

The General Retirement System of the City of Detroit
Request for Proposal
Media Relations and Communications Consultant

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

A. Company Overview

The Board of Trustees of the General Retirement System of the City of Detroit is seeking qualified applications for the position of Media Relations and Communications Consultant. The successful candidate or firm will provide public relations, communications and media consulting services.

B. Background

The General Retirement System of the City of Detroit (GRS, the “Plan” or the “System”) was established in 1938 under the authority of the 1918 Detroit City Charter. The Plan is designed to authorize benefits for all active and retired City of Detroit employees (except uniformed Police and Fire employees). The current provisions of the System are set forth in the Combined Plan for the General Retirement System of the City of Detroit (the “Combined Plan”) as amended and restated effective July 1, 2014 and approved by the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Michigan as part of the Plan for the Adjustment of Debts of the City of Detroit, Michigan (the “Plan of Adjustment”). This Combined Plan document replaced in its entirety Chapter 47 of the Detroit City Code as in effect on June 30, 2014 and incorporates the provisions of the GRS Investment Committee Term Sheet (“GRS IC Term Sheet”) as contained within the Plan of Adjustment. All previously adopted resolutions and policies of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of the System which were inconsistent with the provisions of the Combined Plan were also repealed to the extent of such inconsistency. A copy of the Combined Plan document can be found on the System’s website at www.rscd.org.

The System is a governmental plan under Section 414(d) of the Internal Revenue Code and is a qualified plan and trust pursuant to applicable provisions of the Internal Revenue Code. The investment of Plan assets are governed by the provisions of the Combined Plan and the Public Employee Retirement System Investment Act (Michigan Public Act 314 of 1965, as amended; MCL §38.1132 et seq.); (“Act 314”).

The Plan is administered by a 10-member Board of Trustees (the “Board”) that is vested with the responsibility for the general administration, management, and operation of the System and with the trust and investment powers conferred under the Plan Document. The investment of Plan assets is also overseen by a seven-member Investment Committee (the “IC”) which was created under the Plan of Adjustment for the purpose of making recommendations to the Board with respect to all investment and financial matters of the System. All members of the Board and the IC are investment fiduciaries under the provisions of Act 314. The Plan authorizes benefits for members of the General Retirement Systems of Detroit which consists of all active and retired City of Detroit employees (except uniformed Police and Fire employees).

C. Scope of Work

Core activities may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Press release development and distribution
- Media/analyst relations
- Press materials
- Executive briefing materials
- Member Relations and Communications Consultant
- Develop a strategic member relations plan and crisis communication when disseminating difficult information
- Develop member communications brochures and newsletters
- Identify, draft and submit responses to print and electronic media stories and articles
- Assist in the development and coordination of educational meetings and workshops with the public, GRS members and beneficiaries
- Website and Social Media Consultant
- Event Planning
- Provide training to Board members and key staff members on how to respond to the media

D. Agency Selection Criteria

- Knowledge of, and experience in, our industry
- Knowledge of communicating with governmental employees, retirees, public boards and governmental agencies
- An excellent reputation and strong relationships with industry peers
- Successful editorial coverage in leading business, news, and industry-specific media
- Strong writing skills across multiple mediums
- Team credentials
- No competitive client conflicts
- Client and press references

SECTION II: PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

A. Minimum Qualifications

- Applicants must have a minimum of 5-7 years of experience providing media, communications and member relations consulting services to public boards or government agencies
- Firm should have an excellent working relationship with local, state, and national media outlets
- Applicants should possess strong writing and public speaking skills
- Applicants must be able to provide the following professional communications services:
 - Design/lay out a variety of print and electronic technical and informational publications including newsletters, MS PowerPoint presentations

brochures, website graphics and pages, and other communications-related material

- Crisis communication, media, public relations expertise
- Focus groups and member surveys
- Applicants must be able to work independently and as part of a group that may include technical content experts
- Applicants must have some project management and event planning skills to assist with the coordination of town hall meetings with the members of the system

B. Preparation of Proposal

Format for Proposal

The proposal must be organized and indexed in the following format:

- Letter of Transmittal
- Responses to the Questionnaire
- Additional Documents and Materials
- Fees

C. Cancellation of RFP

GRS reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time, and to reject any and all proposals submitted in response to this RFP if GRS determines such action or actions are in its best interest. This RFP in no manner obligates GRS to the eventual procurement of services until confirmed by a written contract. Progress toward this end is solely at the discretion of GRS and may terminate at any time prior to the signing of a contract.

