



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des arts  
du Canada

**Deaf Communications Strategy**

**2018**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

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# THE CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

## Deaf Communications Strategy 2017-18

### REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

#### 1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION & INSTRUCTIONS

##### 1.1 PURPOSE FOR THE RFP

This request for proposal (RFP) invites individual consultants, consulting firms or teams of researchers (the Firm) with expertise in Sign languages and communications with the Deaf or hard of hearing public in Canada, to submit proposals to provide a sustainable communications strategy that includes documentation of best practices, review of Council practices and identification of key Canada Council messages to be developed into scripts for sign language interpretation to the Canada Council for the Arts (the Council).

##### 1.2 ABOUT THE CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

The Canada Council for the Arts is Canada's national public arts funder, with a mandate "to foster and promote the study and enjoyment of, and the production of works in, the arts."

The Council champions and invests in artistic excellence through a broad range of grants, services, prizes and payments to professional Canadian artists and arts organizations. Its work ensures that excellent, vibrant and diverse art and literature engages Canadians, enriches their communities and reaches markets around the world.

The Council also raises public awareness and appreciation of the arts through its communications, research and arts promotion activities. It is responsible for the Canadian Commission for UNESCO which promotes the values and programs of UNESCO in Canada to contribute to a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable future. The Canada Council Art Bank operates art rental programs and helps further public engagement with contemporary arts.

The Council is governed by an 11-member Board. Members of the Board and the Director/CEO are appointed by the Governor in Council. The Council works closely with federal, provincial, territorial and municipal arts and cultural agencies and departments.

A federal Crown corporation created through an Act of Parliament in 1957, the Council reports to Parliament through the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages. It receives funding from Parliament and its annual budget is supplemented by endowment income, donations and bequests.

For more information in regards to the above-mentioned, please refer to Council's following websites:

- Canada Council for the Arts: <http://canadacouncil.ca/>
- Public Lending Right Program: <http://www.plr-dpp.ca/>
- Art Bank: <http://artbank.ca/>
- CCUNESCO: <http://unesco.ca/>

### 1.3 BACKGROUND

The Canada Council for the Arts published the [Expanding the Arts](#) (ETA) Deaf and Disability Arts Access and Equality Strategy in 2012 as well as its accompanying [Guidebook](#) to better engage people who are Deaf and/or have disabilities. The Council's commitment to ensuring greater access for Deaf and disabled arts professionals and the public is re-iterated in the [Shaping the Future Strategic Plan](#) (2016-21).

The Canada Council wishes to implement a sustainable and effective method of engaging and communicating with Deaf (including hard of hearing) arts professionals and public.

Therefore it will commission a firm to develop a comprehensive strategy to deliver key messages and information to Deaf artists and the public and to facilitate exchange. The proposed strategy should address a range of media including sign language interpreted videos, captioned videos, plain language text and other visual cues. This can be implemented in a variety of contexts and environments such as announcements, blogs, event summaries, webinars, live web events, consultations, information sessions, etc. The strategy should provide recommendations on how these mediums can be incorporated into the Council's web site, portal architecture and all communications technologies and materials, with the purpose of improving user experience. Deliverables will include identifying messages, creating and editing scripts for sign language interpretation, an analysis of the effectiveness of current practices, a strategy for continued sustainable communications and a report on best practices.

### 1.4 ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

It is the intention of the Council to consider the proposals submitted and to not be precluded from negotiating with one, or more than one, of the parties responding to this RFP to finalize technical and commercial terms. **The Council reserves the right to accept any proposal, or any part of a proposal submitted that is deemed, in the sole discretion of the Council, to be the most advantageous to it.**

The proposal having the lowest cost shall not necessarily be accepted and the Council may take into account any criteria in evaluating responses to this RFP. The Council is not obliged to provide reasons to any responding parties with respect to any use of the Council's discretion.

The Council reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to seek further information from, or clarification of, any proposal submitted in response to this RFP, and is entitled to utilize any such information or clarifications received in deciding which proposal it may accept, if at all.

