



Arizona Dispensaries Association

Request for Proposal – Public Relations Support

Deadline: 5:00pm Mountain Standard Time, Thursday, July 29, 2021

Summary

The Arizona Dispensaries Association (ADA) works every day to continuously grow the cannabis industry in the Grand Canyon State. The ADA envisions is a cannabis ecosystem that’s growing and thriving at a pace unconstrained by perception, regulation, and attacks.

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to sam@azdispensaries.org no later than 5p Mountain Standard Time on Tuesday, July 27, 2021. Responses to all questions will be sent via email within two business days.

Electronic submissions of the proposals are required and must be submitted to sam@azdispensaries.org with “RFP for Public Relations Services” in the subject line.

With this Request for Proposal (RFP), The ADA seeks to acquire the services of a qualified public relations firm to support its effort to lead the industry into an adult-use marketplace. The ADA invites proposals from interested agencies with experience in marketing, public relations, and public affairs, regardless of direct cannabis experience.

Background

The ADA is a member-based organization led by a seven-member Board of Directors, elected by their peers. Through political advocacy, continuing education on regulatory compliance, and other member services, the ADA is working toward a thriving regulated cannabis ecosystem that is growing and thriving at a pace unconstrained by perception, regulation, and attacks.

The staff of the ADA is comprised of an Executive Director. Additionally, a lobbyist focusing on the Arizona State Legislature and the Arizona Department of Health – the industry’s main licensing and regulatory body – is on contract with the Association.

Scope of Work

The work to be performed will be focused on supporting the creation and execution of an operator-agnostic campaign to promote the adult-use regulated marketplace in Arizona. Additionally, the ADA is seeking general public relations support services related to a statewide, industry-specific trade association.

The ADA represents roughly 110 of the 125 operating licensed dispensaries in Arizona, and dozens of independently operating wholesale businesses that supply flower, smokeable concentrates, edibles, topicals, and more to the marketplace that sold in excess of \$1.25b in 2020.

There are 315,000 Qualified Patients that participate in the state's mature medical market, and as the industry welcomes adult-use it has become increasingly clear that a majority of the five and a half million Arizonans aged 21 or older are not aware that they can purchase, possess, and consume cannabis legally.

Additionally, prior to the pandemic, Arizona routinely welcomed 40m to 45m visitors annually. As travel - both personal and professional - pick up, the ADA would like to be positioned and prepared to promote the reality that The Grand Cannabis State is open for business.

The scope of work must include the following, supporting the ADA with:

1. Development & execution of awareness/check-off campaign
2. Brand/message consistency across all internal and external channels
3. General public relations support
4. Website development, including microsite for aforementioned campaign

Timeline

The ADA intends to award a contract in early August with the intention to have a preliminary campaign ready to launch in October.

The industry awareness campaign - or commodity check-off program - will be designed to live in perpetuity, funded by ADA Members incrementally and led by a separate, yet-to-be-formed leadership group. The intensity of the workload, however, will be frontloaded.

The general public relations support can be largely transitioned back to ADA Staff after an initial period of dedicated and focused work in building a solid foundation of procedures and standards – as the Board intends to grow Staff by an additional FTE within six months.

Response Requirements

1. Company profile
 - a. Name of the business, contact person, and contact information
2. Qualifications
 - a. Provide a brief description of your firm, including its founding and history; number of employees; service areas; and, awards or other forms of recognition.
 - b. Provide a description of your work process and business philosophy.
3. Experience and ability to perform this work
 - a. Describe the approach your firm would undertake to successfully complete the tasks described in the Scope of Work
 - b. Provide examples of relevant work.
 - c. Provide a list of personnel who would be assigned to The ADA work, along with their credentials and experience.
4. Pricing
 - a. Monthly retainer for Scope of Work
 - b. Any additional anticipated costs, including any hourly rates that may be assessed or fees associated with media buying and related activity

Questions to Consider Addressing

While not necessary to address directly, the following questions have repeatedly surfaced during conversations with the Board and broader Membership of the ADA in the development of this RFP.

- What is your experience working in the cannabis industry, specifically navigating the messaging and advertising restrictions?
- What is your experience developing and implementing a statewide public awareness campaign?
- What is your experience working in consumer-focused health and wellness campaigns?

- What is your experience building coalitions of businesses and organizations to support a single cause?

Questions & Award

Individual questions regarding this RFP will be responded to only as follows:

Questions regarding requirements and scope of work will be accepted up to 5p MST on Tuesday, July 27th, 2021, via email only, at sam@azdispensaries.org. Answers to all questions received by this deadline will be sent via email. Phone calls will not be accepted or acknowledged.

The ADA reserves the right to alter the timing of the start of any work described within this RFP, reserves the right not to award a contract for this RFP, and will not reimburse the cost incurred by bidders who respond to this notice.

Thank you for your interest in supporting the success of the Arizona Dispensaries Association and our Members!

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "SAM". The letters are stylized and cursive.

Samuel Richard
Executive Director