



**FRANKLIN COUNTY
CONVENTION FACILITIES
AUTHORITY**

COLUMBUS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

Public Relation, Event Management, and Communication Services

Issued: January 17, 2020

Due: February 7, 2020

Issued By:

Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority
400 North High Street, 4th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
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www.meetusincolumbus.com

The Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority (the "FCCFA") is seeking proposals from firms interested in providing public relation, event management and communication services for the board and staff of the FCCFA. The FCCFA is seeking firms who have extensive experience in providing public relation services similar to the services described in this request for proposals ("RFP").

BACKGROUND

The FCCFA is the owner/developer of the Greater Columbus Convention Center, the Hilton Columbus Downtown Hotel, Nationwide Arena and five supporting parking facilities; all located in downtown Columbus, Ohio. Established by the Franklin County Commissioners in July 1988 pursuant to Chapter 351 of the Ohio Revised Code; the FCCFA is a special governmental unit governed by an eleven-member board appointed by the Franklin County Commissioners, Mayor of Columbus, and suburban mayors.

As owner/developer, the FCCFA is responsible for the improvement, management and successful operation of owned facilities. In addition, the FCCFA is responsible for ensuring the continued success and growth of the convention business within the Greater Columbus community. Both responsibilities are directly linked to the FCCFA's continued investment in and support of services, resources, facilities and community projects that enhance the use and improvement of the convention center, hotel and arena.

Additional information regarding the FCCFA can be found on its website: www.meetusincolumbus.com.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The scope of services requested through this RFP will be for comprehensive public relation and communication services needed to support the board and staff of the FCCFA. The initial agreement will be for a one-year period with opportunities to extend the agreement for an additional four years dependent upon performance. Services will include but are not limited to:

- Plan and facilitate a comprehensive outreach program that will inform and increase public/stakeholder awareness of FCCFA related projects and activities. Develop key messaging for the FCCFA.
- Research, write and edit quarterly electronic newsletters regarding FCCFA related projects and activities. E-blast newsletters to a continually updated distribution list. Monitor success of newsletter, including read rates and distribution list unsubscribe rates. Re-design and/or improve upon newsletter format as necessary to improve performance.
- Assist with messaging and media relations, including:

- Create and manage a process to effectively respond to media inquiries. Provide concise messages, factual data and accurate answers to questions of the media. Ensure rapid and accurate response to deadline news and in-depth stories.
- Proactively identify and create positive news media stories for the FCCFA. Develop at least one story every six months for placement in central Ohio media outlets, to include print and broadcast media.
- Provide communication services as required. Help prepare board and staff members for speaking engagements and interviews. Prepare required talking points, speeches and presentations on an as-needed basis. Prepare “elevator speeches” and talking points for board members on various topics.
- Assist board and staff members with communication during times of crisis. Prepare required written communication, media responses, talking points and speeches as needed.
- Raise the profile of the FCCFA by helping the public better understand what it does, how it functions and what it contributes to the community.
- Periodically refresh the FCCFA’s website content and offer potential updates to and improvements of the site. Help facilitate updates/improvements as may be required. Manage the posting of required notices to the FCCFA’s website as needed. Refine online content for search engine optimization.
- Research and schedule speaking opportunities, awards and recognition, blogger and third-party outreach to further reinforce the FCCFA’s key messaging.
- Collaborate with the FCCFA Board and the FCCFA’s Public Relations Committee to promote the FCCFA through its social media channels, including:
 - Populating the FCCFA’s social media pages with newsworthy developments;
 - Creating content, and sharing videos through the FCCFA’s YouTube page; and
 - Monitoring social media during times of controversy to understand, and respond to, what is being said in the greater Columbus community.
- Edit and distribute the FCCFA’s monthly construction newsletter.
- Manage, plan, and execute milestone events (groundbreakings, facility openings, etc.) as needed. Collaborate with the FCCFA on concepts, timing, guests and location.

- Continue to build relationships with the FCCFA’s community partners, including Experience Columbus, ASM and the Hilton Columbus Downtown with a goal towards developing a unified message and identifying collaborative marketing opportunities. Develop FCCFA brand guidelines to ensure consistency of messaging among partners.
- Research, recommend, and execute digital marketing initiatives.
- Develop a system of key metrics used to measure progress and effectiveness of marketing and outreach initiatives. Provide the FCCFA with a report outlining key metrics and current status towards achieving annual goals.
- Attend regular meetings with the FCCFA’s Executive Director and Public Relations Committee. Periodically meet with the FCCFA’s community partners to review messaging, branding and public engagement. Develop meeting agendas and provide meeting minutes.

