

# CITY OF ROHNERT PARK

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FOR

## EXPANDED PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS



City of Rohnert Park  
130 Avram Avenue  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928  
(707) 588-2242

Distribution/Advertisement: October 22, 2021

Deadline for Submittal of Proposals: November 19, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

Delivered to:  
City of Rohnert Park  
Attention: Don Schwartz, Assistant City Manager  
130 Avram Avenue  
Rohnert Park, California.

## **I. General Description of the Project**

The goal of this project is to solicit assistance in expanding the City's communications with our residents. On September 28, 2021 the City Council approved staff's recommendations for expansion. The [staff report](#) is attached to this RFP and by hyperlink. The [presentation and Council discussion](#) is available on the City's website under "Meeting Central."

## **II. Contact Person**

Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to the Project Manager:

Don Schwartz  
Assistant City Manager  
City of Rohnert Park  
130 Avram Avenue  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928  
Telephone: (707) 588-2242  
E-mail: [dschwartz@rpcity.org](mailto:dschwartz@rpcity.org)

Email is the preferred method of communication for this RFP.

## **III. Background Information and Scope of Work**

For further background information: Some of the City's public information functions are centralized in the City Manager's Office while others are decentralized. The Assistant City Manager is the primary Public Information Officer (PIO) responsible for overall communications. He is the primary contact for most media relations, although media inquiries are commonly referred to experts in City departments.

The City also has a part-time Communications Specialist who spends the equivalent of about one ½ person in that role. Her primary responsibilities include:

- Creating and administering content on all social media platforms including periodic site metrics and responding to patrons questions
- Researching, compiling, and writing content for inclusion in the City's bi-monthly 1-page newsletter. Includes page layout, creation/editing of graphics, coordination with the translation provider and printer.
- Researching and writing, 450-750 words, draft content for the City's weekly Community Voice column
- Compiling staff submitted written and photo content for inclusion in the weekly City Manager's Weekly update.
- Researching, drafting, and distributing Press Releases
- Researching and drafting Talking Points for press conferences or community events
- Managing the City's website, local government social media accounts, and intranet - includes troubleshooting, creating new users, permissions, content creation and monitoring.

In general, departments that have social media accounts generate their own social media content and responses, and manage authorization of users. Departments also manage many public communications on issues relevant to their expertise. Public Safety handles press relations and most media inquiries regarding police and fire activities.

See the following attachments for more information:

[Attachment A Expanding City Communications Agenda Item](#)

[Attachment B City Manager's Weekly Update](#)

[Attachment C Community Newsletter](#)

[Attachment D Community Voice Column](#)

#### **IV. RFP Proposal Submittal Requirements**

Consultants interested in providing these services must prepare and submit a Proposal, consistent with this Request and the Scope of Work, with a cover letter signed by an officer of the firm authorized to execute a contract with the City.

Proposals should describe in detail how the respondent will provide the services. They should also describe the skills and experience and include resumes of the principal staff who would work with the City. Proposals should include examples from recent, relevant work conducted for other government agencies. Proposals should also include a minimum of three references from other government agencies with full contact information.

Alternatives may be submitted as separate proposals, or may be described as such and included in a singular proposal, and must be so noted on the cover sheet of the proposal.

We are not looking for proposals which:

- a. Focus on marketing the City to businesses or visitors
- b. Explain the value of public communications
- c. Include only alternatives to the desired services
- d. Create a role for a contractor as City spokesperson
- e. Replicate or paraphrase the September 28, 2021 agenda report
- f. Describe the virtues of the firm providing the services; we are interested in the individuals we would actually be working with day to day.

#### **V. Deadline and Delivery**

Six copies of the Proposal must be received, including one un-bound original, and an electronic version via email by the Project Manager by the deadline on the cover page of this RFP. No information submitted by facsimile or electronic mail will be accepted unless otherwise requested by the City during the proposal review process. Proposals received after the deadline may not be accepted.

