



**Request for Proposals
Communication Audit
January 5, 2018**

Introduction

Overview

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to solicit proposals to conduct a comprehensive communications audit for Champaign Unit 4 School District.

Organization

The District is a large school district serving more than 10,000 students in grades pre-K through 12 in Champaign, Savoy, and Bondville, Illinois. The District's 19 campuses employ more than 1,900 teachers, administrators, and support personnel, including some of the brightest educators in the region. With proximity to the University of Illinois and Parkland College, the District is able to build strong community partnerships which provide unique, world-class educational opportunities to its students. The District's focus is to foster positive learning environments and prepare all students for college and career readiness after graduation.

Background

The District is experiencing positive change and growth. In November 2016, the community approved a \$183.4 million bond referendum to update facilities and increase capacity at six District campuses. Under the leadership of a new Superintendent, these projects provide the District with important opportunities to engage in thoughtful, effective communication with all District stakeholders.

The District invites all interested and qualified firms to submit a proposal for a communications audit to the District in response to this Request for Proposals. The Board of Education has adopted goals and strategic initiatives, one of which is to increase opportunities for minority and women-owned firms to provide services to the District. In keeping with that goal, the District welcomes proposals from such firms.

Proposal Submission

Proposals are due by January 26, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. local time. Timely delivery is at the risk of the candidate firm. Any submissions received after the deadline will be rejected.

Please submit eight (8) bound copies as well as an electronic copy (submitted either with the bound copies or via email) to:

Mr. Tom Lockman
Chief Financial and Legal Officer
Champaign Community Unit School District #4
703 S. New Street
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 351-3825
lockmath@u4sd.org

Proposals must be enclosed in a sealed envelope and the package must clearly show the phrase “Request for Proposals – Communications Audit for Champaign Unit 4 School District” and the name of the candidate firm.

Submissions should be prepared as standard 8-1/2 X 11 letter size and shall be limited to 75 pages. Adherence to the maximum page criterion is critical and each page side with criteria information will be counted toward the maximum number of pages. Front and back covers, table of contents pages, and tabbed divider pages will not be counted if they do not contain submission information.

Schedule

The following is the proposed schedule for the selection of firms:

January 5, 2018	Issuance of Request for Proposals
January 19, 2018	Last Date to Submit Questions or Clarifications
January 26, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.	Deadline for Submissions
February 2, 2018	Successful Short-Listed Firms Identified
Week of February 12, 2018	Interviews and Ranking of Short-Listed Firms
February 26, 2018	Proposed Board of Education Action

Candidate Firms’ Inquiries and Addenda

Any questions or concerns regarding this RFP shall be directed in writing to:

Mr. Tom Lockman
Chief Financial and Legal Officer
Champaign Unit 4 School District
703 S. New Street
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 351-3825
lockmath@u4sd.org

Any responses to questions or changes in this RFP shall be posted on the District’s website as an addendum. Candidate firms must acknowledge addenda received as part of their submissions. Oral and other interpretations or clarifications will be without legal effect.

All potential candidate firms are prohibited from making any contact with District staff or the Board of Education with regard to this RFP other than to the Chief Financial and Legal Officer as designated herein. The Chief Financial and Legal Officer reserves the right to disqualify any candidate firm found to have contacted those listed above in any manner with regard to this RFP.

General Information, Notifications, and Purpose

The District will seek to enter into an agreement with the top-ranked candidate firm(s). Candidate firms are advised to review all sections of this RFP carefully and to follow instructions completely. Failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the submission. Qualifications which depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this RFP will be rejected as being nonresponsive.

Joint venture and/or cooperative professional teams will be considered.

Selection Criteria and Process

The primary factor in determining the successful firm will be the firm's ability to provide the services described in the Scope of Services. The District will base its evaluation on responses to this Request for Proposals, oral interviews, and references. In addition, the District will consider costs in the event of significant cost differences between candidate firms with similar Proposals. The District anticipates inviting selected firms to oral interviews following an initial evaluation of Proposals submitted.

The Screening Committee shall determine the selection of respondents for the interview process by reviewing the Proposals of the candidate firms based on the responses to the RFP. A short list will be developed, and those firms will be invited to present before the Interview Committee.

The Interview Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Education on the chosen candidate firm upon completion of the interview process. The Interview Committee may force rank the firms making the presentations to determine a recommendation or immediately reach a recommendation. Each of the interviewed candidate firms shall be evaluated on their Proposals.

