

**Strategic Public Relations and Communications Services
Request for Proposal (RFP) Project/Contract #G5290
Questions & Answers
Updated - May 7, 2020**

PLEASE NOTE: Questions are presented below in bold, with answers from the Trust in italic. Similar questions are answered only once.

- 1. Should respondents include COVID-19 related communications strategy in their response to the RFP? Does Hudson River Park Trust have any events that were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic that specifically requires a communications response?**

The Trust receives daily updates from the State of New York and the City of New York with respect to COVID-19 guidance, which may necessitate communications, both proactive and reactive, regarding conditions in the Park. The Trust plans to publish a press release regarding summer season events, which should include reference to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on programming. Feedback from the selected respondent on both will be expected.

- 2. Is there anything that the Trust would like to share about expected changes to programming, development or other considerations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that the RFP proposals should address?**

The Park is an essential business, and remains open for public recreation (with some changes to certain Park spaces and uses) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Trust's website generally provides the most current information regarding current Park features. Respondents are welcome to include their recommendations specific to COVID-19 communications in their proposal. The selected respondent will receive more detailed information about Park events and other COVID-19 specific concerns at the time of contract execution.

- 3. Along with overall PR, will Little Island's opening in 2021 be a part of the selected firm's work? Any special emphasis on the Pier 55 opening?**

This contract will be awarded for a period of five years, and the Trust anticipates there will be new Park spaces that will be available to the public during that time which will require media placement and coverage, including Pier 55. Pier 55 is a part of Hudson River Park, although the Trust leases Pier 55 to a separate non-profit entity to operate the performance programming. Pier 55, Pier 57 and the Whitney Museum project at the Gansevoort Peninsula all have separate public relations firms, and the selected consultant will be required to coordinate with those consultants to ensure that the Park message is part of the messaging for those projects as needed.

- 4. Can respondents discuss existing Trust projects scheduled and how respondents could add value now or is the Trust looking ONLY for how respondents can add**

value starting June 1, 2020? Are there any existing programs that are recurring on an annual basis that respondents should address in their proposal?

Respondents are welcome to include as much information and as many ideas in their proposals as they would like. No specific programs are required to be referenced, but respondents are welcome to reference any Park programs in their proposal. Information regarding Park programming is available on the Trust's website.

- 5. On page 7 of the RFP, a statement is required by Respondent that reflects respondent's "approach to the Services that clearly demonstrates your understanding of the Scope of Services and your ability to manage the work in a timely and cost-efficient manner." This seems to be an appropriate place for the respondent to share preliminary ideas and strategies for the Trust. Can you elaborate on what you would like the agency to address in this statement?**

We ask each respondent to elaborate on their work with similarly situated organizations on comparable projects, and include examples of press releases, media placements, special recognition their clients have received through their work, etc. This is your agency's opportunity to give us an idea of what makes your agency stand out amongst others.

- 6. How many agencies received this Request for Proposals?**

In accordance with its Procurement Policy, the Trust published this Request for Proposals on the New York State Contract Reporter and on the Trust's website, therefore it is widely available. We have no way to determine the number of firms that have reviewed the RFP.

- 7. Is there an incumbent firm competing for this RFP?**

The Trust does not currently hold a contract for PR services. This RFP is open to all PR firms with the relevant experience to submit a response.

- 8. Describe what success with a new firm looks like; is there anything the Trust is looking for a firm to do differently or better from previous PR firms?**

Increasing brand awareness is a key marker for success, along with additional media placements in all traditional spaces. Success will include media coverage that reflects the many diverse aspects of Hudson River Park, beyond its obvious function as public open space.

- 9. How many Vendors does Hudson River Trust plan to pick for this contract?**

The Trust anticipates awarding the contract to one respondent, however, the Trust reserves all rights as set forth in the RFP with respect to contract awards.

- 10. Is there a MWBE goal on this contract? If the firm is MWBE, does that suffice or additional subcontractors needed?**

Due to limited subcontracting opportunities, there are no MWBE goals for this contract, however, MBWEs are strongly encouraged to apply as the prime contractor. Although a subcontractor is not required, the Trust will consider proposals that include the use of a subcontractor.

11. Are team member biographies acceptable in lieu of resumes?

Biographies are acceptable provided they provide sufficient relevant detail about team members' individual experience.

12. Is there a set amount for this contract in terms of budget? Do you expect a fixed monthly retainer or can the monthly fee vary to accommodate expanded services beyond core media relations when needed, such as consultation on social media, website, copy and graphic design?

