



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM

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DEADLINE: October 7, 2019

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REQUEST

Gallaudet University requests proposals from qualified firms to help expand mainstream national press coverage and build recognition of the Gallaudet story. More than a public relations firm, we seek an advocate in the form of an enterprising and energetic partner to plan, coordinate, and administer public relations and media relations services on our behalf.

ABOUT GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY

Gallaudet University is the premier institution of learning, teaching and research for deaf and hard of hearing students. For more than 150 years, Gallaudet has produced leaders and innovators who have influenced history. There is no other place like this in the world.

When President Abraham Lincoln signed Gallaudet's charter in 1864, our country created a beacon in the world for visual learning, visual language, social justice and full rights for deaf and hard of hearing people. This singular act recognized the importance of higher education to advance the lives and opportunities of deaf and hard of hearing people. Consequently, Gallaudet is the go-to source of knowledge about the deaf and signing community—a hub of history, achievement, and inspiration.

A comprehensive liberal arts university with the feel of a small college, Gallaudet is distinctive in that our students learn in American Sign Language and English, a bilingual approach built into our mission and identity. Science has since proven the powerful value of both languages as a foundation for lifelong learning and literacy. Gallaudet is a rich multicultural and multilingual community; our students are from all over the world. They come from private, public and state schools; they sign, are learning to sign, can hear, can hear with technology, and do not hear at all. Everyone who comes seeks the bilingual learning and multicultural community here at Gallaudet.

Gallaudet is rooted in academic excellence, discovery and transformation of knowledge and possibilities. It was here that American Sign Language was first recognized as a language, advancing sign languages all over the world. It was here that young people led a seminal movement for the right of deaf people to lead at Gallaudet. It was here that students led national

awareness about the rights of people with disabilities, accelerating the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990.

OVERVIEW

The prospective firms replying to this RFP will have relevant experience and expertise. Supporting documentation must thoroughly describe how the firm has supplied expertise for similar contracts and work related to planning, coordination, and implementation of public relations and media relations services. We expect to gain a clear understanding of how firm would approach the projects outlined in the Scope of Work.

CHALLENGE

Under the leadership of our President, Roberta J. Cordano, who has been at the helm for three and one-half years, we have we have experienced a cultural shift that involves a new vision. As a Deaf-centric university, Gallaudet has a substantial social media operation and strong footing with media outlets covering issues related to the Deaf community. We are looking to communicate Gallaudet's vision and stories with the mainstream media. Gallaudet is keenly interested in sharing our stories with the goal of reaching potential students and their parents, potential donors, and addressing perceptions of Deaf people worldwide. Our intention in hiring an outside public relations firm is to partner with a vendor who can help us to advance our mission and make an impact.

SCOPE OF WORK

This Scope of Work is designed to encourage aggressive, proactive media outreach to increase mainstream visibility of GU, our work, and our services and advocacy on behalf of our constituency. We expect to pay up to \$16,000 monthly, and we ask proposal submitters to tell us what they would do for this amount. We expect that proposals will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Strategic development of an overall public and media relations plan for GU.
2. Executing targeted public relations campaigns to generate mainstream national, regional and local media coverage.
3. Identifying and framing substantive, newsworthy content and story ideas to generate expanded national media coverage.
4. Targeting key print, television, radio and online mainstream media outlets to secure news coverage, feature stories, profile articles, event listings and interviews.
5. Coordinating messaging with GU-designated individuals and partners.
6. Conducting outreach to arrange media interviews.

7. Providing media training to coach key GU leadership to prepare for interviews.
8. Writing, formatting, distributing, and placing press releases, white papers, and opinion articles with print, online and broadcast media outlets.
9. Planning press conferences and media opportunities when appropriate to drive coverage.
10. Tracking coverage and measuring overall efforts, delivering weekly reports and comprehensive reports monthly (including estimated number of impressions and media value)
11. Sending media clips on a regular basis; tracking coverage and measuring efforts.

Additionally, we invite a narrative addressing how crisis communications would be handled. Describe your past experience, your approach, how you would staff a crisis response, and how you would handle fees associated with crisis communications, management, and resolution.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The proposal should focus on addressing the firm's ability to provide the services outlined in the Scope of Work. Please provide the following:

1. A cover letter signed by an officer of the firm, including a primary contact person for the proposal.
2. A description of the history, experience, and qualifications of your firm and any proposed subcontractors you plan to use to perform the Scope of Work. This should include:
 - a. An outline of the structure of your firm, including details about key personnel and how many people are on staff.
 - b. The lead account manager's name, experience, role within your organization, and other accounts this person will be handling.
 - c. All specific support staff assigned to the project;
 - d. Resumes for all principals and staff assigned to the project
3. Note any experience, clients, and samples of the work your firm has done with special interest groups such as Deaf or people with disabilities, including results achieved.
4. At least three (3) references from similar, relevant projects. These references should address in detail your firm's qualifications and experience.
5. Rationale for why GU should choose your firm.
6. Two of your firm's greatest strengths that clearly align with GU's goals.

7. One idea you would implement for GU right away.
8. Any proposed public relations activities you envision to get the GU story national press.
9. An assessment of how much staff time you would allocate to work on our account.
10. A specific outline of the reporting and communication system you plan to use in working with our staff to ensure a responsive, productive and successful relationship. Please elaborate with specifics.

APPROACH TO SCOPE OF WORK

Provide a detailed description of your approach to each Scope of Work element.

SERVICE TIMETABLES

Beginning at the date of hire, outline a detailed timetable with description of the services to be performed by the firm. Include the estimated time required to complete the work, with specific benchmarks that will measure the success of your firm's efforts.

ESTIMATED COST

Provide a fee structure based on a monthly retainer with specific projected added expenses.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Prospective service providers should submit their proposal on, or before **October 7, 2019**. Proposals should be titled "PR RFP," and submitted via email to:

Brandi Rarus, Executive Director, University Communications: brandi.rarus@gallaudet.edu

Should you need additional information, please contact Robert Weinstock at robert.weinstock@gallaudet.edu or 202-250-2411.

We expect a final decision to be made by **mid- to late October 2019**.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

The proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Qualifications and range of experience of firm's staff and subcontractors.
2. Written proposal presented by firm demonstrating a clear understanding of the unique needs and requirements of GU as outlined in this document under "Scope of Work."

3. Knowledge of project requirements clearly explained in firm's proposal under "Approach to Scope of Work."

4. Project Costs

Vendors not awarded the work outlined here will be notified by email. The successful vendor will be required to sign a contract with GU in which they accept responsibility for the performance of services as stated in their proposal. After review of the submissions, GU may ask to meet with potential service providers prior to selecting a vendor.

PROVISIONS

Gallaudet University assumes no responsibility and no liability for costs incurred relevant to the preparation and submission of the RFP by prospective vendors, or any other costs prior to issuance of a contract. Gallaudet University reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to choose the company that will best meet the goals and objectives of the institution.