

**PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE AUTHORITY  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) – Public Relations Firm  
Issued: May 16, 2023  
Point of Contact: Jessica Vargas**

**Deadline for Questions:** May 26, 2023, at 5 p.m.

**Response to Questions Posted by** May 31, 2023

**Proposals are Due:** June 14, 2023, by 5 p.m.

Proposals delivered via email to the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Authority after 5 p.m. EST will be considered non-responsive and will be rejected.

**Please send proposals by email to:**

Jessica Vargas, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer [jessica.vargas@ct.gov](mailto:jessica.vargas@ct.gov)

Stephanie Oliveras, Clerical Assistant [stephanie.oliveras@ct.gov](mailto:stephanie.oliveras@ct.gov)

#### **About the Authority**

The Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Authority (The “Authority” or “CTPL”) is a quasi-governmental agency formed by statute and signed into law by Governor Ned Lamont in 2019. Its mission is to provide financial security to Connecticut’s workforce by offering benefit payments when they take a leave from work to care for themselves or a family member.

#### **Outline of Work**

The Paid Leave Authority seeks a Public Relations firm to maximize opportunities for the Authority to connect with the public, specifically through television outlets and news publications. The work will include creating press releases, arranging for television and print interviews, scheduling press conferences, and pitching reporters on stories and interviews with identified CT Paid Leave staff. The proposer will work with the CTPL's Outreach and Engagement Team to create and implement effective public relations strategies, resulting in earned media exposure regarding the work and mission of the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Authority. The firm will also develop a strategy to address and mitigate any negative publicity as needed.

#### **Project Scope**

The Proposer, in partnership with the Outreach and Engagement team, shall provide the following services:

***Strategic communication planning and implementation*** - Work with CTPL to identify specific goals and develop and implement a public relations plan to meet those goals. While there is not a paid media element of this work, the Authority does place paid advertising and will share the outlets used with the chosen firm so that the firm may leverage these media relationships for additional coverage.





**Message development-** Help to develop simple and clear messages to convey to media/news outlets; ensure that messaging is consistent with and complimentary to messaging that the Authority is developing for use in paid media campaigns.

**Briefings for news editors and reporters** - Schedule meetings with key editorial writers and editors to introduce news organizations to key CTPL contacts and provide solid background information.

**Generate news stories and interviews** about the program, with a special focus on news outlets, and regularly scheduled broadcast television, podcasts and news programs.

**Organize and staff press events-** as needed.

**Publicize CTPL events** - Work to generate news coverage for events and announcing major milestones.

**Maximize press opportunities** -Monitor news coverage to identify and maximize opportunities to share messages by generating relevant stories and to proactively develop strategies to identify and address potentially negative coverage.

## Deliverables

- Demonstration of a strong working knowledge of CTPL and its relationship with its key partners, United Way and Aflac, through development of messaging highlighting and elevating the collaboration between the Authority and these partners.
- Participation by identified organizational representative in weekly check in meetings with identified CT Paid Leave Staff.
- Coordination with the Governor's Office, legislators, and other key stakeholders for participation in press events/conferences as needed.
- Delivery of a monthly executive summary that describes the organization's work and outcomes. The summary should be suitable for distribution to CTPL's Board of Directors. The summary should include any press releases/advisories issued, any earned media coverage with dates and links to such coverage, and outline any pitches completed during the month along with outcomes of those pitches.
- Development of a list of targeted news outlets for press conferences and interviews for CTPL with various news outlets throughout the state (television, print, or online) with explanations of why these outlets have been identified.



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- Generation and dissemination of regular press releases (minimum of 2 per month) as directed by Outreach and Engagement Team and CEO.
- Written plan with proactive ways to engage the press with CT Paid Leave, including ideas for PR outreach to the state’s multi-cultural media outlets.

## Timing of Projects:

The project Scope will begin August 1, 2023, and continue until July 31, 2025.

## CONTRACT TERM

The term of any contract resulting from this RFP shall commence on or about August 1, 2023. The contract shall terminate upon the completion of all the tasks that are outlined herein, unless otherwise terminated or suspended per the terms of any resulting agreement.

## Contract Expectations

The following is a link to the State’s standard form contract which is included in the RFP for informational purposes only to illustrate some contract provisions that the State of Connecticut requires. [DAS Procurement Contract Template for Agencies](#)

While the Authority is not a state agency, and provisions such as sovereign immunity are not applicable, other provisions similar to many of the provisions in this sample contract can be expected to be included in the contract the successful Proposer will receive. That contract will also include additional provisions which are tailored to the services requested.

