for each to create awareness and a call to action leading to engagement.
5. Provide samples of business-focused and mission-focused work your agency completed in the following areas: Newspaper, radio, social media, collateral materials.

RFP ATTACHMENT C-4

CREATIVITY

Prepare and submit responses to the following items:

1. Describe your creative process to include providing several examples of work that best exemplifies your agency's branding skills.
2. Provide examples of your agency's creative work that cover an integration of communications efforts across a spectrum of disciplines and stakeholder touch points.

RFP ATTACHMENT C-5

MEDIA

Prepare and submit responses to the following items:

1. Briefly outline your agency's overall media capabilities e.g., media data/intelligence resources, planning, buying, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and overall stewardship of your client's funds. If all or a certain portion of your clients' media is not planned or purchased by your agency, please indicate with whom your agency works in this regard.
2. Detail your agency's approach for identifying key or target audiences and the process for determining and buying the appropriate media to reach those audiences. (Limit to one page)
3. Describe your historical success in negotiating Value-Added media and how your agency measures the effectiveness.
5. Provide examples of media purchasing for non-profits you have managed. Include strategies to secure complimentary appearances (no pay for play) and your agencies success in securing.

RFP ATTACHMENT C-6

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Prepare and submit responses to the following items:

1. Describe your agency's approach to handle non-traditional programs, if any, to include media relations and public relations (PR).
2. Provide a list of your agency's most current clients receiving said services.
3. Outline a successful PR campaign your agency has implemented. (Limit response to one page)
4. Describe your approach in utilizing PR in support of a mission, or business campaign. (Limit response to one page)
5. Describe a campaign for a non-profit agency that successfully increased visibility and awareness of services and brand recognition.

RFP ATTACHMENT C-7

COST/PRICING

Prepare and submit your best pricing offer and cost sheet.

1. Pricing may be provided in the most suitable format and may be presented in either monthly retainer breakdown or hourly rates based on work performed (menu pricing).
 - Include hourly amount when/if agreed upon hours have expired.
2. Pricing should include, but not limited to, the following categories:
 - Strategic Planning
 - Branding
 - Graphic Design
 - Electronic newsletters and communications
 - Media Creation, Planning, Negotiation, Buying
 - Public Relations
 - Content Creation
 - Creative Development
 - Video Production
3. The price(s) quoted should be inclusive.
4. If your price excludes certain fees or charges, you must provide a detailed list of excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees.
5. If the execution of work to be performed by your agency requires the hiring of subcontractors, you must clearly state this in your proposal. Sub-contractors must be identified, the city of their location, and the work they will perform must be defined.

RFP ATTACHMENT D

By submitting a proposal, whether electronically or by paper, Agency(s) represents that: If awarded a contract in response to this RFP, Agency (s) will be able and willing to execute a contract in the form shown in the RFP, as attached and set out in RFP Section II, with the understanding that the scope and compensation provisions will be negotiated and included in the final document.

If the Agency (s) is a corporation, the Agency (s) will be required to provide a certified copy of the resolution evidencing authority to enter into the contract, if other than an officer will be signing the contract.

If awarded a contract in response to this RFP, Agency (s) will be able and willing to comply with all representations made by the Agency(s) in the proposal and during Proposal process.

The Agency (s) agrees to fully and truthfully submit the Respondent Questionnaire form and understands that failure to fully disclose requested information may result in disqualification of proposal from consideration or termination of contract, once awarded.

The Agencies will include the following information in their proposal: (S)he is authorized to submit this proposal on behalf of the entity

Agency(s) Entity Name _____

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Title: _____

(NOTE: If proposal is submitted by Co-Respondents, an authorized signature from a representative of each Co-Respondent is required.)

Co-Respondent Entity Name _____

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Title: _____