Recommendation by the Interview Committee is based on the combination of the candidate firm's response to this RFP, the composition and qualifications of the candidate firm's staff for this project, and the interview process.

The Interview Committee's recommended firm(s) will be submitted to the Board of Education for approval. The District, following Board approval, may then enter negotiations with the selected firm and ultimately execute a contract upon completion of negotiated contract terms and fees.

The District reserves the right to reject any and all statements of qualifications received as a result of the Request for Proposals or to negotiate in any manner necessary to serve the best interests of the District.

Scope of Services

1. The firm selected will partner with the District Communications Department to conduct a comprehensive communications audit to assess and improve the effectiveness of school and district level communications, public relations and marketing within Champaign Unit 4 School District. This proposal should include components deemed necessary to obtain the desired data and subsequent recommendations. This may include, but may not be limited to:
 - a. Expert analysis of current communications tactics
 - b. A statistically sound formal survey
 - c. Informal stakeholder focus groups/interviews

2. The firm selected will analyze the qualitative and quantitative data collected throughout the audit process and generate a report that encompasses the following:
 - a. The current perceptions, expectations, needs and communication patterns of District stakeholders
 - b. Measure community and parent perceptions of the District through opinion research including quantitative and qualitative methodologies
 - c. Measure effectiveness of District branding and marketing messages
 - d. Benchmarks to assist the District in measuring the effectiveness of its communications plan in the future and adjusting as needed to meet the goals of the District
 - e. Recommendations for improving targeted communication and outreach with the District school communities; these will inform the creation of specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound goals to be outlined in a comprehensive three-year communications plan to be developed by the District
 - f. Provide recommendations on how best to utilize staff to maximize effectiveness of recommended next steps

Proposal Requirements

The Proposal should include information regarding the candidate firm's experience and approach relating to the Scope of Services. A candidate firm's submission must include the following:

Letter of Transmittal: A one-page Letter of Transmittal signed by an owner, officer, or authorized agent of the firm or organization, acknowledging and accepting the terms and conditions of this RFP. In its letter, the candidate firm should identify why the firm is interested in working with the District and how the firm could assist the District in meeting its goals. The Letter must contain a commitment to provide both the services described herein and the personnel proposed for the assignment. The Letter of Transmittal should identify all addenda received by the candidate firm. Joint Ventures require signatures from all firms participating in the Venture.

Executive Summary: The Executive Summary is intended to highlight the contents of the submission and to provide the District with a broad understanding of the candidate firm's technical approach and ability.

General Information:

- a) Name, address, and telephone of firm including involvement in industry organizations
- b) Name and title of contact person
- c) Name of officers in firm and an organizational chart
- d) Brief history of firm
- e) Overview of specific qualifications and projects within the K-12 school market
- f) Additional information that the candidate firm feels is a unique qualification and is of direct benefit to the District

Project Staffing: The education, training and qualifications of the proposed project staff.

Experience and References: Profile four (4) to six (6) educational clients and/or projects specifically related to the District's identified needs related to the Scope of Services that have been performed within recent years.

List three (3) professional references with whom the candidate firm has worked in the past twelve (12) months. Submit company name, contact person, and phone number.

Cost: The total cost of the services to be provided under the Proposal and a detailed explanation of those costs.

Representative Sample Work Products: The Proposal should also include a recent representative sample work product.

General Terms and Conditions

All costs associated with developing or submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content, shall be borne by the candidate firm. The District assumes no responsibility for these costs. This RFP does not commit the District to pay any costs incurred in preparation or submission of a response or in anticipation of a contract.

This RFP does not commit the District to enter into a contract. The District reserves the right to award one, more than one, or no contract(s) in response to this RFP. The District reserves the right to waive informalities and irregularities in the submissions of proposals received. The District also reserves the right to terminate this RFP and reissue a subsequent solicitation and/or remedy technical errors in the RFP process.

The purpose of this RFP is to identify an experienced firm with the best combination of qualifications. The contract, if awarded, will be awarded to the candidate firm whose submission is deemed most advantageous to the District, as determined by the interview committee upon the approval of the Board of Education.

The District reserves the right to contact any candidate firm for clarification or interviews or to negotiate if such is deemed desirable by the District.

Any and all materials submitted regarding this RFP shall become the property of the District and are subject to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act.

The District reserves the right to contact references listed in a candidate firm's submission for information which may be useful to the District in evaluating candidate firms.