## REQUIRED INFORMATION AND FORMAT FOR RESPONSES TO THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Responses should be submitted in their entirety in an electronic PDF format only, to Stephanie Oliveras and Jessica Vargas via email only. Submissions provided in any other format may be disqualified from consideration.

A. Contact Information Provide the information requested below (if different than information provided in the letter of intent):

- Name of Proposer;
- Mailing Address;
- Telephone Number;
- E-mail Address; and
- Name of Proposer’s Representative.



## B. Project Plan:

The project plan should include:

- Written plan identifying television, print or online news outlets to be approached for interview opportunities and messaging of press releases, advisories, and events to be scheduled during the period of August 1, 2023-July 31, 2025.

## C. Proposer's Qualifications

- Describe the structure, functions, and positions within the organization.
- Describe your experience, skills, and abilities to perform the services contemplated in the Outline of Work. Explain the organization's direct and relevant experience in public relations work, giving examples of similar projects in which the organization was involved, naming the client, the work performed, when it was done and the outcome.
- Please provide as references a minimum of three (3) clients for which your organization has performed similar services as those described in this RFP. There is a very strong preference for recent references, i.e., clients for whom your organization currently performs work or for whom your organization has performed work in the past three years. Please include the name, address, email address, and telephone number of the F contact person at each reference.

## C. Workforce Diversity

- CTPL has a firm and continuing commitment to workforce diversity. State your organization's efforts to recruit and retain diverse candidates. Clearly define how your organization will create and maintain a diverse team to support this engagement at its inception and throughout the entirety of the contract with CTPL. If you are the sole principal/worker in your firm, please explain how you will develop relationships with a variety of outlets that reach diverse communities (i.e., racially, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse communities)

## D. Cost

- Provide a detailed cost proposal, that includes a breakdown of costs (including staffing, materials, equipment, and any additional costs). Please note that any services suggested must be billed as pass-through expense and may not be marked up.

## E. SUBMISSION DEADLINE

The following timeline, up to and including the deadline for submitting proposals, shall be changed only by an amendment to this RFP. Dates after the deadline for submitting proposals are target dates only. No additions or changes to the original proposal will be allowed after submittal. While changes are not permitted, clarification of proposals may be required by CTPL.



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• Deadline for Questions	May 26, 2023 (5:00 PM EST)
• Official Answers Released	May 31, 2023
• Deadline for Submitting Proposals	June 14, 2023 (5:00 PM EST)
• Proposers Interviews (Target Dates)	June 20-23, 2023
• Contractor Selection	June 28, 2023
• Contract Negotiations Completed	July 12, 2023
• Start of Contract	August 1, 2023

## REVIEW CRITERIA

Proposals from individuals or firms will be rated according to:

1. Firm's qualifications and experience
2. Proposed list of events and other outreach activities
3. Experience on similar projects
4. Costs; and
5. Proposer's commitment to the diversity of their teams

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSERS

**A. Official CTPL Contact.** The Official Agency Contact for the purpose of this RFP is Jessica Vargas. All communications with CTPL must be directed to Mrs. Vargas at the address provided below:

Jessica Vargas

Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Authority

E-mail: [jessica.vargas@ct.gov](mailto:jessica.vargas@ct.gov)

**B. Proposer's Representative(s).** Proposer must designate an authorized representative, including the name, title, address, telephone number and E-mail address for each representative.

**C. Communications Notice.** All communications with CTPL concerning this RFP, other than those opportunities for communication provided by CTPL, are strictly prohibited, except as permitted by this RFP. Any violation of this prohibition by Proposers or their representatives may result in disqualification or other sanctions, or both.

**D. Proposers' Interviews.** The selection committee will review all submitted proposals that are submitted in a timely manner. The Selection Committee will conduct interviews with select Proposers between June 20-23, 2023, via electronic conferencing.



**E. Inquiry Procedures.** Proposers may submit questions about the RFP to Jessica Vargas on or before May 31, 2023. Questions must be in writing and submitted by E-mail. Questions will not be accepted over the telephone. Anonymous questions may not be answered. CTPL reserves the right to provide a combined answer to similar questions. CTPL will distribute official answers to the questions, in the form of a written amendment, not later than May 31, 2023, to all Proposers. Any Proposer who has not received the amendment within two business days following the distribution date may contact Jessica Vargas by e-mail only to request a copy.

