



Questions and Answers Regarding Request for Qualifications: Media Relations/Planning Services, Media Training, and Thought Leadership Planning and Placement Services

The following questions were submitted by the deadline of December 11, 2019:

1. Are we able to submit qualifications for select scope of services? Or, is it required to prepare a response addressing all three categories?

Firms are allowed and encouraged to apply for any of the three scope of service included within the RFQ and are more than welcome to apply to all three if they feel they are capable of meeting the needs of all three areas of service.

2. How many special events, ribbon cuttings, etc. are planned for 2020?

At the current time we have relatively firm dates for 15 to 20 special events over the course of 2020. That said, we have several projects in the works that will also likely involve public meetings or special events.

3. Do you have an estimate on the number of press releases, pitches, etc. for 2020?

We expect to have more than 20 events or programs that our team will be pitching to the media in 2020, and with the assistance of our selected vendor would like to identify other non-event based opportunities for media placements. That said, we would expect the total number of press releases, pitches to be between 20 and 30 over the course of the year. (Note that Great Rivers Greenway staff will be responsible for pitching the press releases.)

4. How many media training classes are estimated in 2020? How many participants do you expect in each class?

We only anticipate holding one media training workshop, which all staff will participate in. This opportunity will also be made available to Great Rivers Greenway and Great Rivers Greenway Foundation board members. We expect 30 to 45 participants in this class.

5. Can you define “placemaking?”

Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach of taking an area, typically some kind of public space, and re-imagining that space through design and programming to elevate its use and usability, making it a more desirable place for the community to gather, thereby strengthening human connections. It is a highly collaborative process built upon a foundation of community involvement.

6. What prompted the agency search?

Great Rivers Greenway had issued a RFQ for Public Relations services in 2018, which many outstanding firms responded to. However, over the course of 2019 we came to realize that the areas which we wanted to pursue in 2020 and beyond fell outside of the

scope of what we had previously procured for. While many of the firms we had previously interviewed and worked with would have likely been able to take on these tasks, we were also cognizant of the fact that this revised scope might be a fit for vendors that were not a fit for our 2018 RFQ and chose not to reply at that time. As stewards of the tax payer's dollars, we want to provide the opportunity for as many vendors to participate in district opportunities as possible. As such, we felt it was consistent with our own procurement best practices to issue a new RFQ for 2020.

7. We work with clients of all sizes – some big and some very small (but great.) So that we can bring you cases studies that are similar in size and scope of your project, can you give us some parameters?

We have budgeted approximately \$45,000 for the three services highlighted in the RFQ, with an estimated \$15,000 for PR support, \$25,000 for thought leadership, and \$3,000 for media training.

8. If you can see yourself sitting here in Dec. 2020 bragging what an amazing partner we've been, what did we accomplish?

You have done amazing things, and elevated the regional conversation about our organization and the things we are doing to make the region a more vibrant place to live, work and play.

9. Can companies from Outside USA can apply for this?

Yes, you can. However, as we are a publicly funded organization priority will be given to Missouri-based firms.

10. Do we need to come over there for meetings?

Yes, periodic in-person meetings will be required at the Great Rivers Greenway offices.

11. Can we submit the proposals via email?

Yes, that is the preferred method for submission.

12. What are your organizational goals | KPIs for this program?

Our organization's goal is an elevation of public knowledge of Great Rivers Greenway and our work throughout the St. Louis region. We have not established any key performance indicators but would work with selected vendors to determine which indicators could/should be implemented to measure success.

13. How will you define success?

We have not established any key measurable for success, but our general goal is to have more people know about who we are and what we do, and in turn support and champion our work throughout the region.

14. Is there currently an incumbent agency/individual who is working on similar projects?

Depends upon which project in the RFQ you are referring to. We are currently working with an agency that has been assisting us with public relations. However we are not currently working with any firms or agencies for thought leadership or media relations training.

15. How many firms/individuals have been invited to participate in this RFP?

This RFQ is open to all qualified and interested firms/individuals, and has been publicly advertised and shared with all vendors who have requested to receive updates about job and bid opportunities from Great Rivers Greenway.

16. What are the marketing communications resources currently in place?

Great Rivers Greenway has three staff members that work in the area of marketing and communications. The organization also works with many outside vendors that provide additional support in the areas of marketing, graphic design, photography and video production.

17. How important is having government and public agency experience in awarding this RFP?

While government and public sector experience is appreciated it is by no means a requirement and it will be of relatively minor importance in the overall decision making process.

18. How will the account be managed on a day-to-day basis? Who will be involved in decision making?

For public relations, we do not expect the selected vendor to provide day to day management. While the vendor will be involved in the creation of the strategy and will provide periodic consultation over the course of the year, the day to day tasks of media outreach and management will be managed by Great Rivers Greenway staff. In the area of thought leadership, we are looking for a vendor that can take on the day to day management of all work in this area.

