



# SHAKER HEIGHTS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM

April 1, 2011

**Proposals Due  
April 15, 2011**

## Introduction

The City of Shaker Heights seeks proposals from a qualified professional Public Relations firm for the development and execution of strategic public relations programs and services. The potential agency must be a Public Relations (PR) firm with the requisite experience and resources to partner with the City's Communications & Outreach Department to accomplish the City's PR objectives, which are detailed within this Request for Proposals (RFP).

This RFP has been sent to a list of interested parties and has been posted on the City of Shaker Heights website ([www.shakeronline.com](http://www.shakeronline.com)) to invite proposals from any other interested parties.

## Background

The City of Shaker Heights, approaching its Centennial in 2012, has a national reputation for excellence in public education, architecturally rich housing options, exemplary public services and a distinguished history as a progressive and diverse community. As a result, the Shaker brand has come to be associated with excellence on all levels.

The Communications & Outreach Department was created ten years ago to maintain the City's position of leadership among Cleveland's suburbs. Now the City has created an Economic Development Plan to expand its position in the marketplace from a desirable residential location to a community that is also open for business. Shaker Heights has begun an aggressive strategic process to build its tax base through identification of Shaker Heights as a city with a welcoming and vibrant business environment.

The City seeks a public relations partner to work collaboratively in its efforts to **Attract and Retain** new residents and new businesses through marketing, communications, advertising and public relations. It currently works with several public relations firms who provide crisis management support as needed. This RFP does not include crisis management services.

## Goals

The Communications & Outreach Department is staffed with three full-time and two part-time employees. It leads the City's efforts to **Attract and Retain** new residents. It is now additionally engaged in this effort on behalf of economic development.

The Department develops and implements a marketing plan to *distinguish Shaker Heights as a desirable destination for relocation by a population capable of, and willing to commit to its preservation and future.* To this end, the department:

- Develops an annual advertising campaign in which the Shaker brand is expressed through print, electronic and other media.
- Identifies programs, events, messages, and tools which may highlight the Shaker brand.
- Creates or takes advantage of opportunities to highlight Shaker's upcoming Centennial celebration (2012). [Visit shakeronline.com](http://shakeronline.com) for more information.
- Seeks and creates opportunities to put Shaker Heights into the local and national media.

Attract and Retain efforts are focused around *the top reasons* residents consistently report (see [community attitude surveys](#) posted online) for locating to Shaker Heights:

- Educational excellence
- Variety and architectural significance of housing
- Caliber, warmth and diversity of neighbors, sense of community
- Proximity to desirable destinations
- Physical beauty and sustainable, healthful living

Primary Attract and Retain communication vehicles:

- **Advertising “People” Campaign**  
Used to both **attract and retain** residents. The Shaker People campaign provides images of prominent Shaker residents who excel in their fields and draws a direct line between their pursuit of excellence and their choice of community. Advertising appears in inflight magazines, on a billboard at the airport, in selected publications, online (in several venues), and in some local media. New in 2011, Shaker ads will appear at Lifetime Fitness in Beachwood. See samples: [Margaret Wong](#); [Elaine Martone](#).
- **Shaker Life magazine**  
Used primarily to **retain** current residents. A bi-monthly magazine published by the City highlighting the top reasons residents choose Shaker. The magazine is distributed to every Shaker School District household, advertisers and businesses and sold on area newsstands. A copy of the most recent six issues is available at [shakeronline.com](http://shakeronline.com).
- **Shaker Contemporary Living magazine**  
Used primarily to **attract** new residents. A marketing magazine produced once every four years featuring pictorial spreads representing the top reasons residents choose to live in Shaker Heights, and reproduced from previous issues of *Shaker Life* magazine. Placed in relocation packets provided to prospective residents, real estate agents, area employers, and others involved in the relocation industry.
- ***shakeronline.com/Social Media***

Used to communicate with both current and prospective residents, the City website, Facebook page, Twitter feed, and LinkedIn pages are used to communicate with the technologically sophisticated target markets in both attract and retain efforts. (A new website is currently under construction. Anticipated launch is September 2011.)

- ***Outreach Services***

Used to target prospective residents, both homebuyers and renters, and area employers anticipated to recruit new personnel, especially from outside Ohio. Department personnel build personal relationships with prospective residents, area realtors and employers to attract new residents and provide promotional materials, educational opportunities, tours of the City, and assistance in rental services.

## **Scope of Work**

As census figures gathered in 2010 reveal, in contrast to the City of Cleveland and many of its suburbs, Shaker Heights has had no significant loss of population as a result of the events 18 months previous or the subsequent economic downturn. In fact, the population of the City has declined by a mere 3.3 percent, and remained stable in terms of its multicultural makeup.

This RFP indicates which services are desired on an ongoing basis and which are needed on a project basis.

### ***Media Relations (Mixed)***

Working closely with the Communications & Outreach Department, the PR firm will develop a plan to gain local and national media attention on topics which speak to the quality of life in Shaker Heights and to its newly “Open for Business” strategies, which include targeting four business sectors Ambulatory Care, Technology, Professional Services, and Design. The [Economic Development Plan](#), which is available online, has led to development of a marketing strategy and branding plan, currently underway.

- Assist in development of effective marketing strategies and negotiations with media outlets for annual advertising campaigns for residential and commercial attract and retain purposes. (Ongoing)
- Prepare releases and media alerts when requested. Provide for distribution of releases/alerts to local and national media, as appropriate. (Ongoing)
- Arrange local media coverage as appropriate when needed. (Ongoing)
- Lead successful pitches to local and national media outlets. (Project)
- Provide marketing project support on an as needed basis. (Project)

### ***Awards/Recognitions (Project)***

Identify opportunities to seek and earn recognition for achievement in areas that either

- a) speak to the welcoming business environment in the City or,
- b) which are connected to the top reasons identified for relocation to the City (see p. 3 of this RFP).

Those who might be recognized would include businesses, the schools, residents, elected officials and public employees (or City departments).

### ***Metrics and Monitoring (Ongoing)***

Provide reports which analyze the effectiveness of campaign and pitched elements. Track media hits.

### **Instructions**

Firms responding to this RFP should email their proposal to [communications@shakeronline.com](mailto:communications@shakeronline.com) using the subject line, “Public Relations RFP” by April 15 at 12:00 Noon. Late proposals will not be accepted.

Please return the following information via email to [communications@shakeronline.com](mailto:communications@shakeronline.com)

- Name of firm
- Address
- Contact person and title
- Telephone number
- Email address
- Website URL
- Brief history of your firm
- Current client list
- Client list that your firm has served in government, school systems or vertical markets, including those related to economic development
- Please certify that there is no conflict of interest in serving the City of Shaker Heights. Principal competitors are Eastside Cleveland suburbs. Additional organizations may also be considered competitors, and we ask that you email any questions on competitors if you have them.
- Two one-paragraph success stories (not more than 150 words each please), demonstrating your creativity and competence in achieving the following objectives for your clients:
  - Attracting attention in new target markets

- Achieving successful pitch(es) in local market
  - Achieving successful pitch(es) in national market
- A 100-word explanation of why your agency is a good fit for the City of Shaker Heights
- Short biographies of proposed account team
- Your proposed budget and compensation based on the scope of work as outlined here
- Three references and contact information.

All costs related to the submission of this RFP must be assumed by the submitting firm. No expenses will be reimbursed.

Please direct all clarification requests to Vicki Blank, Marketing Communications Manager, at (216) 491-1412, [vicki.blank@shakeronline.com](mailto:vicki.blank@shakeronline.com).

Three finalists will be invited to an interview with the selection committee during the weeks of April 18 and 25.