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## **Request for Proposal (RFP) Communications and Social Media Services**

**RFP Release Date: January 5, 2022**

### **OVERVIEW**

NSITE, an enterprise of National Industries for the Blind (NIB) requests a proposal describing your company's ability to provide a variety of communications and media relations services. These services are needed to supplement and support the activities of NSITE's communications team in the following areas:

- Communications strategy and planning
- Branding
- Message development
- Media relations
- Strategic and responsive support for reputation and crisis management
- Social media
- Strategic initiative support
- Writing, editing, and strategic communications

### **ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND**

NSITE officially launched January 1, 2021, with the goal of expanding employment opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired and veterans. We work with employers across the country to address core talent management issues that focus on talent recruitment and onboarding and fostering DEI in the workplace. As a new enterprise, NSITE is looking for an agency who has experience working with startups and who can develop unique and creative ideas to expand the NSITE brand awareness, storytelling narrative, and business/societal impact that will ensure market growth.

Our mission: Through talent development, diversity awareness training, and job placement services, NSITE is the go-to consultancy for talented people who are blind or visually impaired and corporate leadership to come together to substantially reduce the unemployment rate for this untapped workforce.

Our vision: To create the premier corporate consultancy that specializes in talent development, outsourcing, and job placement to businesses in the United States supporting people who blind, visually impaired, and/or veterans.

NSITE has an array of professional workforce training programs to enhance individual's skills and career opportunities. We work with employers throughout the United States. More information NSITE can be found on our [website](#).

Additionally, we have social media presence on both [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

## KEY STRATEGIC CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### **Lack of awareness about the capabilities of people who are blind**

Seven out of ten working age Americans who are blind are not employed. There continue to be misconceptions about the capabilities of people who are blind in the workplace. NSITE is focused on changing those misconceptions to build meaningful careers for people who are blind. With the advancement of accessible technology, people who are blind can perform any job if given the right training and opportunity. In efforts to combat misconceptions and lack of awareness, a strong foundation and regular execution of positive coverage with key messaging about NSITE and the individuals who are successfully employed is required.

### **Position NSITE as an industry leader**

Explore tactics to enhance and build upon NSITE's positive success stories to position the organization as an industry leader in the realm of professional training and employment opportunities for people who are blind. Key priority is demonstrating NSITE's value to the disability community, employers/businesses, key stakeholders, and beyond. Opportunities include NSITE's evolving innovative professional training programs, positioning NSITE's executive director as an industry expert, and highlighting NSITE's impact on private/public workforces with regard to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.

## KEY TARGET AUDIENCES

- People who are blind and/or veterans seeking employment or professional training services
- Corporate and government employers
- Disability community and other organizations serving people who are blind (e.g., State Vocational Rehabilitation offices, National Federation of the Blind and American Council of the Blind, etc.)
- Veteran Organizations and Community
- General public
- Federal government agencies
  - Senior-level decision makers – *those responsible for establishing policy, making hiring and contract decisions, and allocated resources within their agencies.*
  - End-users – *users of NSITE's products and services. Could be any of the above, or not.*
- Hiring managers
- Professional Associations serving industry professionals, e.g., SHRM, ATD, etc.
- Unknown out of the box audiences that can expand NSITE's branding and foothold in the corporate community and in the BVI community as a leader.

## SCOPE OF WORK

**Branding.** Expand on existing branding and develop a strong positive perception of NSITE. Ensuring that we are aligning what we want people to think about NSITE with what people think about NSITE.

**Communications strategy and planning.** Develop strategic communication strategies and plans to advance NSITE's mission, address key focus areas, and address industry and market competitors. Advise the NSITE executive director on a variety of communications issues. Craft recommended approaches of how to position and message issues relevant to NSITE, pros and cons of media strategies, etc.

**Message development.** As part of other strategic communication deliverables and initiatives, develop key messages for multiple audiences, including core messaging relevant to a wide variety of engagements, and tailored, targeted messaging specific to a particular engagement, issue, or initiative. An example is a specific focus on veterans-related messaging.

**Media relations.** Secure media coverage in various national- and local-level outlets and trade publications to help differentiate NSITE in the marketplace and as an industry leader. Develop media briefs and prep spokespeople as needed and help brand NSITE in a unique manner.