### 1.5 RFP DATES & DEADLINES

The following schedule will be followed for this RFP:

RFP posted to MERX	January 22, 2017
Deadline for questions regarding the RFP	February 5, 2017
Deadline for submissions	February 12, 2017
Presentations or additional requests from short-listed Firm(s) if required	February 19, 2017
End Contract negotiations	February 26, 2017
Start of contract	March 5, 2018

**Period of Validity of the Proposal:** Proposals submitted must remain open for acceptance by the Council for a period of not less than sixty (60) days from the specified closing date.

## 1.6 CONFIDENTIALITY AND COUNCIL'S OBLIGATION

All information, including the RFP, provided to the Firms shall remain the exclusive property of the Council. As such, all data and information shall be kept strictly confidential and shall not be disclosed to any third party without the express written consent of the Council.

The issuance of this RFP and Council's receipt of any proposal shall not, in any manner, obligate Council to perform any act, incur any liabilities, or reimburse or compensate any Firm for preparation costs or other losses incurred in the preparation of their response to this RFP. Council shall have the right to use, for any purpose, any information submitted in connection with the RFP unless it has been marked Confidential.

Confidentiality agreements or clauses are subject to the [Access to Information Act](#) s. 20(1)(b) and must meet the following four conditions to be treated confidentially.

The information must be:

1. financial, commercial, scientific or technical information;
2. "confidential" - three indicators of confidentiality:
  - the information contained in the record is not available from other sources in the public domain or obtainable by observation or independent study by a member of the public acting on his or her own;
  - the circumstances in which the information originates and is communicated give rise to a reasonable expectation that it will not be disclosed; and
  - the information, whether provided by law or supplied voluntarily, is communicated to the government within a relationship that is either fiduciary or not contrary to the public interest and that will be fostered for the public benefit by confidential communication.;
3. supplied to a government institution by a third party; and
4. treated consistently in a confidential manner by the third party.

## 1.7 TERMS & CONDITIONS

Successful firm(s) will be required to enter into a contract with the Council which will embody the terms of this RFP and any subsequent negotiations or clarifications. The Council reserves the right to modify or amend this form of agreement prior to its finalization and execution with the party submitting the successful proposal.

## 1.8 REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Please submit any questions in writing, via email, to the contact below and the Council will respond accordingly. To ensure that all firms receive equivalent information, the Council will post applicable clarification questions and responses on MERX. Deadline for submitting questions is February 5, 2018 at 5:00 pm EST (Ottawa local time). Enquiries concerning any aspect of this RFP can be directed to:

**Contact Name:** Sheila James

**Contact Title:** Equity Office, Policy Planning and Strategic Foresight Section

**Email:** sheila.james@canadacouncil.ca

## **1.9 INSTRUCTIONS**

### **1.9.1 INTENTION TO REPLY TO RFP**

Please reply via email (address in section 1.8) that you have reviewed this RFP and of your intention to submit a proposal by February 5, 2018 . A return email address must be shown in the proposal.

### **1.9.2 RECEIPT OF PROPOSAL**

The completed RFP submission shall be received electronically by email on the proposal due date of February 12, 2018 prior to 5:00 pm EST (Ottawa local time). Firms are requested to keep their RFP submission size to under 20 MB. Please indicate the RFP title in the email's subject line.

All proposals must be:

- 1) signed by a duly authorized officer;
- 2) include a statement that the firm has examined and understood the RFP and all addenda (as applicable), and
- 3) state that the Firm has the technical and financial resources and personnel to provide the services as identified in this RFP, and within the timeframes specified in this proposal.

Consulting firms are responsible for ensuring that submissions are received by the Council prior to the proposal due date and time. Late submissions received after the closing date and time will be disqualified from competition and not evaluated.

### **1.9.3 FORMS OF PROPOSAL**

To ensure that all proposals are uniformly evaluated, they must be submitted in the format prescribed in Appendix A of this RFP.

The proposal should completely address each element of the Council's requirements as outlined in Section 2.2 (Service Requirements). Changes or enhancements should be clearly identified and explained. The Firm may suggest alternative means beyond the scope of the stated requirements.