**F. Confidential Information.** Proposers are advised not to include in their proposals any proprietary information. The CT Freedom of Information Act generally requires the disclosure of documents in the possession of the State upon request of any citizen, unless the content of the document falls within certain categories of exemption. An example of an exemption is a “trade secret,” as defined by statute (C.G.S. § 1-19(b)(5)). If the information is not readily available to the public from other sources and the Proposer submitting the information requests confidentiality, then the information generally is “given in confidence.” Confidential information must be isolated from other material in the proposal and labeled CONFIDENTIAL.

**G. References.** Include reference contacts from recent clients. “Recent clients” is defined as clients for whom your organization has provided services no longer than three years prior to the date of this request for proposal. Provide the following information for each reference: name, title, company address, email, and telephone number.

## **RFP REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS**

Important Note: All Proposers must be willing to adhere to the following conditions and must positively state this in the proposal.

a. All proposals in response to this RFP are to be the sole property of CTPL. Proposers are encouraged not to include in their proposals any information that is proprietary.

b. Any product developed under a contract awarded because of the RFP is to be the sole property of CTPL.

c. The proposer agrees that the proposal will remain valid for a period of 90 days after the closing date for the submission and may be extended beyond that time by mutual agreement.



- d. CTPL may amend or cancel this RFP, prior to the due date and time, if CTPL deems it to be necessary, appropriate, or otherwise in the best interests of CTPL.
- e. The price quoted includes all travel and related out-of-pocket expenses that will be incurred. Cost estimates will be considered as “not to exceed” quotations, except to the extent that the assumed scope is changed, against which time and expenses will be charged. CTPL, as a political subdivision of the State of Connecticut, is exempt from the payment of excise, transportation, and sales taxes, therefore such taxes must not be included in the price quoted. Finally, the price quoted will be applicable to the entire term of the contract and will not be subject to alterations without the prior written consent of the Chief Executive Officer of CTPL.
- f. The proposer must certify that the personnel identified in its response to this RFP will be the persons assigned to the project. Any additions, deletions, or changes in personnel from the proposal during the course of the project must be approved by CTPL, with the exception of personnel who have terminated employment. Replacements for personnel who have terminated employment are subject to approval by CTPL. At its discretion, CTPL may require the removal and replacement of any of the proposer's personnel who do not perform adequately, regardless of whether they were previously approved by CTPL.
- g. Any costs and expenses incurred by proposers in preparing or submitting proposals are the sole responsibility of the proposer. A proposer, if requested, must be prepared to present evidence of experience, ability, service facilities, and financial standing necessary to satisfactorily meet the requirements set forth or implied in the proposal.
- h. No additions or changes to the original proposal will be allowed after submittal. While changes are not permitted, clarification of proposals may be required by CTPL at the proposer’s sole cost and expense.
- i. The proposer awarded the contract may be required to give presentations to the extent necessary to satisfy CTPL’s requirements. In some cases, proposers may have to give presentations or further explanation to the RFP evaluation committee.
- j. The proposer represents and warrants that the proposal is not made in connection with any other proposer and is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud. The



proposer further represents and warrants that they did not participate in any part of the RFP development process, had no knowledge of the specific contents of the RFP prior to its issuance, and that no agent, representative or employee of CTPL participated directly in the proposer's proposal preparation.

k. All responses to the RFP must conform to instructions. Failure to answer all questions or to follow the requested format may be considered an appropriate cause for rejection of the response.

l. The contract document will represent the entire agreement between the proposer and CTPL and will supersede all prior negotiations, representations, or agreements, alleged, or made, between the parties. Any contract awarded as a result of this RFP must be in full conformity with the statutory requirements of the State of Connecticut and the federal government. CTPL shall assume no liability for payment of services under the terms of the contract until the successful proposer is notified that the contract has been accepted and approved by CTPL. The contract may be amended only by means of a written instrument signed by CTPL and the proposer.

m. An authorized officer of the firm must sign the submitted proposals. Proposals must also provide name, title, address, telephone number and e-mail of individuals authorized to negotiate with CTPL and contractually bind the firm, and for those who may be contacted for the purpose of clarifying the information provided.

End of RFP Document