**Social media.** Support social media activities including planning, goal development, content creation, and measurement. NSITE currently has a growing social media presence and active follower base and is looking to strengthen and expand its social media program. The agency must plan and execute a comprehensive social media program that complements and supports NSITE's overarching strategic communications goals. The agency will develop social media content for use on NSITE's social channels, including post copy and creative. The agency will conduct a comprehensive social media audit and develop an annual social media strategy with measurable goals, and compile monthly analytics reports for all social media channels. The agency will also review and analyze NSITE's existing social media program and provide actionable recommendations to consistently improve performance.

**Strategic initiatives support.** Provide communications planning and execution in support of other NSITE strategic initiatives, including marketing and branding campaigns, special events, and other related activities.

**Writing, editing, and strategic communications.** Provide writing and editing services for a variety of communication products, including press releases, media advisories, social media, blog posts, LinkedIn articles, website copy, and more. Also provide writing and editing services for high-visibility strategic communications products, including op-eds, holding statements, letters and memos to key stakeholders, and other products used to communicate key messages or address other strategic issues, challenges, and opportunities. Many of these deliverables will require quick turnaround times; immediate access to a professional writing and editing staff will be critical.

## **PROPOSAL CONTENTS**

Please provide the following information in response to this RFP.

### **1) Company Overview**

Provide an overview of your organization, including:

- Name and location of your organization
- Location of the office that will be serving NSITE
- Number of years your company has been in business
- Description of agency's areas of specialization and how they can be applied to NSITE
- Experience working with nonprofits
- Any experience in creating accessible/508 compliant materials
- Is your company a subsidiary of another corporation? If so, what is the name of the parent company?

### **2) Past Performance**

Provide specific examples of work relevant to those proposed above for recent clients. Looking for examples of:

- Media relations – securing media coverage in corporate, HR Trade, federal government, military, and consumer publications
- Message development and strategic execution
- Communications campaign planning
- Social media – including approach to both paid and organic posts, use of influencers, graphic design capabilities, and KPIs used to measure success

Also requesting three recent client references.

- The name, location, and contact reference of the client
- The date range of services provided
- A detailed description of the type of work performed. Include specific examples of how your agency's efforts led to success for these clients.

### **3) Staffing Plan**

Provide a detailed staffing plan, including:

- List of staff members who will be supporting NSITE
- Description of each staff members' qualifications, years at agency, job title, experience, and areas of expertise

- Description of each staff members' role on the NSITE account and an estimated percentage of how much of the workload will be performed by each staff member

#### **4) Management Plan**

Describe how your company will manage tasks and deliverables, including:

- How deliverables will be tracked
- How project status will be reported to the NSITE team
- A description of the firm's availability to participate in meetings with NSITE staff in the Alexandria, Virginia area

#### **5) Fee Structure and Cost**

Describe your proposed billing model including:

- A description of how your organization will charge NSITE
- Schedule of fees
- A description of how incidental costs will be billed

### **VENDOR SELECTION**

Proposals should be emailed to Rikki Howie, NIB Workforce Development Specialist, at [rhowie@nsite.org](mailto:rhowie@nsite.org).

**Proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. (ET) Friday, February 11, 2022.**

### **RFP SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES**

**RFP Release:** January 10, 2022

**Deadline for questions:** January 21, 2022

**Responses circulated among all submitters:** January 26, 2022

**RFP submittal deadline:** February 16, 2022

**Notification to finalists:** No later than March 4, 2022

**Interviews for finalists:** March 7 – March 16, 2022

**Finalize and sign contract:** By March 30, 2022

**Work begins:** April 1, 2022

***\*Note timeline may be accelerated after the February 16<sup>th</sup> submittal deadline.***

### **QUESTIONS ON RFP**

Written questions regarding the RFP should be directed by email only to Rikki Howie at [rhowie@nsite.org](mailto:rhowie@nsite.org).

**The deadline for questions is Wednesday, January 19 at 5:00 p.m. (ET).** Responses to all inquiries will be shared with all agencies. No phone questions will be accepted or answered.

**Please note:**

- Interviews with finalists will be conducted at NSITE headquarters or virtually with key NSITE team members including the executive director.

## **TERM OF CONTRACT**

The initial term of any contract resulting from this RFP will commence 30 days after announcement of the award and will last for a one-year period. The parties thereto shall have the option to extend the contract. Said option to extend will only be exercised upon satisfactory performance and by mutual consent of both parties.

If relevant, provide sample documents required by your company for the execution of a contract resulting from award of this proposal. Any resultant contract award shall incorporate the contents of this RFP as well as the awarded vendor's response. Please note that all proposals should include any applicable warranties of service and should also include proposed language for termination procedures. Termination procedures shall include the following statement: "NSITE reserves the right to cancel the agreement without cause, with 30 days written notice."