D. Submission of Proposal

The deadline for submission of the proposal is August 31, 2017 before 4pm. Please submit one (1) complete electronic copy and five (5) additional paper copies of the proposal to:

Lamonica Cabean
Assistant Executive Director
General Retirement System of the City of Detroit
500 Woodward, Ave. Suite 3000
Detroit MI 48226
Email: Lcabean@rscd.org

A proposal may be withdrawn and resubmitted prior to the proposal deadline. All costs incurred in the preparation, submission and/or presentation of the proposal shall be the sole responsibility of the applicant.

E. Timeline for Search and Selection Process

- July 14, 2017 RFP published and posted on the website: www.rscd.org
- August 11, 2017 Deadline for submission of questions concerning the RFP
- August 21, 2017 Responses to written questions published
- August 31, 2017 Deadline for submission of proposals

F. Inquiries and Communication

Except as authorized in this RFP, effective as of the RFP Notice Date and prior to the time of a decision by the Selection Committee and the subsequent closing of this RFP proceeding, there shall be no communication of any type regarding this RFP.

GRS Board trustees and staff adhere to a code of conduct policy and shall not accept any gifts, favors, or services from any current or prospective service provider that the Board member or staff knows has responded to a Request for Proposal (RFP) from GRS. Furthermore, each and every member of the Board shall refrain from any discussion with any current or prospective service provider, who is a finalist in the selection process, regarding the RFP outside of an open public meeting, other than as a part of a regularly scheduled interview during the selection process.

G. Questions and Requests for Clarifications

Applicants may submit written questions and requests for clarifications regarding the RFP. The questions and requests for clarifications must be in writing and submitted by August 11, 2017 before 4pm. Oral questions will not be permitted. Written responses to questions, requests for clarifications, or suggestions will be posted on the RSCD website.

The General Retirement System assumes no responsibility for verbal representations made by its offices or employees unless such representations are confirmed in writing and incorporated into the RFP.

H. Amendment or Withdrawal of Service Proposal

The applicant may amend its service proposal at any time before the service proposals are due. The amendment must be received in writing (hard copy) and by email and received by the deadline for the receipt of service proposals. Faxed amendments will not be accepted.

Applicants who submit proposals in advance of the deadline may withdraw, modify, and resubmit proposals at any time prior to the deadline for submitting proposals. Applicants must submit written notification if they wish to withdraw their proposals.

I. Submission of Service Proposals

- GRS must receive the service proposal at the address identified in Section II Part D before the deadline listed in Section II Part E. This is a mandatory requirement and will not be waived by GRS.
- Any service proposal received after this deadline will not be considered.
- Applicants mailing service proposals must allow ample delivery time to ensure timely receipt of their service proposals. Faxed service proposals will not be accepted.
- Applicants must furnish all information necessary to evaluate the service proposal.
- Verbal information provided by the applicant will not be considered part of the applicant's service proposal

J. Rejection of Service Proposals

- GRS reserves the right to reject without penalty any or all service proposals received in response to this RFP at any time prior to the execution of a written contract.
- Issuance of this RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by GRS to award a contract.
- The objective of this RFP is to provide applicants with the information necessary to prepare a competitive service proposal.
- This RFP process is intended to provide GRS with competitive information to assist in the selection of a Consultant. It is not intended to be comprehensive and each applicant is responsible for determining all factors necessary for submission of a comprehensive service proposal.

K. Reference Checks

GRS reserves the right to contact any reference listed by the applicant. References may be contacted to assist in the evaluation of the service proposal, to verify information contained in the service proposal, and to discuss the applicant's qualifications or that of any sub-contractors.

