

**Request for Proposal
Public Relations and
Advocacy Campaign
In Support of Melwood's 50th Anniversary**

*This year, Melwood celebrates 50 years of providing opportunities to people with **differing abilities** and we are excited to tell our story!*

Melwood is a dynamic 501(c)(3) organization that creates jobs and opportunities to improve the lives of people with differing abilities. Melwood supports 1900 people with differing abilities in the greater Washington, DC area through career training, job placement, individual support, and recreation according to their individual preferences. Melwood provides employment opportunities for people with differing abilities at approximately 41 sites through partnerships with community employers and through the AbilityOne Program. AbilityOne pairs federal agencies with approved organizations to provide job opportunities for people with differing abilities.

A. Our History:

- Melwood started in 1963 when a small group of parents and supporters decided to teach plant care to young adults who were considered by most to be untrainable, and unemployable. Their goal was almost unheard of and it was a bold idea for its time -- *jobs for people with disabilities*.
- Andrews Air Force Base donated seven acres of undeveloped land along rural Dower House Road in Prince George's County, along with one surplus tent, and Melwood's first trainees went to work growing plants.
- In 1966 Earl Copus became Director — and at the time, he was Melwood's only full-time employee. Over the following decades, Melwood would pioneer many new milestones in the field that would be known as social-entrepreneurial ventures: businesses with the "double bottom line" of providing jobs as well as revenue for people with disabilities.
- The first successes came in horticulture. Melwood raised plants and sold them at work sites around the Washington D.C. area. That work led to groundskeeping and landscaping work, where individuals surprised many people with their good, dependable work.
- Next came custodial work, aided by the 1971 Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act, now known as the AbilityOne Program, providing for federal jobs for Americans with disabilities who could show they are able to do a fair day's work for a fair day's pay.

- In 1971 Melwood purchased a 108-acre farm in rural Charles County, Maryland. The plan was to teach farming as an enhancement to the horticultural training already underway. However, recreation soon became the big attraction on the scenic site. Today it is home to Camp Accomplish, an inclusive camp for kids with and without disabilities; Access Adventures, Melwood's travel service that takes adults with disabilities on fun trips and getaways to destinations near and far; and Melwood Retreat Center, offering meeting and event facilities in a beautiful countryside location.
- Through the 1970's, Melwood workers and staff continued to show they could turn in fully competent and dependable work, and Melwood's contracts grew in size and number. The number of people served grew from 25 in 1970 to more than 100 in 1975, the year the budget exceeded \$1 million. By the mid 1980's Melwood employed more than 300, and the budget surpassed \$5 million.
- In 1998 Melwood signed its first Complete Facility Management contract, and Melwood was entirely responsible for the day-to-day operation of the USDA's new 350,000 square-foot George Washington Carver Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, where 1300 people work.
- Today, Melwood performs on over 38 federal contracts at 41 locations totaling more than \$80 million in revenue.

Melwood continues to seek new opportunities to provide people with differing abilities the crucial careful training they need to become proud and valuable members of the workforce and in their communities.

A. Scope of Work:

This year Melwood celebrates 50 years of community service and providing opportunities. We believe there are many stories to be told that celebrate our growth, leadership and program successes. We also believe that there are national platforms and sources (traditional and new media) that will recognize our leadership as social entrepreneurs and position us as pioneers in the fields of horticulture and equestrian therapy and as advocates for people of differing abilities.

Melwood would like to understand how you would execute a thoughtful, strategic year-long public relations "campaign" that will highlight our successes, leadership and innovation over five decades that will naturally lead to our 50th Anniversary Gala planned for Saturday, November 9, 2013 at the Gaylord National Resort and Conference Center and *beyond*. The Scope of Work (SOW) is outlined as follows:

1. Melwood Brand

- a. Provide a robust public relations and media strategy of how the agency will leverage Melwood's core assets (programs and services) to position/promote the brand and include signature events such as, Fall Fest at the Recreation Center in Nanjemoy, Maryland in October, our participation in the Marine Corps Marathon, our 50th Anniversary Gala, Christmas and Spring horticulture sales, horticulture therapy conference and raise awareness to increase Camp Accomplish registration.
- b. Provide a broad-based and/or national strategy that highlights Melwood's CEO, founder and board leadership. Melwood would like to see thinking that includes specialty magazines, trades and national platforms.
- c. Provide assistance with developing a 3-5 minute video for the gala and to be used in subsequent marketing materials.