All the terms and conditions set forth in the RFP are accepted and incorporated in the proposal unless the proposal specifically takes exception to them.

### **1.9.4 MODIFICATION OF PROPOSALS**

Firms may modify their proposals up to the specified closing date and time.

### **1.9.5 AMENDMENTS OR WITHDRAWAL OF THE RFP**

Correction or clarification to the RFP will be issued in the form of a written addendum to the RFP and will be posted on MERX. No interpretation, correction, clarification or amendment to the RFP shall be binding on the Council unless it is by way of an addendum. Firms must acknowledge receipt of all addenda in their proposal.

### **1.9.6 RETURN OF PROPOSALS**

Unsuccessful proposals will not be returned to the Firm.

## 2.0 COUNCIL'S REQUIREMENTS

### 2.1 OVERVIEW

The work consists of reviewing current communications and broadening the reach of the Council to the Deaf and hard of hearing public, building on achievements outlined in the [\*Expanding the Arts\*](#) (ETA) strategy.

A critical element would be to analyse and understand barriers experienced by the Deaf/hard of hearing sector specific to Council's programs and services. This work is directly related to the Council's [\*Strategic Plan 2016-21\*](#) commitments to strive for equity in support of and access for Deaf artists and artists with disabilities.

There are six deliverables:

- A review of the Council's current Sign language interpreted videos and materials on the website and portal and analyze materials within these to retain and/or edit.
- Identification and prioritization of key messages on the web and programs in the portal for later interpretation in American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ)
- Identification of new messages or instructions for users
- Development of scripts of key messages and critical information
- A review of current practices and a report on best options for sustainable and continuous service to the Deaf public
- A review of frequency of communication with Deaf public by Council staff, including use of Bell Relay, Skype and other digital communications devices
- Projection of costs for adopting best practices
- A report that summarizes the above

Suggested methodology:

- Review of Council's current communications practices vis a vis the Deaf and hard of hearing public
- Review of current best practices employed by other institutions of comparable scope and scale
- Analysis of general information on website and portal with a view to greater accessibility
- Cost analysis and implementation process

### 2.2 SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

The firm shall demonstrate:

- High level skills and capacity to communicate in American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des signes Québécoise (LSQ)
- Capacity to communicate and interpret both sign languages to both Deaf and hearing stakeholders
- Knowledge of various telecommunications, technologies and methodologies used by Deaf public
- Experience in reviewing and analyzing communications, identifying and prioritizing information and writing and editing scripts in ASL and LSQ
- Experience producing reports, strategies and related communications materials
- Experience in creating a cost analysis of various communication strategies



The final report will be divided into the following components:

1. Executive Summary with high-level findings
2. Detailed report with full analysis, identification of key messages for Sign language interpretation, including the methodology and findings of each line of inquiry
3. Proposed Sign language scripts in English and French (for respective interpretation of ASL and LSQ)

### **2.3 GENERAL TIMEFRAME REQUIREMENTS**

Exact timelines and workplan will be defined with the successful Firm. However, the following general timeframes are being planned for as follows:

- March 5, 2018 - Contact is signed and work begins
- March 12, 2018 (tbc) - Kick-off meeting with Project Authority
- April 2, 2018 - Review of Website and identification of key messages
- April 16, 2018 - Review of communications strategies
- May 7, 2018 - Delivery of scripts
- May 21, 2018 - Interim report submitted to Project Authority
- June 11, 2018 - Final Report and presentation to Project Authority

### **2.4 OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

The Canada Council welcomes a range of proposals and methodologies. The total proposed budget should not exceed \$30K.

## 3.0 EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSALS

### 3.1 SCORING

All proposals will be rated on the basis of a "points earned" matrix that will involve an analysis of the complete proposal including, but not limited to, such areas as:

- ☐ Proposal is submitted according to instructions (Pass/Fail)
- ☐ Firm's capability (70%)
  - [Section A: Executive Summary of the Proposal](#)
  - [Section B: Profile of the Firm](#)
  - [Section C: Suitability of the Firm](#)
  - [Section D: Service Requirements](#)
  - [Section E: Service Standards](#)
  - [Section F: References](#)
  - [Section G: Timeline Requirements](#)
- ☐ Firm's pricing schedule (30%)
  - [Section H: Pricing Schedule, Experience & Value Added](#)
  - [Appendix B](#)

Firms are required to demonstrate in their proposal that they are able to satisfy the above criteria. Council reserves the right in its sole discretion to request, in writing or orally, clarification of any additional information concerning proposals that are considered responsive.

