

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Communications Services

RFP #CS-PY'21-I

Issuance Date: 3/1/21

I. PURPOSE

The Hampton Roads Workforce Council (HRWC) is currently seeking a single Contractor to provide a broad array of professional communications services, as outlined in the Scope of Services Section of the RFP, and in support of the organization's goals, objectives and strategic workforce development initiatives in Hampton Roads.

II. BACKGROUND

HRWC is a regional government authority chartered by the Cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Virginia Beach and the Counties of Isle of Wight and Southampton to lead the Region's Workforce Development effort that has served the region under several amended charter agreements since 1974. On 7/1/21, HRWC will legally and formally merge with the Greater Peninsula Workforce Board to then include the cities of Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson and Williamsburg and the counties of Gloucester, James City and York. The newly re-constituted HRWC will consist of the aforementioned fifteen (15) localities which should be considered as the geographic area for services requested under this RFP.

HRWC works closely with the local business community, government, public school systems, community colleges, military, four year institutions, community based organizations and other workforce development stakeholders in supplying the workforce development components of the collective promotion of the region's economic competitiveness. In that regard, HRWC serves as the single workforce development convener for the Region. The HRWC is also supported by the Hampton Roads Workforce Foundation that receives charitable contributions or grants in support of HRWC programs.

HRWC has had a communications contract for about five years and some of the proposed services in this RFP have been provided as part of that contract.

Additional information regarding HRWC can be found on the HRWC website at <https://www.vcwhamptonroads.org>.

III. RFP AVAILABILITY, PROPOSAL DUE DATE, QUESTIONS AND CONTRACT

The RFP Package will be available on the HRWC website at <https://www.vcwhamptonroads.org> and the Greater Peninsula Workforce Board (GPWB) website at <https://vcwpeninsula.com> beginning on 3/1/21.

Proposals are due in the offices of the Hampton Roads Workforce Council by 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time on 4/1/21 at the following address:

Hampton Roads Workforce Council
999 Waterside Drive, Suite 1314
Norfolk, VA 23510

Proposals received after the aforementioned date and time or those submitted by email or fax will not be considered.

Questions regarding this RFP may be addressed to Mr. Steve Cook, HRWC Vice President for Workforce Innovation, at either (757) 314-2370 or scook@vcwhamptonroads.org. Answers to questions that are not available in the RFP Package or any other clarifications or addendums regarding the RFP will be posted on the HRWC and GPWB websites without further notice.

Approximately \$130,000 is available to fund an initial one year contract for the period 7/1/21 to 6/30/22 under this RFP. Thereafter, up to five (5) one (1) year contract extensions may be authorized at the discretion of HRWC, and future contract amounts will be negotiated at the time of the extension.

Submission of a proposal under this RFP does not guarantee the award of a contract and HRWC reserves the right to not consider any incomplete or non-responsive proposal, as determined by HRWC.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES

- To increase awareness of HRWC and its programs, resources, initiatives and successes.
- To encourage employers and prospective employees to utilize HRWC as a resource and a gateway to opportunity through the organized dissemination of valuable information.
- To engender additional support for the continued and expanded mission of HRWC within the community, particularly among targeted industry-specific employers, elected officials, military officials, secondary and higher educational institutions and peer organizations.
- To become an example for other locales with similar programs and create consulting or collaboration opportunities, while serving as the single convener of workforce services.
- To disseminate accurate information to the community regarding the outcomes of HRWC initiatives and activities.
- To become a valued partner with local print and electronic media as a resource for workforce development information.

V. TARGET AUDIENCES

Depending on the particular communication vehicle and activity, the following audiences may be targeted:

- Customers – including employers, adults and youth career explorers.
- Workforce Board Members – including non-board members of HRWC’s standing committees.
- Strategic Partners – including secondary and post-secondary education; local, regional and State business and industry organizations; social services and public housing agencies; military veterans, transitioning service members and spouses; veteran serving organizations; military commands; mandated workforce system partners; and other State and local community organizations and stakeholders.
- Policy Makers – including local, State and national officials.
- Media Outlets – including Television, Radio, Print and Social Media.

