

City of Cayce, South Carolina
Request for Proposals
Public Information/Press Relations Services for
the City of Cayce

OVERVIEW

The City of Cayce is seeking proposals from Public Information/Press Relations consultants/firms who are knowledgeable about special event coordination, marketing and public relations to manage City relationships with the media and ensure quality and accurate dissemination of information; act as City's official spokesperson with the media; respond to crisis outbreaks; provide proactive media relations; facilitate news conferences and prepare all necessary materials as needed; proactively promote City accomplishments and activities; facilitate broadcast and telephone interviews with the media as well as responses to email inquiries; organize special events including logistical set-up, volunteer coordination and promotion. It is the intent of this Request for Proposal (RFP) to have the successful consultant/firm, enter into a Professional Services Contract with the City to supply services as outlined herein.

BACKGROUND

The City of Cayce was incorporated in 1914. The City operates under the Council-Manager form of government with an elected Mayor and City Council appointing a full-time City Manager. The City's population is approximately 15,000.

CITY DEPARTMENTS AND APPOINTED

- Sanitation
- Community Planning & Development
- Finance
- Parks
- Public Safety
- Human Resources
- Maintenance Garage
- Utilities - Water and Sewer
- Information Technology
- Historical Museum
- City Attorney
- City Clerk
- Municipal Judge/Recorders Court

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

The following information must accompany your proposal:

1. Cover Letter: Provide a cover letter indicating your interest in providing public information/press relations services to the City.
2. Firm Description and Key Personnel: List years in business with a description of your firm including size of firm, location, number and nature of the professional staff to be assigned to provide services (include a brief resume for each key person listed).
3. Portfolio: Include a portfolio highlighting various media coverage garnered in the past 12 months and describe experience (minimum five years previous experience with proven effectiveness) your firm or organization has in pertinent public information/press relations services.
4. Writing Samples: Include a minimum of five (5) writing samples (please include a variety of

- sample formats such as reviewing and editing of news releases, newsletters, emails, articles, postings and publications).
5. Creative Ideas: Describe your proposed methods of providing proactive media relations, including a minimum of two (2) story ideas specific to the City. You may wish to provide samples of successful media programs.
 6. Events Management: Please provide examples demonstrating effective and efficient events management and coordination.
 7. Fee schedule:
 - a. State your proposed method of compensation for providing the City services as described above.
 - b. State any other costs the City may anticipate relating to the public information/press relations services to be provided.
 - c. The quoted fees shall be valid for a minimum of 6 months.
 - d. Please note, in the event of an emergency, the Consultant may be contacted at any time of day. Include if there would be an additional cost to "emergency response."
 8. References: Provide a list of three (3) applicable references. Include name, title, and contact information for each reference as well as a brief description and dates of the specific services provided.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

City staff will evaluate all properly submitted proposals and will grade and rank all proposals with respect to the Project Scope and the requirements set forth in this Request for Proposals, including without limitation the consultant fee and responsiveness of the proposal. The criteria for evaluation are set forth as follows:

1. Responsiveness to this RFP.
2. Experience of the professional personnel with local governments/agencies.
3. Quality of work samples presented.
4. Scope and appropriateness of services proposed; clear understanding by the applicant of work to be performed.
5. Capability of providing consistent, timely responses as determined by the availability of "back up" staff if principals are unavailable, and by information requested from references.
6. Billing proposal.

The City will then select the top preferred firm, with whom an Agreement will be executed on a form to be provided by the City. The City Council has the ultimate authority to approve any proposal and to authorize execution of the Agreement.

The City reserves the right to make clarifications, corrections or changes in this Request for Proposals at any time prior to the deadline for the submission of proposals. All proposers or prospective proposers will be informed of said clarifications, corrections or changes so long as the proposers and prospective proposers are registered with the City via e-mail to thegler@caycesc.gov prior to the due date for proposals.

PROPOSAL PROCESS

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals should be emailed no later than 5 p.m. EST on Wednesday, September 11, 2019. Questions may be sent to the following: Tracy Hegler, City Manager thegler@caycesc.gov

An electronic copy of the proposal, plus samples of work products as detailed herein, must be received by the City no later than 5 p.m. EST, on Monday, September 23, 2019. Proposals will be reviewed by City staff. Proposals must be sent to the following contact: Tracy Hegler, City Manager thegler@caycesc.gov

The recommendation of City staff will be provided to the City Council for their review and approval. City staff may interview one or more of the respondents. It is anticipated that the selection process will be completed by October 18, 2019.

STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Proposals submitted are offers only and the decision to accept or reject is a function of quality, reliability, capability, reputation and expertise of the firms submitting proposals. Issuance of this RFP does not obligate the City to pay any costs incurred by a respondent in its submission of a proposal, or making any necessary studies or designs for the preparation of that proposal, or for procuring or contracting for the services to be furnished under this RFP.

The City reserves the right to accept the proposal that is, in its judgment, the best and most favorable to the interests of the City and to the public, to reject the proposal with the lowest consultant fee, to accept any item of any proposal and to reject any and all proposals.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The successful consultant/firm shall agree to contract with the City to provide the following:

- Act as City's official spokesperson with the media, as delegated;
- Create content for press releases;
- Manage media inquiries and interview requests;
- Facilitate broadcast and telephone interviews with the media as well as responses to email inquiries;
- Develop media relations strategy, which should include at a minimum, approaches to promoting new opportunities, effective communications, and response to crisis outbreak;
- Proactive media relations, through the writing, reviewing and editing of news releases, emails, articles, social media postings and publications;
- Coordinate messaging with third party partners of the City and arranging media interviews;
- Facilitate news conferences and prepare all necessary materials as needed;
- Develop, implement, and maintain an effective public information program and coordinate public relations activities for City Council, City Manager and City departments;
- Assist and counsel elected officials, City Manager and department heads concerning public relations;
- Proactively promote City accomplishments and activities;
- Provide and coordinate media training to management and employees as requested or needed;
- The public relations firm must have a developed (excellent rated) relationship with local and regional media outlets, to include print, online and broadcast;
- Improve, maintain and expand the use of social media programs and provide efficient marketing tools to help get news and information out as soon as possible (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, E-blasts, etc.);
- Respond to all inquiries from the Public's posts and direct messages on the City's main above mentioned accounts after verifying information from City staff (if required);
- Provide daily news monitoring services for coverage relating to the City and their stakeholders;
- Attendance and presentations at public meetings may be required;
- Read the City Council Meeting agendas for opportunities for information sharing with the public;
- Monitor and report on communications metrics on a monthly basis;
- Connect with other leaders and communication staff in sister agencies and organizations that serve Cayce residents (i.e. utility agencies, Chamber of Commerce, Lexington 2 School District, community service groups, etc.);

- Handle all other customary activities and services associated with Public Information/Press Relations services;
- Promote events by preparing ads and articles for local and statewide media;
- Design posters, fliers, displays and other public relations releases;
- Develop and monitor event timelines and ensure deadlines are met;
- Coordinate the work activities of employees and volunteers at events;
- Participate in the development of the budget for special events;
- Participate in the negotiation of event contracts and service agreements;
- Develop and enhance working relationships with various organizations, non-profit groups, service clubs and businesses;
- Present reports and outcomes of events to City Council and City Management Team

REQUIREMENTS

Respondents to the RFP shall have the following qualifications:

1. Principal service provider(s) must have a Bachelor's degree in public relations, journalism, and mass communications or related field; recent experience in responsible public relations positions. Minimum of five (5) years' experience in professional level work. Previous related public sector experience desired.
2. Active in public information organizations.
3. Must have verifiable knowledge of current principles, techniques and objectives of public information, communication and public relations programs; Council-Manager form of government; media tactics, including interview techniques and preparation; and professional applications of research and writing skills.

TERM OF CONTRACT

The contract period for the successful consultant/firm will be six months from date of award. The contract may be renewed for additional terms upon satisfactory performance by the Public Information/Press Relations consultant/firm and at a negotiated rate agreed to in writing by both the consultant/firm and the City of Cayce.

Alternate contract periods may be considered.

EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS

Issuance of this RFP and receipt of proposals does not commit the City to award a contract. The City reserves the right to postpone receipt date, accept or reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFP, or to negotiate with any of the firms submitting an RFP, or to cancel all or part of this RFP.

ORAL PRESENTATION/INTERVIEWS

Firms submitting a proposal in response to this RFP may be required to give an oral presentation of their proposal. Additional technical and/or cost information may be requested for clarification purposes, but in no way change the original proposal submitted. Interviews are optional and may or may not be conducted. If an interview is conducted, it is essential that the consultant's personnel to be assigned to the work, as well as key representatives, be present at and participate in the interview. The selected firm/consultant and City of Cayce representatives will negotiate a mutually acceptable contract.