SELECTION PROCESS and EVALUATION CRITERIA

The FCCFA will review, evaluate and select a public relations firm whose proposal is “most advantageous”, as determined by the criteria stated in this document and in accordance with law. Evaluation will be made by a group of individuals selected by the FCCFA and will include members of the FCCFA Board and staff (the “Selection Committee”). The Selection Committee will review and evaluate all proposals and will short-list firms for interviews based upon criteria listed below and the requirements of law. Upon conclusion of the interviews and evaluation of proposals, the Selection Committee will recommend approval of the firm deemed “most advantageous” to the full Board.

Proposals submitted by interested parties will be evaluated based upon the criteria listed below. Each criterion will be weighted equally. Only that information which is submitted through the RFP process will be used for evaluation.

Criteria One: Qualifications

The qualifications and competence of the firm to perform the requested services as demonstrated by the technical training, education and experience of proposed team members who would be assigned to perform the work.

Criteria Two: Past Performance

The past performance and ability of the firm to provide the services required by this RFP as demonstrated by review of past projects completed by the firm and by evaluation of previous clients. Emphasis of past review will be placed on quality of work completed; ability to meet objectives and schedules; responsiveness; and resolution of issues/challenges.

Criteria Three: Availability of Resources

The ability of the firm to perform the required services competently and on schedule as demonstrated by the availability and accessibility of experienced personnel and other resources needed to successfully provide the required services.

Criteria Four: Uniqueness

The uniqueness of the firm as demonstrated by the proposed manner and methodology in which the firm will achieve the requirements of this RFP. Evaluation will include a review of the firm's demonstrated knowledge and understanding of required public relation services for entities similar to the FCCFA. Consideration will be given to philosophy as well as unique approaches, resources and experiences that will further improve and ensure the success of the FCCFA's public relations program.

Criteria Five: Knowledge of FCCFA

Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the FCCFA, its facilities, organization, board members, staff, functions, responsibilities and history.

Criteria Six: Price

The competitiveness of the proposed pricing for public relations services.

REQUIRED SUBMITTALS

One original, five copies and one electronic copy of each proposal shall be delivered to the following addressee on or before February 7, 2020 at 4:00 PM EST.

Jordan Edmonds, In-house Counsel
Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority
400 North High Street, Fourth Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Questions regarding this RFP must be submitting in writing to Jordan Edmonds at jedmonds@fccfa.org on or before close of business on January 27, 2020. Responses to all questions submitted prior to the deadline for submittal will be distributed to interested firms on record that have received a copy of this RFP. Responses will be distributed on or before January 29, 2020.

To enable the FCCFA to efficiently evaluate submittals, Respondents should prepare their submittal on 8.5 x 11 paper utilizing the format guidelines described below. Please feel free to include other materials, such as covers, table of contents, transmittal letter, appendices, brochures, etc., at your discretion.

The following outlines the information to be included in each submittal. This outline is not all-inclusive, and information may be added as deemed necessary. Submittals are to be paginated and the section number, title of section, and each sub-part should be clearly identified.

Section I – Firm Description

General information should include, but not be limited to:

1. The name, address, telephone number, fax and email address of an individual who will serve as the firm's contact for any questions or correspondence regarding the RFP process.
2. A certification of accuracy provided by the highest ranking individual responsible for the firm's submittal.
3. A summary highlighting why the firm is uniquely qualified to fulfill the requirements of this RFP.

Section II – Profile & Organization

The profile should include but not be limited to:

1. Information describing the firm's current organization, date of incorporation, ownership, corporate office, number of years in business, size of business, services offered, operating philosophy, number of employees and employee demographics.
2. If applicable, information describing any other participating firm's current organization, date of incorporation, ownership, corporate office, number of years in business, size of business, services offered, operating philosophy, number of employees and employee demographics.
3. Provide an organizational chart and staffing plan for the team who will be working directly with the FCCFA. Identify key members and describe the services, roles and responsibilities of each. Show the relationship of key team members to each other, the prime firm and other member firms. Indicate the availability of key team members.
4. Provide information that describes the firm's current workload as well as outlines the availability of necessary personnel, equipment and resources needed to satisfy the requirements of this RFP.

Section III – Approach

A description of the firm's approach to providing public relations services for the FCCFA. Identify possible challenges and discuss how these challenges will be addressed through the implementation of the requested services. Provide information on how the firm plans to enhance the public perception and visibility of the FCCFA and its operations.

Section IV – Resumes of Key Individuals

Provide professional resumes and job titles for individuals that will be working with the FCCFA; describing each member's education, qualifications, and experience with similar clients.

Section V – Experience

List clients that the firm has worked with during the past five years that are similar in size and function to the FCCFA. The firm's role with each client should be clearly identified as well as the role of individual team members. Information should include a description of services provided; examples of successful strategies implemented that improved outcomes; and unique characteristics of the services provided that resulted in a positive outcome for the client. Include references for each listed client. References should be prepared to be contacted by the RFP Selection Committee.

