CITY OF COVINGTON
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH PLAN
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
ISSUE DATE: December 5, 2019
SUBMITTALS DUE: January 3, 2020 by 5:00pm PST

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
The City of Covington invites qualified consultants to submit proposals to complete a City of Covington Public Education and Outreach Plan.

POINT OF CONTACT:
Karla Slate, Communications & Marketing Manager
City of Covington
16720 SE 271st St #100
Covington, WA 98042
E-mail: kslate@covingtonwa.gov
Phone: 253-480-2402

I. BACKGROUND
Situated in south east King County, Covington has a strong retail core with big brands. While the population of Covington is now over 20,000, the retail trade area serves a population of more than 140,000 in a 5-mile radius and 691,000 within a 20-minute drive. Additionally, Covington has become a medical hub for Southeast King County with a large and growing population of medical offices and facilities in the downtown core area. There are currently several hundred units of housing under construction or just completed in the city; two major developments are on the way including a town center/civic plaza and a 200+ acre retail shopping, dining, housing and lakefront development; and a new hospital was just completed last year.

As the cost of living continues to increase in urban centers, folks who work in those urban areas of the county (Bellevue, Seattle, etc.) are moving to Covington and the surrounding area to be able to afford housing. Even with the planned developments, and like many other cities in the region, Covington is struggling to find sustainable funding for critical services like street operations and maintenance and for police and public safety. Additionally, the city has a host of unmet parks needs to accommodate the growing population as well.

Despite the challenges, there are even more positive and important things going on in Covington and the city has a need, now more than ever, to tell our story. The community-at-large lacks knowledge of city government processes and procedures and the challenges we face. We strive to push for awareness of these issues at the same time we have a need to inform the public of our successes.
In an effort to unify our message(s), educate and engage our target audiences, further our brand, tell our story, and build support, the city is seeking a consultant who brings innovative ideas and proven experience and will recommend a multi-year plan with phased strategies for implementation. Experience in the field of municipal government is preferred.

The City of Covington has an in-house Communications and Marketing Manager who will be managing and implementing the final plan, much of which will be executed in-house with the possible need to supplement with professional services.

II. SCOPE OF SERVICES
The selected consultant will work with the Communications and Marketing Manager to create a Public Education and Outreach Plan using existing data, any required new data, best practices and creativity in collaboration and alignment with the city’s brand.

The main goal of the Public Education and Outreach Plan is to grow a citizenry that are knowledgeable and aware of their city government and secure active and participatory citizen engagement.

The Public Education and Outreach Plan should be conducted in such a way as to allow the City to guide and inform its decision-making process in terms of public education, outreach, advertising, branding and marketing programs, priorities, strategies and tactics. Primary tasks and expectations of the final deliverable will include development of an integrated plan that includes, but is not limited to, the items listed below.

**DETAILED SCOPE ELEMENTS:**
The Plan should provide strategic action items, operational steps and outcomes to facilitate the City's ability to efficiently implement the Plan. All strategies should be integrated to ensure consistency across all collateral and should be sustainable over a long-term period.

A. Develop an action plan with key deliverables and milestones established.

B. Review/audit current education and outreach methods to evaluate effectiveness, allowing the Plan to leverage existing methods and propose new opportunities.

C. Identify gaps and existing efforts that aren't effective or don’t align with goals and expectations.

D. Identify target audiences and recommend channels to increase awareness among them.

E. Propose strong, identifiable and relevant key messaging to increase community awareness of city services, programs, projects, events, finances, and challenges.

F. Recommend an approach to a comprehensive evaluation criterion, measuring the performance of strategies and/or media/collateral, etc.

G. Recommend priority levels for proposed strategies/actions that keep in mind staff time, work load and ability of the City to execute.
H. Provide a detailed budget of additional costs to the City in order to implement a Public Education and Outreach Plan.

III. KEY DELIVERABLES

The selected Consultant will be expected to deliver the following:

1. Initial Meeting. The Consultant and city representatives shall meet to go over the proposed schedule and plan, including responsibilities, the scope of work and deliverables.

2. Project Plan. Based on the schedule and the initial meeting, the Consultant shall prepare a project plan, outlining the process for conducting the scope of the work outlined, including any methodologies to achieve identified objectives. The city will review and approve the plan before work starts.

