



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING CONSULTATION SERVICES

The City of Valdez seeks proposals from experienced consulting firms interested in providing professional strategic communications planning services.

The deadline for submission of proposals is **March 3, 2023**.

A. INTRODUCTION

The City of Valdez Communications Department is interested in developing an external and internal strategic communication plan for the City using research to identify communications priorities, effectiveness in customer reach, brand recognition and perceptions, and strategic goals and objectives to guide the City's internal and external communications over the next 3-5 years.

B. OBJECTIVES

- Establish short-term (3 – 5 years) Communications priorities and goals.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities between the Communications Director and departments.
- Develop consistent and collaborative project intake and management processes to ensure a more consistent and manageable workflow.
- Identify Communications team staffing and resource needs.
- Increase the City's communication effectiveness by engaging the Communications Director's expertise and guidance early and often in significant work efforts.
- Unite the community and City brands and create a unified brand.
- Increase the use of consistent, clear, and recognizable messaging and branding for all City communications.
- Use data collection, reporting, analysis, and horizon-scanning to improve communications effectiveness and reach within the community and report on progress in achieving strategic goals.

C. IDEAL CANDIDATE

The selected communications planning firm will have the following:

- Broad experience in providing strategic communications planning and related services to municipalities and other governmental entities, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, or civic organizations.

- Advanced degrees in communications, marketing, statistics and quantitative methods, socioeconomic and demographic research, and appropriate industry-recognized certification and association memberships.
- Well-rounded portfolios of innovative project examples demonstrate the creativity, quality, and diversity necessary to perform the stated scope of services successfully.
- Excellent project management and relationship development skills. Ability to work cooperatively with diverse organizations and community stakeholders.
- Autonomy and independence from customer relationship management (CRM) system manufacturers, vendors, and/or implementation consultants.

D. DELIVERABLES

Research external stakeholders and audiences

Purpose: To gain a measurable, projectable assessment of the views of the overall population, gain an understanding of the perceptions of key audiences, generate buy-in through their early participation, develop an inventory of all relevant communication tools, and gain an accurate external perception of the City's operations and communications.

- Interview, survey, and/or conduct focus groups to hear “the voice of the customer” to include:
 - Residents
 - Local businesses
 - Coast Guard
 - Local non-profits

Research internal stakeholders

Purpose: To understand how issues are perceived by City leadership and key staff.

Research city employees

Purpose: To gain a quantitative and qualitative assessment of employee perceptions of the city's communications channels and processes.

Provide a summary report of research findings, including an analysis of level-of-service requirements.

Conduct a Materials Review/Communications Audit

Purpose: To analyze existing tools, including message consistency, appearance, communications effectiveness, and representation of all employees and all community segments.

- Review of existing internal and external communication tools
- Review and analysis of the external facing communication activities, materials, procedures, and practices of City departments outside of the Communication Department
- Provide a summary report of the findings

Integrate the community and city brands

Purpose: To create a cohesive and consistent brand identity throughout the city.

- Develop brand guidelines that connect both brands.

- Create brand guidelines for Ports and Harbors, Economic Development, and Parks and Recreation departments utilizing the integrated brands with an emphasis on the community brand.

Develop a three- to five-year strategic communications plan

Purpose: To provide a blueprint for future communications activities to reach and hear external and internal audiences in the most creative ad efficient manner possible.

- Develop an external and internal strategic communications plan with goals, priorities, timelines, budget, and a comprehensive roll-out strategy
- Develop results measurement for the plan and reporting tool
- Recommend a systemic approach to data collection, reporting, analysis, and horizon-scanning to improve communications effectiveness, reach within the community, and report on progress in achieving strategic goals.

Provide a summary report and presentation of the project and the recommendations

E. INSTRUCTION TO PROPOSERS

PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN THE SEQUENCE LISTED BELOW:

1. A letter of interest (a maximum of three pages) outlining your qualifications for this contract and your availability in the timeframe outlined in this RFP.
2. A list of relevant work samples, including documentation (such as a report or plan) for one project in which you played a significant role. This can be a web link or a printed document. Specify your role and the date of the project.
3. Current resume, at most five pages, including name, address, phone number, email address, and website for lead roles in your proposal.
4. Three (3) references who can speak to your eligibility for this project. Please provide each reference's name, title, address, email, and current daytime telephone.

F. SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Method of approach to Scope of Work	25
Previous experience on similar projects	20
Cost Proposal	15
The expertise of key personnel to be used on the project	25
Work Samples	15
Total possible score	100

G. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Respondents assume the risk of any delay in email. Any RFP received after the designated time will not be considered.
2. Any errors discovered after the RFP submission deadline must remain and cannot be adjusted.

3. It is the sole responsibility of the respondent to ensure that they have received the most current RFP and addenda.
4. It shall be the responsibility of each respondent to call to the attention of the City any apparent discrepancy in the RFP or any questions or interpretations. Failure to do so constitutes acceptance as written.
5. The proposal, as presented, must remain valid for ninety (90) days from the due date.
6. The City of Valdez reserves the right to reject all proposals or to request and obtain supplementary information from one or more respondents that may be necessary for the City to analyze the proposals under the consultant selection criteria contained herein.
7. The City reserves the right to revise or amend the RFP by written addenda before the proposal's due date.
8. The respondent, by submitting a response to this RFP, waives all right to protest or seek legal remedies regarding any aspect of this RFP.
9. The successful respondent will be asked to sign a Contract with the City; the City will not sign any company's service agreement, contract, or other forms of agreement. The City does reserve the right to extract specific language from a company's agreement and insert it into the City contract if agreeable to both parties.
10. The City reserves the right to negotiate with the selected respondent(s) the exact terms and conditions of the contract or agreement.
11. The contract resulting from the acceptance of the submittal by the City shall be in a form supplied by the City and shall reflect the specifications in this RFP.
12. The insurance certificate is required, as detailed herein, and shall be submitted upon award notification.
13. All RFP documents are public records and subject to public disclosure.
14. The successful applicant must comply with all Federal, State, and City of Valdez statutes and codes as may apply to the scope of work detailed herein, including all labor laws.
15. The City shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by the respondent in preparing, submitting, or presenting its response to the RFP.
16. Current minimum prevailing wage rates, as the Alaska Department of Labor published, must be paid if the law requires it.
17. Requirements of the Alaska Employment Preference (AS 36.10) must be met, as well as all other applicable sections of Title 36 and other required federal laws.
18. The City of Valdez encourages disadvantaged, minority, and women-owned firms to respond and is available to assist said firms in learning how to do business with the City.

19. All respondents shall obtain and produce, upon request, a license to do business in the City of Valdez before executing their contract with the City.

H. CONTRACT AND COMPENSATION

The City will select a minimum of one (1) consultant for this contract. The selected consultant will be required to enter into a professional services agreement with the City for six (6) months. The contract may be renewed for an additional time, providing that the contract has stayed within the not-to-exceed contract amount. The Administration Department has budgeted \$50,000 for this work.

The City of Valdez's Professional Service Agreement Under 100K, Exhibit A, will be the contract document for these services.

I. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To be considered, a complete proposal package in the format requested must be received by the City of Valdez by **4 P.M. ALASKA STANDARD TIME, FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2023, via the City's Drop Box application.**

To submit an electronic proposal, firms may request access to the Box file by 4 P.M. at least one business day before the submission deadline by emailing wrobertson@valdezak.gov.

No faxed or mailed submittals will be accepted.

The City of Valdez encourages disadvantaged, minority, and women-owned consultant firms to respond. Submissions should meet the criteria outlined in Section E, and firms will submit one (1) proposal electronically through the City's Drop Box application.

The selection process must comply with the procurement requirements of the City to ensure fair and open competition. The selection will be made based on qualifications and price. The City reserves the right to cancel this procurement effort and will not reimburse respondents for any costs of preparation or submission of proposals.

For questions about this RFP, please contact Ana Hinkle via email at ahinkle@valdezak.gov. Questions via telephone will not be accepted.

END OF RFP