Section VI – Fee Proposal

Provide a pricing and fee structure for providing the public relation services proposed in this RFP. Provide information that documents the basis for proposed pricing and fees. Also include pricing, if any, for any additional services and reimbursable expenses that are needed but are not covered in the base price/fee.

Section VII – Other Requested Information

Each firm should provide specific information describing their understanding of required services for the project along with a description of any services not provided by the firm. Please include any other pertinent information in this section.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS, NOTIFICATIONS AND INFORMATION

FCCFA's Best Interest – the FCCFA reserves the sole right to (1) evaluate the proposals submitted; (2) waive any irregularities therein; (3) select candidates for the submittal of more detailed proposals; (4) accept any submittal or portion of a submittal; and/or (5) reject any or all responses to the RFP, should it be deemed in the FCCFA's best interest to do so. This RFP is not intended to be an offer, contract, obligation, or commitment of any kind.

Addenda and Modifications – Changes in the specifications or terms and conditions of this RFP may be made in writing by the FCCFA prior to the required due date. Results of informal meetings or discussions between a Respondent and any FCCFA or GCCC official may not be used as a basis for deviations from the requirements contained within this RFP and may subject the Respondent to immediate disqualification.

All addenda, amendments, and interpretations to this RFP shall be in writing. Any amendment or interpretation that is not in writing shall not legally bind the FCCFA. Only information supplied

by the FCCFA in this RFP, or in connection with this RFP, shall be used in preparing submittals. All contact that a Respondent may have had before or after receipt of this RFP with any individuals, employees, or representatives of the FCCFA and any information that may have been read in any news media or seen or heard in any communications regarding this RFP should be disregarded by Respondents in preparing responses to this RFP.

Clarification – the FCCFA reserves the right to conduct discussions with Respondents who submit proposals, or statements of qualifications, for the purpose of clarifications or corrections regarding a submittal to ensure full understanding of, and responsiveness to, the requirements of this RFP.

No Gratuities – Respondents shall not offer any gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value to any official, director or employee of the FCCFA nor its advisors for any purpose or reason that could be construed as influencing the selection process. Any attempt by a Respondent to influence the selection process by any means, other than disclosure of qualifications and credentials through the proper channels, shall be grounds for exclusion from the selection process.

No False Information – Respondents who provide false or misleading information, whether intentional or not, in any of the documents presented to the FCCFA for consideration in the selection process shall be excluded.

Conflicts of Interest – All Respondents must disclose, within their proposal, the name(s) of any officer, director, agents, or immediate family member (spouse, parent, sibling, child) who is also an employee of the FCCFA or ASM Global or have a familial business relationship with any FCCFA director. Further, all proposals must disclose the name of any FCCFA or GCCC employees who own, either directly or indirectly, an interest of 10% or more in the Respondent or any of its affiliates or subcontractors.

Preparation Costs – Under no circumstances will the FCCFA be responsible for any costs incurred by anyone in (a) the submittal of proposals or qualifications, (b) in any subsequent follow-up to the submittal, (c) in any subsequent negotiations of a contract, or (d) in any other aspect of the effort to select the most advantageous Respondent.

Confidentiality – To the extent permitted by law, the FCCFA will make reasonable efforts to safeguard the confidentiality of confidential information submitted in response to this RFP, provided that the information is conspicuously marked “CONFIDENTIAL”. The FCCFA will not be required to defend any litigation seeking disclosure of confidential information. The FCCFA will make reasonable efforts to notify a Respondent to give the Respondent opportunity to defend any request or litigation seeking disclosure.

Note that the wholesale use of headers/footers bearing designations such as “confidential”, “proprietary”, or “trade secret” on all or nearly all of a proposal is not acceptable and may be deemed by the FCCFA as a waiver of any exemption claim. The identification of exempt

information must be sufficiently specific to allow for the FCCFA to identify the exempt data in responding to public records requests.

Public Records – Respondents are hereby notified that all proposals and qualifications, including without limitation, any and all information and documentation submitted therewith, will be available for public inspection after the award of the contract, in compliance with Ohio Revised Code 149 and other applicable public records laws.

By submitting to the FCCFA a document that the Respondent designates as “confidential” or “trade secret”, the Respondent agrees that in the event a third party brings any action against the FCCFA or any of its officials or employees to obtain disclosure of the document, the Respondent will indemnify and hold harmless the FCCFA and any affected officials and employees from all costs, including attorney’s fees incurred by or assessed against any defendant, of defending against such action. The Respondent also agrees that at the FCCFA’s request, the Respondent will intervene in such action and assume all responsibility for defending against it, and that the Respondent’s failure to do so will relieve the FCCFA of all further obligations to protect the confidentiality of the document. The FCCFA assumes no responsibility for disclosure or use of unmarked data for any purposes.