### 3.2 SHORT-LIST

A short-list of Firms will be selected on the basis of Council's analysis. Firms on the short-list will be notified in writing and Council reserves the right to request a one-hour presentation to the Council's Selection Committee.

The Council retains complete discretion in deciding which proposals meet the requirements set out in the RFP and what evidence will be considered adequate to indicate compliance with those requirements.

### 3.3 AGREEMENTS WITH SUCCESSFUL FIRMS

The Council shall enter into negotiations with the successful Firm(s) with a view to finalizing a contract for services (the contract), on terms acceptable to the Council. The contract shall be for a period of six months in favour of the Council. The Council reserves the right to cancel the contract at any time if the service does not meet Council's expectations and a 30-day advance notice will be sent.

If an agreement acceptable to the Council is not reached within sixty (60) days after selection of the successful Firm, the Council may disqualify that Firm and re-evaluate the remaining proposals without obligation or claim against the Council.

All proponents will be advised on the results of the RFP, including disclosure of the name of the winning proponent, once the proposals have been reviewed and the final negotiations with the winning proponent have been finalized and agreed. Notifications will be done via an email and/or telephone conversation with all the proponents at the discretion of the Council. Within 15 days after notification of award, unsuccessful proponents may request a debriefing on their proposal to be scheduled at a later date.

## **4.0 WORK TERMS**

### **4.1 TASKS**

Specific tasks, activities, deliverables, and Initiative/Project timelines or milestones will be determined by the Project Authority during negotiation of the contract. The Project Authority will negotiate with the contractor the level of effort (number days), nature and/or scope of each task.

### **4.2 CLIENT SUPPORT**

The Council's Project Authority will:

- Provide overall project management authority;
- Provide the Firm with background documents for review;
- Assist the Firm with obtaining Council documents and data, when required;
- Will be the source of final approval and acceptance of all deliverables; and
- Provide feedback to the Firm on all deliverables.

### **4.3 DELIVERABLES AND ASSOCIATED SCHEDULE**

Deliverables include:

- March 5, 2018 - Contract is signed and work begins
- March 15, 2018 (tbd) - Kick-off meeting with Project Authority
- April 2, 2018 - Interim report on Review of Website and identification of key messages
- April 16, 2018 - Interim report on review of communications strategies
- May 7, 2018 - Delivery of scripts
- May 21, 2018 - Interim report submitted to Project Authority
- June 11, 2018 - Final Report and presentation to Project Authority

### **4.4 OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

Work, including tasks and deliverables, will be primarily completed in English; however the team must be capable of providing services in both official languages and be fluent in ASL and LSQ.

### **4.5 WORK LOCATION**

The work shall be carried out primarily via email and teleconference with meetings and consultations conducted as required in the offices of the Project Authority.

### **4.6 TRAVEL**

Travel within the National Capital Region (NCR) will not be reimbursed. If the selected firm is outside the NCR, travel costs for the kick off meeting and 1 follow up meeting can be included in the proposal.

## APPENDIX A - PROPOSAL FORMAT

To ensure that all proposals are evaluated equally, the submissions must be divided into the following sections:

### SECTION A AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL

### SECTION B A PROFILE OF THE FIRM

This section should include:

- company legal name and Canadian address;
- contact information for person responsible for RFP submission;
  - Name, Title, Phone, E-mail
  - Authorized Signature and Date
- website;
- professional memberships;
- number of years in business as Sign language interpretation/communications/accessibility firm in Canada;
- number of core customers;
- geographical area of operation;
- a brief description of your company, including the number of staff, years of experience, resumes of key personnel.
  - Provide details that would be specific to this engagement

### SECTION C SUITABILITY OF YOUR FIRM

This section should describe in one page why you feel that the Firm is best suited to serve the Council's project requirements.