VI. SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. The following projects are expected to be delivered for which a **firm fixed price estimate** is to be provided for each project in the submitted proposal:

- The development and implementation of a Comprehensive Communications Plan for HRWC.
- Production of an Annual Report detailing the activities, outcomes and successes of HRWC. This is to be a 16 page (including cover), 4 color glossy, report. Requested services include graphic design, copywriting, copy editing and preparation for print and electronic publication.
- Development of an Email Newsletter Template for electronic publication and distribution.
- Production of an Email Newsletter. 4 quarterly Newsletters each year averaging 4 to 5 articles of 250 to 300 words each. Requested services include graphic design, copywriting, copy editing and preparation for electronic publication and distribution.
- Production of a Labor Market Information Bulletin. 4 quarterly Bulletins each year averaging 3 to 4 articles of 150 to 250 words each including charts, tables, information graphics and other design elements. Copy will be provided by HRWC. Requested services include graphic design, copy editing and preparation for electronic publication and distribution.
- Development of a Standard HRWC Presentation Template. This is to consist of a title page and 3 interior page templates for use in HRWC presentations.
- Production of a Strategic Plan Booklet. This is to be an 8 page (including cover), 4 color glossy overview of the HRWC Strategic Plan. Copy will be provided by HRWC. Requested services include graphic design, copy writing, copy editing and preparation for print and electronic publication and distribution.

B. The following ongoing services, for which an **overall monthly fee** fixed for the first one year contract is to be included in the submitted proposal, consist of the following:

- Represent HRWC with the Public and Media as the official public relations spokesperson. This will include interviews with the various Media outlets, as well as written communications, press releases and the distribution of information.
- Prepare and conduct outreach activities for HRWC's programs through social media, commercial advertising, website notices, community sources and email.
- Design and layout print collateral pieces to include brochures, flyers, advertisements, special event displays, etc.
- Design Email marketing products.
- Complete stories pertaining to HRWC for earned Media placement.
- Maintain the HRWC website and all links and pages, including the Hampton Roads Workforce Foundation, at <https://www.vcwhamptonroads.org> in accordance with professional standards and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements.
- Review, on an ongoing basis, existing HRWC outreach materials current relevance and related ADA information requirements and make recommendations for the elimination or revision of such materials in consultation with HRWC.
- Provide all communications-related services included in the Communications Plan (as approved by HRWC) or specifically requested by HRWC over the performance period of a contract awarded under this RFP.

NOTE: The Contractor will interact with HRWC Staff and Partner Organizations as needed with regard to the ongoing implementation of the Communications Plan.

VII. AUTHORIZATION OF WORK NOT IN THE CONTRACT

From time to time, HRWC may ask the Contractor to complete work that is not already required as part of the Communications contract and/or is outside of the scope of work of the contract. When this happens, HRWC will submit a written request to the Contractor for a proposal with price quotes for the work to be done. Upon receipt of the proposal and approval by HRWC, an authorization form will be submitted to the Contractor requesting completion of the work.

VIII. PROPOSAL PREPARATION GUIDANCE

A. RFP Response – 1 original, and 2 copies of the Proposal are to be submitted.

B. Proposal Preparation – Proposals must meet all applicable RFP specifications and requirements and be signed and dated by an authorized representative of the proposing organization.

C. Required Proposal Components:

1. Proposal Submission Certification Form. This Form is on Page 7 of this RFP and will serve as the cover page for the submitted proposal and must be fully completed.

2. Summary of the proposing organization’s prior experience in performing the types of services requested under the RFP, and current organizational capability to do so.

3. Professional qualifications of the staff who will be assigned to a contract that may be awarded under this RFP and their respective role.

4. Professional References, with full contact information, for others that the proposing organization has performed services that are substantially the same as requested in this RFP. Three (3) references are required on a separate page attached to the Proposal.

5. A fully completed Proposed Costs Form. The form is on Page 13-14 of this RFP.

6. Executive Summary outlining how the Comprehensive Communications Plan will be developed, in addition to, addressing the requirements of the RFP Sections VI. (A) and VI. (B). Responses to items 2 and 3 above will also be included in the Executive Summary. (Up to 6 single space pages)

XI. PROPOSAL SELECTION CRITERIA

- Organizational Capability and Experience (0 to 40 points)
- Qualifications of Staff (0 to 20 points)
- Proposed Delivery of Services (0 to 15 points)
- Professional References (0 to 15 points)
- Proposed Costs (0 to 10 points)

X. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The General Terms and Condition for this RFP are attached and incorporated into this RFP.