## **VI. Review and Selection Process**

Consultant selection will be based upon the Proposals submitted and any other information, such as reference checks, available to the City. City staff may request additional clarifying information from any or all consultants that submit a Proposal. Depending on the number and quality of responses, and after initial screening and evaluation of proposals submitted in response to this RFP, the City may select a short-list for additional evaluation and potential interview. Consultants may be requested to be available for an interview in Rohnert Park as part of the selection process, and should be available on the interview date in the schedule below. The lead member(s) of the consulting team will be expected to attend any interviews scheduled with the City.

Factors that will be considered in the review process include but may not be limited to:

- Meeting all of the requirements of this RFP; failure to meet the requirements of this RFP may be deemed unresponsive and the proposal may not be further evaluated.
- Background and experience of the project team members assigned to this project.
- Quality of the proposed approach to the project.
- Proposed cost. Proposals may include options, with the costs for each option identified separately.
- Agreement to use City's standard contract, and/or negotiate reasonable alternative language
- Adherence to the [City's Purchasing Policy](#), in particular Chapter 6 as it relates to local vendor preference.

## **VII. Contract Requirements**

The successful Respondent may be required to enter into an agreement with the City within 15 days of notice of the City's Intent to Award. A sample agreement is attached to this RFP. If an Agreement on terms and conditions acceptable to the City cannot be achieved within that timeframe, or if, after reasonable attempts to negotiate such terms and conditions, it appears that an agreement will not be possible, as determined at the sole discretion of the City, the City reserves the right to retract any notice of intent to award and proceed with awards to other Respondents.

Respondent(s) must identify all proposed modifications to an Agreement in a transmittal letter which identifies the specific sections of the Agreement proposed to be modified. Attached to the proposal must be the appropriate sample Agreement clearly defining Respondent's proposed modifications. Proposed modifications to an Agreement must be made in an in interlineated "Strikeout/Bold" or "Strikeout/Underline" format. An electronic copy of the Agreements may be requested from the Project Manager.

Estimated Schedule:

October 22, 2021:  
November 5, 2021:  
November 12, 2021:

Release RFP  
Questions on RFP due to City via e-mail  
City provides responses to questions

November 19, 2021:	Proposals due by 4:00 p.m.
December 3, 2021:	Interview date, if needed
December 8, 2021:	Evaluations completed
December 28, 2021	Contract negotiated
January 10, 2022:	Project initiation

**VIII. General Terms and Conditions**

- A. The City reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals and to award any or all sections of the work to one or multiple consultants.
- B. The City will not be responsible for any costs incurred by respondents in the preparation and submittal of a response to this Request for Proposals.
- C. The City reserves the right to modify the scope of the work for this project at any time.
- D. Documents, drawings and findings (regardless of format) that are associated with this project shall be the property of the City.
- E. Fee proposals included with the submitted Proposal shall remain effective for 90 days beyond the submitted date.

Attachments:

- Exhibit A - Scope of Work and Compensation
- Exhibit B – Sample Agreement including Insurance

## **EXHIBIT A**

### **Scope of Work and Compensation**

Please see attached agenda report from September 28, 2021. The recommendations in that report – also included below with additional information - were approved by the City Council and represent the range of services desired. Proposals should describe how they would meet those needs. Proposals may include a range of options.

For additional information regarding the recommendations:

- a. Targeting low-income residents: Build capacity to ‘inform’ low-income residents by increasing relationships with other organizations willing to share information. This could include small businesses such as laundromats, Latino-focused markets, and mobile home parks. We would also increase communication through non-profits, such as the Rohnert Park Health Center, and the School District.*

The City has started creating a [spreadsheet](#) regarding the organizations who might be willing to share information on behalf of the City. We need this spreadsheet to be completed. This includes adding missing information for organizations listed on the spreadsheet, as well as contacting and adding (if agreeable) any missing organizations that should be included such as churches, non-profits, or businesses with a substantial number of low-income customers. We also need to know, for each organization contacted, if they are willing to amplify City messaging. Proposals should include this piece of work, including price, as an item that can be completed independent of other requested services.