FCCFA Policies and Ordinances – Respondents should be aware of and therefore familiar with all pertinent ordinances and policies that will relate to contracting with the FCCFA. In the event of any inconsistency or conflict between the process of requirements set forth in this RFP and FCCFA policies and ordinances, or other requirements of law, such policies, ordinances, or other requirements shall take precedence.

Right of Refusal – the FCCFA reserves the right to reject any proposal in which the Respondent takes exception to the terms and conditions of this RFP; fails to meet the terms and conditions of this RFP, including but not limited to, the standards, specifications, and requirements specified in this RFP.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority (“FCCFA”) is committed to equal opportunity and non-discrimination in all aspects of its contracting and procurement activities through the adoption of this Non-Discrimination Policy (“Non-Discrimination Policy”). Pursuant to this Non-Discrimination Policy, the FCCFA will not participate in either active or passive unlawful discrimination of any type.

The FCCFA recognizes that it has a continuing obligation to avoid unlawful discrimination in contracting and procurement activities. Therefore, all Respondents shall not have engaged, and shall not engage, in any kind of unlawful discrimination. Each Respondent, should they be engaged by the FCCFA, shall certify in writing that such Respondent, directly or indirectly, (1) has not engaged, is not engaged, and will not engage in any kind of unlawful discrimination involving race, color, sex, disability, age, religion, veteran status or national origin, or any other basis

prohibited by laws of the United States, the State of Ohio or the City of Columbus (“Other Prohibited Basis”), whether or not such discrimination is related to a contract or procurement activity with or for the FCCFA and (2) will not, for any purpose related to its engagement by the FCCFA, employ or contract with persons or businesses which the Contractor knows or has reason to know have engaged, are engaged, or will engage in any kind of unlawful discrimination involving race, color, sex, disability, age, religion, veteran status or national origin, or Other Prohibited Basis, whether or not such unlawful discrimination is related to a contract or procurement activity with or for the FCCFA.

It is the position of the FCCFA that discrimination against business owners based on race, color, sex, disability, age, religion, veteran status or national origin, or Other Prohibited Basis, is prohibited. No person unlawfully shall be denied the benefit of, or otherwise discriminated against, in connection with the award and/or performance of any contract or award, or modification of any contract or award, between a Contractor and the FCCFA on such basis.

The fundamental tenets of this Non-Discrimination Policy are as follows:

- All contractors should have an equal opportunity to compete with respect to contract and procurement activities of the FCCFA, regardless of race, color, sex, disability, age, religion, veteran status or national origin;
- No contractor shall have engaged or shall engage in any kind of unlawful discrimination involving race, color, sex, disability, age, religion, veteran status or national origin, or Other Prohibited Basis, whether or not such unlawful discrimination is related to a contracting or procurement activity with or for the FCCFA;
- The FCCFA through its staff, management company and other contractors will (i) monitor and provide periodic reports to the FCCFA regarding compliance by the FCCFA and its contractors with this Non-Discrimination Policy; (ii) collect and record information on the use of minorities and women in contracting and procurement activities; and (iii) analyze data to evaluate the utilization of minorities and women in the FCCFA’s contracting and procurement activities;
- The FCCFA shall review this Non-Discrimination Policy periodically to ensure that it effectively promotes and achieves non-discrimination and equal opportunity in connection with FCCFA contracting and procurement activities; and
- All contractors shall comply with this Non-Discrimination Policy. A contractor’s success or failure to comply with this Non-Discrimination Policy will be a factor in any award of contracts or procurements from the FCCFA to such contractor.

The FCCFA through its staff, management company and other contractors shall be responsible for implementing, monitoring and evaluating this Non-Discrimination Policy.

The FCCFA staff shall periodically review this Non-Discrimination Policy to ensure that it effectively promotes non-discrimination and equal opportunity in connection with the FCCFA's contracting and procurement activities and periodically report to the Board regarding compliance by the FCCFA and its contractors.

If the FCCFA determines that the objectives of this policy are not being achieved, the FCCFA may, in its discretion, direct the Executive Director to conduct further investigations into the reasons for not achieving such objectives.

This Non-Discrimination Policy applies to all contracting and procurement activities of the FCCFA, including contracting for construction, professional and non-professional services and procurement of goods and supplies.

This Non-Discrimination Policy shall be referenced in each bid and Request for Proposal or Qualifications document issued by the FCCFA. A contractor's failure to comply with this Non-Discrimination Policy may result in (a) debarment from participation in future FCCFA contracting opportunities, (b) liability for breach of contract and (c) the enforcement of any other remedies available under the related contract or applicable law.