



RFP for Communications, Marketing, and Public Relations Questions

1. Is there a need to conduct data-driven research with social science experts for these communications, marketing, and public relations services?
Any data-driven research your firm can provide is welcomed as part of your engagement.
2. Will firms located outside of Ohio be considered?
There is nothing in the RFP to exclude firms outside of Ohio but demonstrated experience and accessibility within Ohio will be part of the evaluation.
3. When responding to the RFP, can you respond only to the services that you have expertise in or are you looking for a firm to handle the entire scope of work?
Firms with specialized expertise in specific areas may choose to respond only to those sections of the RFP. Multiple firms may be selected to handle the different aspects of the scope of work described in the RFP.
4. Should three (3) individual responses be provided for the three Scope of Services items, each limited to 20 pages? Or should one (1), 20-page response be provided that includes information relevant to all three Scope of Services items?
If the firm chooses to make a proposal for all three services, it should submit one 20-page response incorporating all services.
5. The Proposed Schedule of Events on page 9 lists the deadline for proposals related to Scope of Services item #3 as February 14, 2025. Requirement #2 on page 2 lists the delivery deadline for proposals as December 6, 2024. When should proposals for Scope of Services item #3 be submitted?
The proposals to Scope of Services item #3 should be submitted no later than February 14, 2025.
6. Is there a total budget for all scope of services listed, including items 1 through 3? If yes, what is the total budget? Are there individual budgets assigned for each of the scope of services items 1 through 3? If yes, what are the individual budgets for item 1, item 2, and item 3?
OAQDA is seeking competitive proposals through this solicitation and will establish the final budgeted and contracted amount for scope of services described in the RFP based on the process.
7. Does the Authority have an existing marketing team that the selected vendor partner would be working with? If there is not an existing marketing team, with whom would the selected vendor partner work on all initiatives?
Vendor partners selected through this RFP will work with a small internal communications team and under the direction of the Executive Director and Board of the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority.

8. Scope of Services item 1, bullet #4 mentions the use of “data-driven research” - is the vendor partner expected to conduct research, or will findings and data from previously conducted research be supplied to the vendor partner?
The vendor will have access to previously-conducted research as well as recommend or conduct research that may assist in fulfilling the scope of services described in the RFP.
9. Scope of Services item 1, bullet #4, sub-bullet 3 mentions “assist in stakeholder engagement” - will this scope of service involve the planning, buying, placement, management, and reporting of paid media? If yes, what is the expected budget for paid media?
Paid media may incur an additional fee outside the contracted service with the selected vendor. A specific budget range has not been established for paid media.
10. Scope of Services item 1, bullet #5 mentions that vendor partners “may be expected to embed themselves within the Authority’s internal team” - is there an expected number of hours each day/week that the vendor partner should be available/on-site/on-call exclusively as an embedded part of the Authority’s internal team?
It is recommended that the vendor have a team member available/on-site at least one day per week. This individual will also be expected to attend board meetings and other engagements deemed essential by OAQDA.
11. Scope of Services item 2, bullet #2 mentions that vendors will “create and deploy media and PR materials” - will this deployment be through paid media channels? If yes, what is the expected paid media budget for all planned initiatives?
Informational and public relation materials may be delivered through multiple marketing channels, including paid media, as designed and described in a proposal. Proposers should demonstrate the value and benefits of the paid media with specifics on desired budget for consideration under the RFP.
12. Upon award, what is the length of the contract period? Are there opportunities for extension? If yes, what are the extension terms?
The desired contract with a selected vendor will be a two-year term with options for renewal annually up to total five-year term.
13. Are there specific months or times of year when certain programs are active and require heightened effort or time commitments? What are these programs or promotional messages that will require focused attention, and when are their "key" times?
OAQDA has a consistent work stream throughout the year with Spring and Fall experiencing some greater activity.
14. Could we request an extension to the submission deadline?
Currently, no extensions are being considered
15. Do you have an incumbent and would they be participating in this RFP?
OAQDA is currently under contract with a PR firm, which also has the option to respond to this RFP
16. Could you let us know if you are willing to accept our proposal if we are able to support the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority virtually?
OAQDA will consider proposals for virtual assistance, but stronger consideration will be given to proposals that demonstrate ability for onsite support as described in the RFP.
17. Could you let us know if you have a local preference or are you open to a Canadian agency that has done similar work with clients across the United State, with some currently being the states of California, Colorado, and Wyoming?
OAQDA is limiting consideration of submissions for this RFP to domestic, American-based entities based on certain funding sources and restrictions tied to those sources.

18. How will federal funding (e.g., EPA grants) influence resource allocation and priorities? And are there any restrictions?

The federal awards will primarily be delivered through existing programs and any interested applicant is encouraged to review 2 CFR 200 (and other references in RFP) about federal requirements.

19. What is the expected frequency of in-person meetings, and are virtual meetings acceptable?

The Authority anticipates availability of collaboration and services through in-person and virtual meetings (estimated at 4-8 hours per week by assigned personnel).

20. Are you requiring a registered lobbying firm or a PR firm with advocacy experience?

OAQDA does not require a registered lobbying firm.