NOTE: The Hampton Roads Workforce Council (HRWC) is an Equal Opportunity Program/Employer and does not discriminate against any individual in the United State on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, or political belief or citizenship. The full HRWC EO/ Nondiscrimination Policy 15-14 is posted on the HRWC website.

A contract awarded under this RFP will be funded in whole or in part with Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds from the United States Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA), through the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), to HRWC through the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia, the designated WIOA Grant Recipient for HRWC.

XI. ATTACHMENTS

- Proposal Submission Certification Form
- General Terms and Conditions
- Proposed Costs Form

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION CERTIFICATION FORM

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT:

I agree to comply with the terms and conditions related to **RFP # CS-PY'21-I** issued by the Hampton Roads Workforce Council as published and/or made available on its official website. I certify that the proposing organization identified below is not currently on any Federal, State or Local Government Debarment List, is authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of Virginia and City or County shown below and that I am authorized to sign and submit this Proposal on behalf of the organization shown below.

Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name and Title: _____

Legal Name of Organization: _____ Year Established: _____

Legal Status of Organization: _____

Street Address: _____

City or County: _____ Zip Code: _____ State: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Email: _____ Fax: _____

Federal Employer Identification Number: _____

NOTE: This Form will serve as the Cover Page for each Proposal.

**GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS
RFP #CS-PY'21-I**

A. VIRGINIA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT ACT (VPPA): This RFP is subject to the provisions of the VPPA and any revisions thereto, which are hereby incorporated into this document by reference. The method of procurement under this RFP is competitive negotiation set forth in section 2.2-4302.2 of the VPPA.

B. APPLICABLE LAWS AND COURTS: This RFP and any resulting contract shall be governed in all respects by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the Courts of the Commonwealth and must be in compliance with all applicable Federal, State and Local laws, rules and regulations, inclusive of, but not limited to, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, as amended, or any other federal, State or local funding source that may be identified.

C. ETHICS IN PUBLIC CONTRACTING: Proposing organizations certify that their proposals are made without collusion or fraud and that they have not been offered or received any kickbacks or inducements from any other proposer or subcontractor in connection with their proposal, and that they have not conferred on any public employee having official responsibility for this procurement transaction any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit of money, services or anything of more than nominal value, present or promised, unless consideration of substantially equal or greater value was exchanged.

D. IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT OF 1986: Proposing organizations certify that they do not and will not employ illegal alien workers or otherwise violate the provisions of the Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 in the performance of any contract resulting from this RFP.

E. ANTITRUST: By entering into a contract resulting from this RFP, the contractor conveys, sells, assigns, and transfers to the Commonwealth of Virginia all rights, title and interest in and to all causes of action it may now have or hereafter acquire under the antitrust laws of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia, relating to the services purchased by the Hampton Roads Workforce Council under said contract.

F. PAYMENTS: The terms for payments will be part of the competitive negotiation process for this RFP and stipulated in the contract.

G. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR: A Contractor resulting from this RFP, and any employees, agents or other persons or entities acting on behalf of the Contractor shall act in an independent capacity and not as officers, employees or agents of the Hampton Roads Workforce Council or the HRWDB.

H. **SEVERABILITY:** If any provision of a contract resulting from this RFP or the application thereof to any person or circumstances shall to any extent be invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of this contract, or the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those which it is invalid or unenforceable, shall not be affected, and each provision of this contract shall be valid and enforced to the full extent permitted by law.

I. **ADDENDA:** Changes or supplemental instructions related to this RFP will be in the form of a written Addendum. Any Addendum that may be required will be posted on the Hampton Roads Workforce Council website at <https://www.vcwhamptonroads.org> with this RFP without notice. It is the responsibility of proposers to check for updates on the website prior to the proposal due date and time. No addenda will be posted subsequent to three working days prior to the due date of proposals.

J. **VENDOR STATUS:** An entity that is awarded a contract as a result of this RFP will be considered a vendor of HRWC and will not be a sub-awardee of Federal Funds as defined by OMB Uniform Guidance.