The Trust has not set forth a budget for this project in the RFP. Respondents should propose a fee arrangement, based on similar-sized government/non-profit organizations in New York City for comparable services. This fee arrangement should include any retainer requests and all fees for services based on the Scope of Services provided in the RFP.

13. Does Hudson River Park Trust seek social media, digital strategy and/or email marketing as part of the broader communications strategy?

Feedback with respect to specific events or market research/best practices is welcome and may occasionally be specifically requested; however, this will not be a regular recurring requirement.

14. When you reference “develop strategies for print and digital media, broadcast media, and select social media channels” in the scope of work, are you looking for the agency to advise on advertising and paid digital strategy or just organic and earned media?

This contract is focused on organic and earned media. Best practices for print and digital media are welcome to be shared, though advertising and paid digital strategy are managed in-house.

15. Any preferred media that Trust is looking for over another? Ex: television over print or digital media or radio or other?

The Park welcomes all varieties of media exposure.

16. Will there be any Advertising buying involved in this contract?

No, Hudson River Park staff manages the advertising buy for the Park.

17. What other institutions, parks, and attractions does the Hudson River Park Trust view as a peer or competitor?

Hudson River Park Trust is a partnership between the City and State of New York. Through this partnership, the Trust works closely with several City and State agencies to operate, maintain and develop the Park. While there are commonalities with other public parks in New York City with respect to user trends, event attendance, operations, etc. the Trust is uniquely positioned based on its geographic location and access to the Hudson River, its commercial revenue that funds Park operations and with shared governance from the City and State.

18. Has Hudson River Park Trust conducted any research or analysis of its brand and reputation in the past several years?

The last Park audit was conducted in 2012, and Hudson River Park plans to undertake another audit soon. An audit was scheduled for this summer but has been postponed due to COVID-19 concerns.

19. How does the Hudson River Park Trust describe its key audiences?

Hudson River Park is a public park and open to all visitors, however, the visitors that frequent the Park the most and regularly attend Park events are individuals who live along the four-mile footprint of the Park, patrons of arts and culture, health and fitness enthusiasts, sustainability-minded individuals who want to make an environmental impact in their city. Other important audiences include elected officials, decision makers, funders and prospective funders, the environmental community, the real estate community, and other business sectors in New York City.

20. Who do you see as primary spokespeople for the Trust itself, as well as key programs/projects?

The primary spokespeople for Hudson River Park Trust are Madelyn Wils, President & CEO and Noreen Doyle, Executive Vice President. In addition, key staff from the Trust's Public Programs and Environment and Education departments are also important spokespeople depending on the subject matter.

The last 25% of unfinished Park space is currently in the design phase or under construction. The completion of the rest of the Park will be a main focus in the coming years.

Key programs include environment, sustainability and education initiatives, such as Park Over Plastic: www.parkoverplastic.org and free & low cost arts and cultural programs during the Park's peak season in the summer, known as the *Summer of Fun*.

21. Where can we find past press releases?

Some past press releases for Hudson River Park may be found online at www.hudsonriverpark.org.

22. In the Respondent's Proposal Certification Form (p. 11), what is the "Addenda" referred to in (c) and where can we find the corresponding "Number" listed next to "Date"?

Section (c) on Page 11 of the RFP provides a space to acknowledge receipt of any addenda or amendments to the RFP issued by the Trust. To date, the Trust has not issued any addenda or amendments. Any addenda or amendments to this RFP would be posted on the New York State Contract Reporter and the Trust's website.

23. Would it be possible to waive the notary requirement during shelter-in-place times, including The Iran Divestment form & Diversity Practices forms?

Yes, the Trust will accept the Iran Divestment form and the Diversity Practices form without the notarization.

24. Is it permissible to include a subcontractor to perform some of the services outlined in the RFP? If so, what type of information should be included in the proposal?

Yes, responses to the RFP may include the use of a subcontractor to perform a portion of the services. The proposal should specify what services would be performed by the prime contractor and what services will be performed by the subcontractor and provide relevant information on the subcontractor's requisite experience and other credentials. The price proposal must also reflect the fee arrangement for prime contractors and subcontractors.

25. For the price proposal, should it be broken down by year? Or should it be a total lump sum estimated budget for the first three years? Or for the entire five years? Is there a proposed budget range that has been allocated for this effort?

The price proposal should be completed in accordance with Exhibit 2 of the RFP. Please provide pricing for the five year term, with the breakdown of the cost for each year. There is no proposed budget range for this contract.