21. Regarding podcasts, do you currently produce and distribute them, or are you seeking brand-owned podcast production in the proposal?

OAQDA does not currently produce podcasts. Podcast creation and development will be considered in the review process of proposals.

22. What other vendors or professional service providers will the selected firm collaborate with, as noted in the RFP? Will you assign one partner as the lead agency?

OAQDA utilizes professional service providers in many areas of the agency to conduct services and all firms working on behalf of the OAQDA are expected to work collaboratively.

23. Please clarify the specific services you expect in the proposal. Should it include:

- A. Public Relations
- B. Lobbying
- C. Digital Advertising
- D. Social Media Management
- E. Media Buying
- F. Videography
- G. Podcast Production
- H. Market research
- I. Other (please specify)?

All of these services are welcomed in the proposal. Please provide detailed materials on how to implement the best strategies for our growing landscape.

24. What market research or audience surveys have been conducted in the last three years and will be available to inform our strategy?

The Authority routinely conducts assessments of market conditions as it relates to program development and implementation. A formal example is the Market Needs Assessment in 2023 available on the website: ohioairquality.ohio.gov

25. Are you seeking to build relationships with state-level stakeholders (via PR methods like meetings, tours, and events) or are you seeking to have us perform lobbying activities?

No part of the RFP will be services related to "lobbying activities" but focused on communications and marketing to maximize the ability of OAQDA to fulfill its mission through its program activities. Proposals may consider strategies aimed at this goal for stakeholder engagement.

26. How do you currently track media relations and advertising performance? What software or metrics are used (i.e. Google Analytics, Cision/Meltwater, etc.)?

Media reporting and analytics are currently monitored and reported by the existing PR firm using their software and technology tools.

27. Under what circumstances would the service provider act as the spokesperson instead of the Executive Director?
There is an expectation that a qualified representative of the service provider may act as a spokesperson for OAQDA, as delegated by the Executive Director. Existing practice includes representation on press releases.
28. Can you clarify your expectations for responding to question three (3) (Education, Marketing, and Outreach)?
What would satisfy this requirement in the proposal?
Firms should outline how they can excel in education, marketing, and outreach for the multiple programs that OAQDA offers. Developing materials for stakeholders and the public to enhance clarity and understanding of how OAQDA can support their needs.
29. For “Cost: each proposal should include specific compensation amount, including preference on fixed fee arrangements with the understanding that the payment amounts and schedules will be negotiated with the successful proposer(s) and during each project assignment;” can you provide a number of hours you may require on a monthly basis for public relations and scope of deliverables based on previous contracts? If this is not available, can you please provide a clear scope of work to be produced on average every month to ensure proposals are based on the same scope of work for comparison?
While an exact hour range may not be available, the services of each section will be accomplished every month, so if applying for all 3 categories please take that into consideration of time/work load and your proposal/costs.
30. What challenges or gaps are you facing with your current communications approach?
With growth in the existing programs and new federal funding awarded to OAQDA, there is a need to expand our communications, marketing, and PR services and outreach. This opportunity can be capitalized and expanded upon in multiple different categories outlined within the RFP and respondents should demonstrate their expertise, capabilities and proposed creative strategies for delivering services.
31. Are there preferred channels or tools for media engagement that have been effective for the Authority in the past?
OAQDA is currently using media outlets such as LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter to spread outreach about our Authority.
32. What is the scope of the "assigned programs" for marketing and outreach deliverables?
The scope can be diverse and depends upon the program selected for communication and marketing services. For example, our CAIP program has one-pager marketing collateral, website content, and case studies, to name a few within one program. Moving forward with an increase in new federal funding, there will be an expansion in outreach on existing programs while also marketing and outreach to reach targeted audiences (e.g. small businesses, advanced manufacturing) and underserved communities with all programs and financing options.
33. Are there specific underserved communities or regions where the Authority seeks increased outreach and participation? Should translation services or enhanced demographic marketing be part of our proposal?
The 2023 Market Needs Assessment conducted by the Authority identifies specific areas in Ohio, including Appalachia, where increased outreach for the Authority's programs is needed. Translation services have also been considered and may be a focus for future efforts.
34. Can we include case studies or additional success examples beyond the written proposal as exhibits (going beyond the 20 pages).
Case studies can be an exhibit and be outside the 20-page limit if numbered and outlined as such.

35. What will fall under “exhibits” and not counted in the 20 pages? Please confirm if the following is considered OUTSIDE of the 20 pages as exhibits.

A. Staff bios/resumes

B. Case Studies

Brief resumes of staff and case studies can be provided as an exhibit.

36. What is the weight distribution for ranking RFPs for selection for the following as noted in the RFP:

A. Articulation of ability to fulfill the scope of work by identifying the areas of expertise.

B. Experience representing state and local governments

C. Cost

D. Organizational overview as noted

E. Physical presence within the State of Ohio and Responsiveness

F. References

OAQDA has not weighted any of the categories under which it will review submissions. OAQDA anticipates a variety of responses demonstrating a variety of qualifications and experiences. OAQDA reserves the right to consider each application and each category holistically based on those responses.