L. Release of Claims

By submitting a service proposal, the applicant agrees that it will not bring any claim or cause of action against GRS based on any misunderstanding concerning the information provided within the RFP or concerning GRS failure, negligent or otherwise, to provide the applicant with pertinent information as intended by this RFP.

SECTION III: INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED

A. Letter of Transmittal

The individual(s) who is (are) authorized to bind the applicant contractually must sign a cover letter, which will be considered an integral part of the proposal. This cover letter must indicate the signer is so authorized and must indicate the title or position that the signer holds in the applicant's firm. An unsigned cover letter may cause the proposal to be rejected. The cover letter must contain a statement that the firm acknowledges that all documents submitted pursuant to this request for proposal process will become a matter of public record. The letter must also contain the following:

1. The applicant's name, address, telephone and fax number
2. The name, title or position, telephone number and email address of the individual signing the cover letter
3. A statement indicating the signature is authorized to bind the applicant contractually
4. The name, title or position, and telephone number of the primary contact for the proposal, if different from the individual signing the cover letter.
5. A statement to the effect that the proposal is a firm and irrevocable offer good for twelve (12) months.

6. A statement expressing the applicant's availability of staff and other required resources for performing all services and providing all deliverables specified within.
7. A statement to the effect that the applicant meets the Minimum Qualifications for the Proposal set out in this RFP.

B. Questionnaire

Name and Contact Information

1. What is the current name of the firm?
 - a. If the name has changed, what was the previous name?
 - b. What was the original name of the firm when it was founded?
2. Please provide the following information on the firm:
Address of head office:
Phone Number:
Firm's Internet (www) Address:
3. Please provide the following information on the primary RFP contact for the firm:
Name:
Title:
Phone Number:
Facsimile Number:
Email Address:

Agency Overview

1. Please provide a brief overview of your agency history
2. Please provide an in-depth list of your agency capabilities
3. Describe how your agency differentiates itself from your competitors

Client Related Questions and Requests

1. Please provide a current client list
2. Please list the clients that your organization lost in the last two years and the reason
3. What is the average term a client works with your agency?
4. Do you have any clients that might pose a conflict to managing our account?
5. Please provide a sample of reports that you typically generate for your clients (for example media coverage, monthly activity report, etc.)
6. Vendor references
 - a) Show examples of previous work
 - b) Provide client references
 - c) List awards and special certifications

Account Team Related Questions

1. Describe the team structure and how resources would be allocated to us
2. Please provide brief bios for the team you would assign to our account and identify the team leader

3. Please provide client references for the PR representatives
4. Who would be responsible for managing timelines and budgets?
5. How do you handle staff turnover on accounts and what role do you typically want/allow the client to play in this process?
6. How are new account team members' brought up to speed on the account?
7. Describe all subcontracts and associations, if any, with other firms your firm proposed to utilize in the performance of this work. Explain the intended working relationships and responsibilities of each of these firms.
8. Will a single point of contact person be provided to serve as GRS's liaison to your firm?

Industry Experience Related Questions

1. Describe your experience with similar clients
2. Please provide a case study demonstrating your familiarity with municipal or public funds

Program Related Questions

1. Please propose what your agency thinks should be our representative objectives, strategy and tactics and describe how you would propose to address the General Communications Needs and the Program's Audiences based on your suggestions.

Budget Related Questions

1. Please quote your fees for each of the following: retainer, per hour, and per project basis. Tell us your preference.
2. Provide a recommendation based on your knowledge of our system's needs.
3. Please suggest an annual cost of services and a budget that would encompass the program components listed above on a yearly basis and describe how you would allocate resources in accordance with that budget

Litigation and Insurance

1. Has the firm, or any officer, principal, or employee of the firm, ever been involved in any business litigation or other legal proceeding? If so, please explain and indicate the current status of the litigation?
2. Does the firm, or any officer, principal, or employee of the firm, have any lawsuits pending against it concerning the delivery of communications, consulting or related services for any client? If yes, please explain.

Miscellaneous Questions

1. Describe the firm's practice in starting a new account. What is your role? What do you need/expect us to do?
2. What do you feel makes for a successful client/agency relationship?
3. Add any additional items you believe are relevant to the management and execution of this program.