2. Melwood Social Media

- a. Provide a creative strategy that will engage our Facebook fans and increase Twitter presence that can be used as a platform for increase donations (text to give) and build a following for [new] young professional donors.
- b. Provide a strategy that will demonstrate ROI through increased SEO and remarketing efforts for assets such as the brand, camp, contract services, community services and vehicle donations.
- c. Provide solutions to streamline website content based on current best practices.

3. Melwood Marketing

- a. Work with staff on the communications audit to ensure consistency in messaging in materials and web. Ensure material has shelf life and is inclusive of all programs and services.
- b. Provide strategy that positions Melwood as the industry thought leader in service to people of differing abilities, veterans and inclusion camps; and, is the “go to” place for information, programs, services and donations.

B. RFP Timeline:

- **July 29, 2013** – Issue RFP
- **August 1-2, 2013** – If you have any questions about the RFP/SOW, please submit them to dhyater-lindenmuth@melwood.org between 12:00 noon and 5:00 p.m.
- **August 19, 2013** – Proposal due close of business (5:00 p.m.). They may be e-mailed, hand delivered to the receptionist and addressed to the Chief Development Officer or by mail/FedEx to be received/post marked no later than due date.
- **August 30, 2013** – Top candidates will be notified to deliver their presentations (please be prepared to provide a quick framework of your year-long strategy)
- **September 9-11, 2013** – Presentations scheduled (please be prepared to submit a contract template)
- **September 16, 2013** – Winning Proposal is selected
- **September 20, 2013** – Finalize contract
- **September 23, 2013** – Begin strategy and building public relations campaign

C. Agency Selection Criteria:

The successful agency will work on behalf of Melwood. The agency will be responsible for providing all resources required to complete the project, and will work independently under the direction and/or oversight of Melwood’s CDO and/or communications staff. Melwood will work in cooperation with the agency to provide information required to successfully execute and complete the campaign.

Selection criteria include:

- A presentation or “campaign” that utilizes creative resources to address the SOW
- Staff delegated to work on the project. Time spent on projects to include senior/executive staff time, SAE, AE, junior staff, sub-contractors.
- Time estimated to complete SOW elements.
- A deep understanding of Melwood’s programs/services, legacy and the people served.

D. Budget:

Melwood would like to see budget estimates to execute the campaign. This may not be the deciding factor in awarding the business.

E. Project Deliverables:

The required deliverables for the project must include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A campaign that addresses the SOW; describe how you would address the strategic communications needs and reach the audiences based on the suggested objectives, strategy and tactics provided.
- A plan demonstrating how the account will be managed.
- An overview of the identified target audience, campaign research, media strategy, tactics, desired results, "call to action" and metrics to determine added value and performance.
- A review and an assessment of the factors that may influence the public relations campaign i.e., national disability awareness months/activities/thought leaders.
- An examination and evaluation of the market to ensure a successful public relations campaign effort.
- Positioning CEO, board members, founder and other public relations activities that is appropriate to positioning and branding.
- Any other information and/or challenges the agency has identified to be pertinent to Melwood's public relations campaign, i.e., hours required by and information needed from Melwood staff, handling communication/updates with Melwood.

F. RFP Response Format:

Please limit the proposal to a succinct, yet informative and concise, document. The following items should be included in the proposals:

1. SOW by outline provided to include project deliverables
2. Brief bios for the team you would assign to the account
3. Proposed project timelines, work plans and day-to-day management
4. Budget estimates to include all fees, sub-contractors, billing and all ancillary costs
5. Sample client monthly reports
6. Relevant experience including credentials and relevant project profiles
7. Client list for Melwood to select references
8. Full contact information for the agency, including daytime phone number and email
9. Any additional information

G. RFP Responses are due no later than the close of business on Monday, August 19, 2013 to:

Denise Hyater Lindenmuth, MA,CHES
Chief Development Officer
Melwood

5606 Dower House Road
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Electronic proposals will be accepted at dhyater-lindenmuth@melwood.org