Please describe what work the Firm has done in terms of development and delivery of Sign language interpretation/communications/ accessibility or other activities with (a) Crown corporation(s), or (b) similar type of agencies and/or organizations, and (c) with organizations working in the arts and culture sector. A demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the arts and culture sector will be a bonus.

The Firm must be able to demonstrate experience in providing 2 services for similar corporations and agencies and should demonstrate results for the Canadian public .

### SECTION D SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

This section should be broken into sub-sections that respond to each of the requirements identified in the [Council's Service Requirements](#) (2.2) of this RFP. The Firm must provide project summaries describing at least two (2) engagements related to each project/service/requirement completed in the past five (5) years and must show experience and qualifications with similar corporations and agencies. The Firm must demonstrate qualifications for each of the requirements and articulate what value they brought to their client(s) through the delivery of that service. The Firm must demonstrate experience in providing communications analysis, Sign language interpretation and other accessibility requirements.

## SECTION E      **SERVICE STANDARDS**

This section should describe the Firm's approach, methodology and accelerators for managing and delivering on project engagements of this nature (based on the examples identified in [Section D](#)).

This section should also address the following:

- Firm's ability to provide a highly personalized, responsive and practical service, and meet established project deadlines;
- Firm's proposal for problem resolution if the proposed work is unsatisfactory;
- Firm's ability to provide a high level of service to Council in both official languages.

## SECTION F      **REFERENCES**

Please provide three references of comparable, existing corporate clients including the names of the senior contacts, phone number and email. Summarize the work that was done for their organization and the year(s) the service was provided. At a minimum, one of these references must come from Government of Canada departments, agencies or Crown Corporations. Private sector references may also be provided in addition, if desired.

## SECTION G      **TIMELINE REQUIREMENTS**

This section should describe the Firm's ability to meet the timeframes indicated in [Section 2.3](#) and demonstrate availability and capacity to deliver on the Council's service requirements in the timeframe requested.

## SECTION H      **PRICING SCHEDULE, RESOURCES & VALUE ADDED**

This section should state the total value of the contract and outline the rates for services for each resource category (see [Appendix B](#) for the roles). Resumes must be provided for each of the roles to demonstrate the Firm's breadth of experience and availability of these resources to immediately start work on the proposed requirements.

Indicate whether your Firm would provide thresholds for pricing influenced by spending or if any additional incentives such as early payment terms or grouped project discounts could apply.

Describe any other value added services that your Firm could provide. Explain where there would be any additional financial advantage if your Firm was awarded work.

## APPENDIX B – PRICING SCHEDULE, RESOURCES & VALUE ADDED

As a requirement to complete the Proposal, a pricing schedule must be included.

### B.1 PRICING SCHEDULE

To ensure that all proposals are evaluated equally, please provide a rate for each of the work phases identified below including total number of hours and/or days for the entire project. If there are several consultants on the project, please list role e.g. Lead communications strategist and specific fees if applicable :

#### Fee Schedule

	\$/Hour	Daily Rate
Review of Sign Language videos		
Review of website and portal to identify key messages		
Script development for Sign language interpretation		
Review of current practices		
Best practices approach		
Adaptation and implementation costing		
Final report		
Role		
Role		
Role		
Role		

**Note:** If additional roles would be required to provide the services requested by the Council, list the role, rate and provide a description of the expected need for that type of resource.

### B.2 KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE AND CAPABILITY

It is important to the Council to have competent resources who have been dedicated by their Firm to work with the Council. Describe the resources, including their knowledge, qualifications and experience to provide the services required by the Council. Please provide resumes for each of the roles identified above.

### B.3 VALUE ADDED

Indicate whether your Firm would provide thresholds for pricing influenced by spending or if any additional incentives such as early payment terms or grouped project discounts could apply.

Describe any other value added services that your Firm could provide. Explain where there would be any additional financial advantage if your Firm was awarded work.