

**City of Vernon  
Request for Proposals (RFP)**

**For the Function of  
Strategic Communications Advisor**



**City of Vernon  
City Administrator's Office  
4305 Santa Fe Avenue, Vernon Ca 90058  
Phone: (323) 583-8811  
August 2012**

I. **INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT**

The City of Vernon (City) is currently seeking Proposals from qualified individuals and/or business entities for the function of Strategic Communications Advisor (“Advisor”).

The City will select an individual who and/or a business entity which demonstrates proven capabilities of serving in the role of and carrying out the functions of an Advisor. The candidate should reflect a knowledge of applicable areas of expertise, have recent related experience, provide a proposed scope of work, and a proposed fee schedule, not to exceed \$5,000 per month for an initial one-year period of rendering services.

II. **BACKGROUND**

The City of Vernon was founded in 1905, is approximately 5.2 square miles in size and is located approximately 5 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles California. Over its long history Vernon has been developed as an industrial community. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the lands that make up Vernon were comprised largely of farmlands. The presence of three major rail lines in the area led influential business men and property owners to encourage the railroad companies to run spur lines onto the farmlands. These rail extensions enabled the creation of an “exclusively industrial” city. By the 1920’s Vernon was attracting large stockyards and meatpacking facilities. In the 1930’s Vernon became the location of choice for many heavy industrial plants. As economic conditions changed over the decades, these large scale industrial operations have relocated out of Southern California and Vernon has attracted smaller, lighter industrial facilities. The City’s business friendly environment, low cost utilities and key location for trucking and rail transport continue to position Vernon as an ideal location for industrial uses.

**City Government:** The City Council consists of five members, elected from the City at-large, who serve five-year staggered terms. The City Council annually appoints a Mayor and a Mayor Pro Tem from its own membership to serve one-year terms.

III. **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

Each Proposal shall include a description of a full scope of services, including at least the following elements:

- Serving as the City’s Strategic Communications Advisor.
- Advising and implementing message development, media relations, crisis management and communications between the City and its residents and businesses.
- Advising and implementing communications with other governmental entities.
- Attending City Council meetings as requested by the City Council or City Administrator.

#### IV. PROPOSED FORMAT

The selected Advisor shall work with the City's personnel to ensure the highest level of accuracy.

- A. **Assumptions:** Proposals should include a list of assumptions made in preparation of the proposal on a separate page entitled, "Assumptions Upon Which This Proposal is Based." This section should also specifically set forth those documents and data which the prospective Advisor expects to be provided by the City.
- B. **Schedule:** Proposals should provide a detailed schedule for the completion of services to the extent reasonably possible and foreseeable. Time frames should be stated in terms of the number of calendar days or weeks required to complete the specified tasks using the City's notice to proceed as the start date. The schedule should identify the periods as the total elapsed time from the start date.
- C. **Costs:** Proposals should include either the costs for the completion of each major task proposed, or the basis for calculating such costs, if the costs are based on one or more variables. This section should include billing and expense reimbursement requirements. This one-year contract will be for a not-to exceed maximum amount of \$5,000 per month, plus pre-approved costs for all work done. A time and materials rate schedule should also be provided for use in negotiating any changes in Work required during the course of the contract. *Cost information shall be submitted in a separate sealed envelope.*
- D. **Staffing:** The proposed Advisor and any key additional personnel, including those of any subcontractor, shall be designated. The person(s) who will attend and facilitate public meetings and presentations should be identified and should be the same persons making any presentations to City Staff during the selection process. The geographic location of the proposed Advisor and key additional personnel, if any, shall also be identified. Any proposed sub-contractors shall be listed and their responsibilities should be included in the proposal, if necessary. There shall be no changes in the project manager, sub-contractors, or key staff without prior approval of the City.

#### V. QUALIFICATIONS & CRITERIA

- A. **Qualifications:** The City of Vernon will select an Advisor on the basis of qualifications, experience, and cost. The following are the minimum qualifications to be used to evaluate responses to this Request for Proposal:
  - 1. The proposed Advisor has sufficient relevant education. An

- advanced degree in an applicable field is desired, but not required.
2. The proposed Advisor has recent relevant experience performing the requested services. Short of actual experience as an Advisor, relevant experience may include public or private sector administration, advice, and counsel.
  3. Each proposer shall provide three references, preferably from governmental entities, for relevant work performed in the past five years. When possible, include references from cities of a similar size and character to Vernon. If the proposer does not have three governmental entity references, references from private entities may be provided.
  4. The proposer can demonstrate understanding of the assignment and knowledge of the skills necessary to serve in the role of the Advisor.

B. **Selection Criteria:** The following items will be used to evaluate each proposed Advisor:

1. The proposed Advisor's resume. The resume shall include educational background and qualifications.
2. Resumes of anyone being proposed to assist the Advisor.
3. Relevant experience and a demonstrated record of success carrying out the duties of an Advisor.  
Substantiating adequate ability to complete the assignment within the time specified in the proposal (initial one-year period).
4. The ability to make effective public presentations as may be required.
5. The ability to work effectively with City staff, other public agencies, and related parties as may be required during the course of the assignment.
6. Pertinent new ideas or approaches that may be presented during the course of the selection process.
7. Whether the proposer has adequate knowledge of local conditions.
8. A record of keeping costs within budget.
9. Contract fee as negotiated and ultimately agreed upon. Price is not the sole basis for selection, but may be considered in the criteria for evaluating proposals.