3. Stakeholder Engagement. Engage with key stakeholders and departmental/City staff to determine objectives and targets to be met by the Plan.

4. Research. The Consultant shall perform additional research, if necessary, using approved methodologies and practices. If in conducting this research, the Consultant shall find any statistical anomalies or other inconsistencies, irregularities or concerns with the data or the methodology used, they shall notify the City in writing and propose solutions prior to the due date for any identified deliverable in the project plan.

5. Draft Public Education and Outreach Plan. The Consultant shall provide a draft plan for review according to the agreed upon schedule and scope details. This draft plan will serve as a framework upon which additional detail will be added to create the final Marketing and Outreach Plan. City representatives shall have sufficient time to review the draft plan, make any changes/additions/recommendations to it and ask for further clarifications if needed.

6. Final Public Education and Outreach Plan. Based on the draft Plan and input from the City, the Consultant shall prepare a final detailed Public Education and Outreach Plan complete with any supporting data, charts, graphs and analysis covering key findings, strategies, tactics and recommendations. City representatives shall have sufficient time to review the final plan and request any changes/additions or ask for further clarifications. The final approved plan will be submitted in an electronic, editable version as well as a pdf version.

7. Final Presentation. The consultant shall meet with representatives of the City and/or present to City Council to share the information contained in the final Public Education and Outreach Plan, identify key findings and answer questions.

8. Meetings. During the initial meeting, the City and Consultant will work together to determine appropriate timing of when meetings may be required throughout the process. It is estimated that a minimum of two to three meetings will be required.
IV. INSTRUCTIONS

A. Pre-Response Information and Questions: Each response received by the submittal deadline will be evaluated on its merits and completeness of all requested information. In preparing responses, Consultants are advised to rely only upon the contents of this RFP and accompanying documents and any written clarifications issued by the City of Covington. If a Respondent finds a discrepancy, error or omission in the RFP package, or requires any written addendum thereto, the Respondent is requested to notify the Point of Contact noted in this RFP, so that written clarification may be provided to all prospective Consultants. **City of Covington staff is not responsible for, and Respondents shall not rely upon, any verbal instructions.**

B. RFP Modifications: Clarifications, modifications, or amendments may be made to the RFP at the discretion of the City of Covington.

C. Response Submission: To be considered, the indicated number of copies of the response must be prepared in the manner and detail specified in this RFP.

   1) Responses must be emailed to **Karla Slate, Communications & Marketing Manager**, and be received by the deadline indicated in this RFP. It is each Consultant’s responsibility to ensure that its response is received by the City of Covington prior to the deadline.

   2) Submission of a response demonstrates that the Consultant is thoroughly familiar with this RFP. By submitting a response, the Consultant warrants that it understands and agrees to abide by each and all of the stipulations and requirements contained therein.

   3) All documentation submitted with the response will become the property of the City of Covington.

V. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A budget in the range of $20,000-$30,000 has been identified and respondents of the RFP should do their best to accurately price their work.

The City of Covington reserves the right to reject any and all responses to this RFP and to waive irregularities and informalities in the submittal and evaluation process. This solicitation for Consultant Services does not obligate the City of Covington to pay any costs incurred by respondents in the preparation and submission of a response. This solicitation does not obligate the City of Covington to accept or contract for any expressed or implied services. Furthermore, the City of Covington reserves the right to award the contract to the next most qualified Consultant if the selected Consultant does not execute a contract within thirty (30) days after the award of the proposal.

The successful respondent is required to provide the necessary services needed to develop a strategic, phased, marketing and outreach plan consistent with the following objectives:

1. Provided services should have well-formulated procedures.
2. The approach should be well-designed and executed utilizing industry standards and best practices.
3. Any new research and subsequent analysis should be methodologically sound.
4. The resulting Public Education and Outreach Plan should support the advancement of knowledge of the City of Covington.
5. The resulting Public Education and Outreach Plan should be relevant to industry standards, historical, current and predictive standpoints.
6. The Public Education and Outreach Plan should be objective, independent and balanced.
7. Research, analysis and assumptions used in the plan should be verifiable and defensible to peer review and audit.

