

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT: CULTURAL INVESTMENT GRANT | EV0014825

RFP Questions

RFP is located [here](#).

Q: I was wondering if firms located outside of Boston will be considered for the project and if one firm will be required to perform the entire scope of services?

A: Yes, firms outside of Boston will be considered. The RFP provides detailed guidance on how we will evaluate proposals.

Q: My firm partners with other firms on proposals. Can the contract be awarded to all three?

A: We can only award the contract to one firm, but the firm may hire subcontractors. For the purpose of this contract, you must elect a prime contractor to hold the contract and designate the rest as subcontractors.

Q: Is the contract term 3.5 or 2 years? And is the budget for each year or the totality of the project.

A: The term of the contract is 2 years, the Cultural Investment Grant runs 3.5 years. The budget is for the full communications project.

Q: If the company applying has two offices and one is in NY and one is in Boston, is it ok if the RFP is mailed from the NY office.

A: Yes.

Q: If a company has offices in multiple cities but has done a bunch of work like this. Would this be prohibitive?

A: No, the consultant does not need to be based in Boston. However, we encourage you to look at the criteria closely as familiarity with the neighborhoods where our grantees are located is important.

Q: We have a bunch of consultants that we work with. Is it ok if the lead is not the primary? Is it OK to be a passthrough for the grant? Or should we just have the other organization apply? The University can offer some additional support.

A: the consultant would need to apply directly, or it would need to be stated in their proposal that the consultant is the primary subcontractor and clarify what, if anything, that the lead would be doing to fulfill the services of the contract.

Q: It was confirmed during the Bidders Conference that the project will be supported by ARPA funds. Will the Federal terms and conditions of those funds, presumably already agreed to by the City, also be required to extend to the Awardee?

A: Since this contract is strictly consulting to the city (and not a subrecipient), the consultant would not be held to the ARPA/federal terms.

Q: For the training, do we need to rent space?

A: No, most likely we can host it. Please note this assumption in your budget.

Q: If federal dollars are attached, there may be additional paperwork that will be needed to be added as an addendum.

A: There is no need to submit any additional paperwork right now.

Q: The RFP mentions paid advertising collateral and influencers. Is that something that needs to be in the proposal? Would that need to come out of the project budget

A: We are open to multiple solutions. If you think that would be helpful for the project, please include. Yes, it would need to come out of the project budget.

Q: The training - how many people and what will it look like? What's the KPI? Usually the way we write it is X number of people trained.

A: The training will include the 11 grantee organizations and the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture (MOAC) staff. This is the first time we are doing this so we are open to what training looks like. The goal is to ensure that we share all of the messaging work with our grantee partners and they have a clear understanding of how to use deliverables.

Q: Has the work started? Can you speak to this?

A: The grants have been distributed to the organizations so that work has begun. However, there has been no communications work initiated so far outside of an initial announcement about the grant. This RFP would be the beginning of this work.

Q: For social media, would we be posting on the City of Boston account? Or send to them? What about monitoring the traction of social media?

A: You would send the posts to the MOAC staff to post. MOAC staff will monitor the posts.

Q: Anyway for us to get the list of organizations that got the grant.

A: Yes, they are available on our website:

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/arts-and-culture/cultural-investment-grant>

Q: The video production teams. Do I have to list them in the RFP if I don't know yet who I am going to hire?

A: Yes, it would be helpful to list a few of your top choices.

Q: In the RFP it says you want a summary of the interviews. What does a summary look like? Transcripts? Do they have to be done behind a window like a traditional focus group?

A: We do not need transcripts but would like an in depth summary of the interviews with key points of commonality or divergent ideas noted across the interviews. No, the interviews don't have to be behind glass walls – these are just information gathering sessions to help with messaging.

Q: Ad space: Bus ads/T ads are costly. Is that something I would have to cost out?

A: Yes, if you think that would be an effective way to get the word out, then please include it in the plan and the budget. Note that the City of Boston can get a discount on MBTA advertising.

Q: To what extent is this effort expected to promote the City of Boston's work to support the grantee organizations versus promote the work, accomplishments, etc. of the grantee organizations themselves? Assuming that promoting the grantees' work in the cultural sector is at least part (if not all) of the project focus, to what extent is the consultant expected to develop and implement a plan to promote the grantees' work, accomplishments, etc. over the two-year contract versus build the capacity of the grantees to plan and undertake their own communications work?

A: As stated in the RFP, "We hope to seize this opportunity to communicate what we are learning [from the grantee partners] and use it as a platform to advocate for similar investments in arts and cultural organizations." So the focus is on messaging for investments in arts and culture organizations and the public benefit of such investment. In addition, we are hoping to uplift the work of the grantee organizations, but that is not the only objective of the work. The goal of the Cultural Investment Grant itself is to build the capacity of these organizations and this grant should also ensure that we build the communications capacity of the organizations. In order to do so, we built in a training for the organizations and MOAC staff.

Q: Under Phase III, Implementation, ad-buy and video are mentioned as potential implementation strategies. Given the relative expense of these activities compared to many of the others, are you expecting these costs to be included in the \$200,000 award amount or would funding be available through other means?

If these activities need to be covered with the \$200K award, would you want alternative budgets to be presented? For example, one with a significant ad-buy and/or video and a different one which concentrates, alternatively, on strategies like organic digital engagement, earned media, and grantee capacity building?

A: Yes, ad-buys and video are potential strategies and would need to be included in the budget. We are open to a variety of solutions to achieve our goal. You are welcome to submit alternative budgets, but we would like to know what direction you would ultimately propose given the goals and budget. As stated in an earlier response, the City of Boston is able to purchase ads on the MBTA at a discounted rate.

Q: Do you plan to do an orientation meeting for this proposal?

A: Yes, we held a Q&A conference call on September 20 and will publish all questions we receive on September 30.