As we complete the spreadsheet, we anticipate creating an e-mail list that provides messages in different formats, such as attached flyers that can be printed and distributed, links to one or more of the City’s social media channels, and verbiage that can be included in newsletters, e-mails, or other communications. In addition, the finalized spreadsheet should be provided in .CSV format so that it can be easily uploaded into Outlook and other e-mail delivery platforms.

We are also interested in developing the ability to determine the measureable effectiveness of messaging and campaigns across platforms (e-mail, social media channels, Nextdoor, etc.).

- b. Expand use of social media analytics to help assess effectiveness of and improve social media communications.*

We are looking to take the lead responsibility, in collaboration with the City, to develop a regular and as-needed method for us to assess and improve social media communications. This should also reflect analytics of our website and open rates for e-mail. Our current thinking is that we could make good use of the following; proposals can reflect this approach or propose an alternative.

1. Provide an analytics template that translates native platform verbiage to easily understood reports for monthly/weekly or campaign-specific analytics reports.

Regular reports and/or infographics should include a brief (1-2 page) summary of key findings and recommendations that reflect the best use of available resources.

2. A documented procedure to generate routine reports.
3. Platforms that require measuring include: Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Nextdoor, Outlook, and the City's website.
4. Contractor should assess (if needed) and recommend a service that meets the City's needs and is used by other government agencies. Options include but are not limited to Hootsuite, AgencyAnalytics, and DashThis. References for other jurisdictions that use the recommended service should be included.

*c. Emergency response: Increase our capacity to respond to emergencies on short notice and without activating the Emergency Operations Center.*

This requires availability on short notice (24 hours or less) to develop and deliver messages on social media regarding potential fire risks and power shut offs due to those risks. The City may want to call on the contractor to provide this service after hours and on weekends. Proposals should indicate if that is an option, and any associated fees for service during such times.

The written content and graphics, if provided by a partner agency, often require formatting and tailoring to target the Rohnert Park audience. For example, a 'fire weather watch' or a Public Safety Power Shutoff PSPS event may include Sonoma County but not Rohnert Park. In many cases content requires additional research to be conducted from credible resources such as the County, National Weather Service NWS, PG&E and CAL FIRE. In some cases content from other jurisdictions or credible agencies can simply be shared.

*d. Communications through the media: Increase press releases to include more on City programs and Council actions.*

The content for press releases is typically available in staff reports provided as part of City Council meetings, although there are times when content will need to be compiled from other materials. Discussions with knowledgeable staff may also be needed to develop press releases. We are looking for a contractor to develop press releases. This may include contacting reporters on the City's behalf to notify them of newsworthy items and to determine their interest in pursuing a story.

Other Tasks: We anticipate that the selected contractor(s) will be part of the City's public information team. As such, they may be called upon for a variety of roles. Examples include:

- Preparing and distributing messages and related materials via e-mail targeted to low-income residents
- Developing and posting content on social media

- Monitoring and responding to comments received on social media, by e-mail, or in other ways, and/or referring them to knowledgeable City staff for a response
- Creating and posting content on the City's website
- Assisting with producing community events such as Town Hall meetings or ribbon cuttings
- Developing flyers or other materials
- Producing the every-other-month [utility newsletter](#)
- Producing a [weekly update](#) of accomplishments for the City Council

In some cases the work may be administrative in nature and might include making copies, hand-delivering or mailing print materials, sending email requests for content, coordinating meeting participants, and/or formatting documents. Proposals may distinguish the costs for such roles compared to work which requires a greater level of skill.

Additionally, the City welcomes suggestions from the selected contractor(s) on how to improve communications as a complement to the services above.

### Compensation

Proposals should also describe compensation for services. This should include hourly rates, and could include costs per deliverable (such as a certain amount for a monthly report of social media analytics) and other options.

Note that the City Council has approved \$50,000 for FY 21-22 for this effort. We estimate that \$5,000 will be used for contracts for translation services. Funds that remain at the end of the Fiscal Year on June 30, 2021 may be carried over into the following year. We do not yet know if funding will continue in future years.