

Requesting Proposals for Communications and Outreach Strategy and Template Development for the Chesapeake Research Consortium

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Description of Work

The Chesapeake Research Consortium (CRC) is soliciting sealed proposals to develop an electronic media and communications plan, including a website redesign plan and a social media strategy. The contractor will be expected to work with CRC Staff and Management in a participatory process to ensure that the plan meets the needs of the organization. In short, we seek your assistance with the CRC's continuing evolution into a modern, full-service operation with respect to its communications with member institutions, federal and state partners, and research investigators throughout the region.

Project Background and Objectives

The CRC is a regional nonprofit association that represents six research institutions in the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. CRC's members are: The Johns Hopkins University, University System of Maryland, Smithsonian Institution, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Old Dominion University, and Pennsylvania State University. The goal of the CRC is to foster multi-disciplinary research through collaborative activities among research institutions, non-profit organizations, and government agencies and to facilitate the transfer of information among researchers and regional managers, thereby fostering better science-based management of the Bay, its tributaries, and surrounding lands. In short, the CRC strives to be a hub for connecting science to management and management to science, with a focus on highlighting and facilitating the research and activities of our member institutions and partners. To date, the CRC has not had a systematic approach to transferring information from and disseminating information to researchers and environmental managers. With support from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's Chesapeake Bay Office, the goal of this project is to lay the framework for a comprehensive electronic media and communications effort. This will enable the CRC to emphasize the value of collaborative, multi-disciplinary research by providing venues to share how the work of researchers in the region can help resolve challenging environmental management issues and spotlight successful science-based management projects.

Scope of Work

The scope of services shall be determined by the contractor in order to best obtain the objectives set forth in this RFP. Specific tasks shall include but not be limited to the following items:

- Develop a comprehensive electronic communications plan, including social media.
- Assist the CRC in defining its "voice".
- Develop a visually-pleasing, electronic newsletter template.
- Develop a plan for a redesign of the CRC's website, www.chesapeake.org, including the development of a more appropriate site structure to expand the website's value to our membership and partners. Provide guidance to CRC staff toward the implementation of this plan over the course of the project.

Time Frame

It is expected that work will start in early 2016 and conclude by August 31, 2018. The bulk of the work for the contractor will take place during spring and summer 2016, with a goal of having the electronic media and communications plan completed by September 1, 2016. Some level of continuing support and guidance to CRC personnel is expected throughout the project duration and, contingent on the availability of additional funding, the contractor may be asked to provide additional technical assistance and/or refinements in the future.

Budget

The CRC expects a budget of \$28,750 for this project for the approximately 3-year period, with the bulk of the funds being distributed in the first year of the project. A responsive proposal would explain a reasonable spending plan for the 3-year period that is within the overall budget. We would also welcome, if the contractor wishes to provide it, some additional comments about what could be done with higher amounts of annual investment.

Qualifications

The contractor should be trained and have experience in full-service marketing and communications planning and implementation. Familiarity and experience with the Chesapeake Bay research community is preferred. Demonstrated experience with the successful development of a comprehensive communications plan, which included guidance for implementation, is essential. Experience working with nonprofit organizations is helpful. Ability to provide services within our budget and meet deadlines is vital to the success of this project.

Submissions

Potential contractors should submit sealed proposals, including all necessary documents, by 5pm on **January 15, 2016**, to Mycah Berryman at berrymanm@si.edu.

Please include the following:

- A cover letter and summary providing the highlights and basic information included in the proposal.
- A detailed description of services, showing your firm's approach to the project, identifying concepts, techniques or tools that may be used to accomplish the tasks set forth in the RFP, as well as any potentially beneficial services beyond those requested in this document.
- A cost estimate of professional fees to complete the description of services. The cost estimate should include labor costs, any mark-up for reimbursable items, overhead, profit, and other direct expenses such as transportation, housing, printing and per diem. A breakdown of labor costs, including position, hours, hourly rates of pay, and cost should also be provided.
- Proof of woman-owned business status and/or minority-owned business status if applicable.
- Consultant must provide a Certificate of Insurance showing coverage of Worker's Compensation, and both general and any professional liability if held.

A contractor will be selected based on a combination of qualifications and price.

Programmatic questions should be addressed to Melissa Fagan at faganm@si.edu. Administrative questions should be addressed to Mycah Berryman at berrymanm@si.edu.