19. What role, if any, will your 12-member board have in this work?

Our board provides oversight of all our work and guidance as necessary but will not be involved in these efforts on a regular basis.

20. What is the duration of this engagement?

The selected vendor will be offered a one year contract, which may be renewed on an annual basis up to a maximum of three years. At that point in time, the scope of work would again be up for procurement and a new RFQ would be issued.

21. What have you spent previously on similar projects?

This is not a question we can accurately answer, as the scopes of service we are seeking are outside of what we have done in the past. Some are new and some are scaled down from past efforts.

22. We noticed that the Women's Business Development Center (WBDC) was not listed as one of the WBE certifying agencies. Does that mean that our WBE certification through WBDC will not be recognized? We are currently a registered supplier with one of your listed local agencies.

The certifying agencies listed are the ones we typically use for certification on construction projects and particularly projects which involve the use of federally granted

funds. However, because all work related to this RFQ would fall outside those areas, we are able to consider WBE certifications from other boards, such as the WBDC. We apologize for any confusion.

23. What are Great Rivers Greenway's (GRG) primary goals for 2020 and the foreseeable future?

In regards to this RFQ we are seeking to heighten awareness of our organization, our work, and the expertise of our team. We want to elevate the general understanding about Great Rivers Greenway and the impact we are making throughout the St. Louis region.

24. What communication objectives are you looking to achieve for this scope of work?

We are looking to further stimulate the regional conversation about greenways and their economic, social and environmental benefits to the region. We do not have specific measurable goals in mind at this point, though we would be open to establishing key performance indicator goals with the assistance and input of the selected vendor.

25. What are your priority target audiences? Secondary audiences?

We have identified several key demographic audiences that are priorities for all our marketing, public relations, promotional and programming efforts. These are baby boomers, families with young children, civic minded millennials, environmentally conscious citizens, and greenway enthusiasts. As a secondary audience, we would like to elevate the level of awareness of our organization within the corporate and philanthropic communities.

26. What do you feel the perception of GRG is with your primary target audiences?

In general there is some level of awareness of us through our various existing greenway segments or projects. There is definitely high levels of affinity for the greenways that people know, but there is a general lack of understanding of who the organization is overall and the broad spectrum of work that we do.

27. Do you have any recent research that gets to the perceptions and/or awareness of GRG that you are able to share regarding target audience demographics and/or psychographics?

A research study was conducted in 2017 that provided us with some general awareness and sentiment data from around the region. We also just completed a follow up research study and will have results from that survey in a few weeks.

28. Are there any peer organization you would like to emulate / be more like from a communications standpoint, in terms of stakeholders' awareness, engagement or brand affinity? If so, why?

No. We have not set our sights on emulating any other organizations.

29. 2020 will mark an important year for GRG with your 20th anniversary. Are there any plans or special events already in motion to mark this significant milestone for the organization? Fundraising initiatives?

We will definitely be doing some things, though we do not know what precisely those things will be as of yet.

30. Outside of your 20th anniversary, what are your top priorities and biggest initiatives or events you're planning for 2020?

We will be launching a new events series in 2020, and will also be expanding our existing outdoors festival to hold multiple events. We also see one big ribbon cutting celebration in 2020 and will have many public engagement opportunities to gather feedback on upcoming projects and updates to our regional plan.

31. What messages that you've recently been communicating do you feel are resonating the most with your target audiences? What important messages might not be resonating?

That is not a question we can adequately answer at this time.

32. In terms of media relations and thought leadership, what has been working well, and what are some of your greatest challenges or missed opportunities?

Up to this point we have had a decent amount of success in utilizing public relations channels to promote event related messages. We have had good coverage of events and activities, but we would like to be able to transition our media coverage from sharing dates and places to sharing ideas and concepts. We want to pull more of the curtain back and share with the world what Great Rivers Greenway really is, and place more of a highlight on the incredibly talented people within the organization that are working day to day to make the region a better place to live, work and play.

33. What skill sets or experience are you looking for in your next PR partner?

Because we intend to maintain the day-to-day operations of our public relations efforts, we are looking for a partner that can provide strategic expertise. A partner that can help help us craft pitches around ideas not events. A firm that can make introductions and open doors, offer suggestions and guidance, and can assist as needed. We would like to be more organized and forward thinking with our PR efforts and want a partner who can help us towards that goal.

34. Would you need extra support, beyond media relations, around the organization's events?

Potentially yes. Not for all events, but for a few of the larger events we may want someone there to help identify media and assist in the fielding of their questions or requests.

35. Against your priority needs, how are you planning to evaluate your PR partner's success?

That has not yet been determined, but metrics for success will be established in conjunction with the chosen vendor.