## VI. **FORMAT AND DELIVERY RESPONSE**

Respondents are asked to submit seven (7) copies of their proposals in sufficient detail to allow for a thorough evaluation and comparative analysis. The proposal should include, at a minimum, the following information in sectionalized format addressing all phases of the work in the RFP.

- A. **Format:** Limit your proposal to 20 typed 8.5" x 11" pages, or fewer, on white bond paper of at least 20-pound weight single sided (excluding cover

letter and attachments). You may attach company brochure materials if you wish, but these must be as separate attachments and independent from the required elements noted above.

1. Use a conventional typeface with a minimum font size of 12 points. Use a 1" margin on all borders.
2. Organize your submittal in the order described above.
3. Provide one (1) unbound original of your firm's response and one electronic version
4. Prominently label the package: "RFP for the Strategic Communications Advisor" and include the name of the prime respondent.

**Deliver the response to:**  
**City of Vernon**  
**City Administrator's Office**  
**Attention: Kristen Enomoto**  
**4305 Santa Fe Avenue**  
**Vernon, CA 90058**

5. Responses are due on or before 5:00 p.m., on October 2, 2012. Late responses will not be accepted.
  6. If you have any questions please contact Kristen Enomoto at (323) 583-8811.
- B. **Cover Letter:** All proposals shall include a cover letter which states that the proposal shall remain valid for a period of not less than ninety (90) days from the date of submittal. If the proposal contemplates the use of sub-contractors, the sub-contractors shall be identified in the cover letter. If the proposal is submitted by a business entity, the cover letter shall be signed by an officer authorized to contractually bind the business entity. With respect to the business entity, the cover letter shall also include: the identification of the business entity, including the name, address and telephone number of the business entity; and the name, title, address and telephone number of a contact person during the proposal evaluation period.
- C. **Introduction:** Present an introduction of the proposal and your understanding of the assignment and significant steps, methods and procedures to be employed by the proposer to ensure quality deliverables that can be delivered within the required time frames and your identified budget.
- D. **General Scope of Work:** Briefly summarize the scope of work as the proposer perceives or envisions it.

- E. **Work Plan:** Present concepts for conducting the work plan and interrelationship of all products. Define the scope of each task including the depth and scope of analysis or research proposed.
- F. **Specific Work Products:** Identify the specific end products that will be submitted. Include concepts as to the form and content of each work product.
- G. **Proposed Schedule:** Present a comprehensive schedule reflecting time frames and milestones for completing each phase and task. Include key decision points, interviews, workshops and Public Hearings
- H. **Estimated Cost and Hourly Rate Schedule:** Although an important aspect of consideration, the financial cost estimate will not be the sole justification for consideration. The City does expect a fair and reasonable project cost, backed by itemization of how the costs per phase and task were developed.

Negotiations may or may not be conducted with the proposer; therefore, the proposal submitted should contain the proposer's most favorable terms and conditions, since selection and award may be made without discussion with any firm. All prices should reflect "not to exceed" amounts per item.

- I. **Ability of the Proposer to Perform:** Provide a detailed description of the proposer and his/her/its qualifications, including names, titles, detailed professional resumes and past experience in similar work efforts/products of key personnel who will be working on the assignment. Provide a list of specific related work projects that have been completed by the proposer which are directly related to the assignment described in this RFP. Note the specific individuals who completed such project(s). Identify role and responsibility of each member of the project team. Include the amount of time key personnel will be involved in the respective portions of the assignment. Respondents are encouraged to supply relevant examples of their professional product. Provide a list of references.

The Advisor shall not subcontract any work under the RFP nor assign any work without the prior written consent of the City.

## **VII. ADDENDA, CHANGES, AND AMENDMENTS TO THIS SOLICITATION**

At any time prior to the due date for responses, the City may make changes, amendments, and addenda to this solicitation, including changing the date due to allow respondents time to address such changes. Addenda, changes, and amendments, if made, will be posted on the City's website ([www.cityofvernon.org](http://www.cityofvernon.org)), which is deemed adequate notice. A proposer may make a request to the City's project coordinator to be placed on a list of persons to receive notice of any such addenda, changes, or amendments. The preferred

manner of communications is via e-mail due to its timeliness.

**VIII. CONDITIONS FOR RESPONSES TO RFP**

The following conditions apply to this RFP process:

- A. Nothing contained in this RFP shall create any contractual relationship between the respondent and the City.
- B. This RFP does not obligate the City to establish a list of service providers qualified as prime contractors, or award a contract to any respondent. The City reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP without prior notice, at any time, at its sole discretion.
- C. The City shall not be liable for any expenses incurred by any individual or organization in connection with this RFP.
- D. No conversations or agreements with any officer, agent, or employee of the City shall affect or modify any terms of this RFP. Oral communications or any written/e-mail materials provided by any person other than designated contact staff of City shall not be considered binding.
- E. The City reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to accept or reject any or all Proposals without prior notice and to waive any minor irregularities or defects in a Proposal. The City reserves the right to seek clarification on a Proposal with any source.
- F. The dates, times, and sequence of events related to this RFP shall ultimately be determined by the City. The schedule shown above is subject to change, at the sole discretion of the City, although the City will attempt to follow it and, if it must be altered, will attempt to provide reasonable notice of the changes.
- G. Respondents shall not issue any news release pertaining to this RFP, or the City without prior written approval of the City.
- H. All submitted proposals and information included therein or attached thereto shall become public record upon delivery to the City Administrator's Office.

**IX. RIGHT BY THE CITY TO WITHDRAW THIS REQUEST**

The City may, at its sole discretion and for any reason whatsoever, withdraw this solicitation at any time.