VI. MATERIALS AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY CITY

The City of Covington will provide the following material and services to the selected Consultant:

A. City of Covington Branding Guidelines
B. City of Covington marketing materials
C. City of Covington Communications Plan
D. Coordination with key stakeholder groups
E. Rooms for meetings
F. Examples of current/past marketing collateral used where applicable
G. Access to social media data
H. Communications and marketing budget data

VI. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Cover Letter: A cover letter from the lead Consultant containing the name, address, and daytime phone number(s) and e-mail contacts for the lead Consultant and any partnering Consultant(s). The lead Consultant’s primary contact person shall be identified along with any individuals who will be authorized to act in behalf of the Consultant and any partnering Consultant(s). The letter shall bear the signature of the person authorized to act as the legal agent of the principal Consultant.

B. Basic Consultant information:
   1) Organizational background.
   2) Key members of the project team.
   3) Location of the facility from which the selected Consultant/project team would operate.

C. Availability: A description of the availability of the Consultant, its partnering Consultant(s), and key staff to provide services in a timely manner.

D. The Consultant’s proposed approach to the project, the Consultant's approach includes a complete description of the Consultant's proposed approach and methodology for the project. This section should convey the Consultant's understanding of the proposed project.

E. A proposed schedule, demonstrating the Consultant's ability to meet the city's deadline for completion of the plan, demonstrates the Consultant's ability to ensure participation and buy-in from key stakeholders and key leadership staff.
F. Examples of prior work that demonstrate the ability of the Consultant to meet the objectives of the project; examples demonstrating municipal knowledge.

G. Submittal will include a maximum of 25 pages.

H. A detailed breakdown of the proposed fees/costs to complete the plan as well as the Consultant’s fee rates for staff assigned to the project. Identify all costs in U.S. dollars including expenses to be charged for performing the services necessary to accomplish the objectives and scope of the contract. The Consultant is to submit a fully detailed budget including staff costs and any expenses necessary to accomplish the tasks and to produce the deliverables under the contract.

The breakdown of the proposed fee should be tied to the scope of services listed in within this RFP and include an estimated amount of time for completion of each main item listed in the scope, as well as any optional elements which can be added to the scope of work with mutual consent of the City.

VII. SCHEDULE (subject to change)
- Project First Advertised: December 5, 2019
- Submittal Deadline: January 3, 2020 by 5:00pm PST
- Interviews (if needed): Week of January 13-17, 2020
- Final Selection: Week of January 20-24, 2020
- Contract to City Council: February 11, 2020
- Final Deliverables: August 31, 2020

VIII. SUBMITTAL PROCESS
Interested Consultant shall submit electronic PDF version of their response to this RFP as outlined in this document to the Communications and Marketing Manager Karla Slate at kslate@covingtonwa.gov with the subject line reading: "REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL– COVINGTON PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PLAN.” Responses must be received by the submittal deadline specified above.

IX. SELECTION PROCESS
Responsive proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the non-exclusive criteria provided for in this solicitation and any addenda issued. Other factors not listed here may also be considered as the selection process develops. Responses will be reviewed by a committee consisting of staff from the City of Covington. The evaluation process is designed to award this contract/project not necessarily to the Consultant of least cost, but rather to the Consultant whose proposal, in the judgment of the City, best meets the City's needs. The evaluation and scoring process provided below will guide the City's decision, but will not control the City's decision. The City has complete discretion in selecting a proposer who, in the judgment of the City,
best meets the City’s needs. The RFP process is inherently subjective and qualitative, and the City will consider scoring results and all other submission materials, presentations, and interviews when making a final decision.

**Technical Proposal – 50% (50 Points)**
- Project Approach/Methodology
- Quality of Work Plan
- Project Schedule
- Project Deliverables

**Project Team Structure / Experience and Expertise – 30% (30 Points)**
- General experience of the Consultant and/or Project Team
- Direct experience in municipal work by the Consultant and/or Project Team
- Experience working with diverse cultures and communities

**Cost Proposal – 20% (20 Points)**

**TOTAL POINTS = 100**

**Notification to Proposers**
The Communications and Marketing Manager will notify the apparently successful Consultant of their selection in writing upon completion of the evaluation process. Individuals or firms whose proposals were not selected for further negotiation or award will be notified separately by e-mail.