K. **QUALIFICATIONS OF PROPOSING ORGANIZATION:** Proposing organizations agree to provide the Hampton Roads Workforce Council with any other requested information at any time to determine their ability to perform the services proposed. The Hampton Roads Workforce Council may, at its sole discretion, cease negotiations with proposing organizations if information provided or other evidence fails to meet the requirements of the RFP.

L. **ASSIGNMENT OF CONTRACT:** A contract which may result from RFPs shall not be assignable by the contractor, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the Hampton Roads Workforce Council.

M. **CHANGES TO THE CONTRACT:** A Party to the contract may request, in writing, changes to the contract. Changes are not binding until both parties have signed an official contract modification document. An increase or decrease in the price of the contract resulting from any modification is subject to applicable provisions of the Virginia Public Procurement Act.

N. **DEFAULT:** In case of failure to deliver services in accordance with the contract terms and conditions, the Hampton Roads Workforce Council may declare the contractor in default and will immediately notify the contractor in writing. As a result, the Hampton Roads Workforce Council may procure the same services from other sources and reserves the right to seek compensation from the contractor for any and all additional expenditures as a result of the default.

O. **INSURANCE:** By signing and submitting a proposal in response to this RFP proposing organizations certify that they shall maintain and provide documentation, if requested, of all applicable and/or required insurance coverage(s), as applicable. Insurance requirements for contracts with Federal, State or Local Governments or their agencies may vary from contracts with private entities.

P. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS: In the event Federal, State or Local funds that are the resources for contracts are discontinued, curtailed or otherwise no longer available, contracts awarded as a result of any RFP may be cancelled or reduced at any time. The Hampton Roads Workforce Council will notify contractors in writing as soon as possible after receiving any such notice.

Q. PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE PERIOD: Proposals shall be binding upon proposing organizations for one hundred twenty (120) calendar days following submission deadline. Any proposal that requests a shorter acceptance period may be rejected at the sole discretion of the Hampton Roads Workforce Council.

R. SUBCONTRACTS: In the event that a Contractor desires to subcontract for services to be provided, the contractor shall furnish to the Hampton Roads Workforce Council the names, qualifications and experience of their proposed subcontractor. The Contractor shall remain fully liable and responsible for the work to be done by their subcontractor and shall ensure compliance with all contract requirements. All subcontracts must be approved in writing by the Hampton Roads Workforce Council prior to execution.

S. RECORDS RETENTION: Contractors agree to retain all books, records, and other documents relative to contracts for four (4) years following the expiration of the contract or until audited, whichever is greater. However, if any audit claim, litigation, negotiation or other action involving the records has been started as a result of the audit or before the expiration of the four (4) year period, the records shall be retained until completion of the action and resolution of all issues which may arise. The Hampton Roads Workforce Council, its authorized representatives and/or State and Federal auditors shall have full access to and the right to examine any of said materials during said period. Contractors are responsible for all costs associated with the retention of the books, records and other documents.

T. CLARIFICATION OF TERMS OR QUESTIONS: Clarifications to RFPs and answers to questions not contained in RFPs, as applicable and appropriate, will be posted on the Hampton Roads Workforce Council website at <https://www.vcwhamptonroads.org> and the Greater Peninsula Workforce Board website at <https://vcwpeninsula.com> without further notice. No clarifications will be posted subsequent to three working days prior to the due date of proposals.

U. **HOLD HARMLESS:** Contractors agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the Hampton Roads Workforce Council, the HRWDB, the Chief Local Elected Officials of the Hampton Roads Region, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and their officers, agents and employees from any claims, damages, and actions of any kind or nature, whether at law or in equity, arising from or caused by the use of materials, goods, or equipment of any kind or nature furnished by the contractor, or arising from, or caused by any services of any kind or nature provided by the contractor, provided that such liability is not attributable to the sole gross negligence on the part of the Hampton Roads Workforce Council or to the failure of the Hampton Roads Workforce Council to use the materials, goods, or equipment in the manner outlined by Contractors and descriptive literature of specifications submitted with contractors' proposals. This section does not apply to contracts with Federal, State or Local Governments or their agencies.

V. **CONTRACTUAL DISPUTES:** In accordance with Section 2.2-4363 of The Code of Virginia, claims arising out of a contract issued as a result of any RFP, whether for money or other form of compensation, shall be submitted by the contractor, in writing, with all necessary data and information attached to the claim. This submission must be received by the Hampton Roads Workforce Council no later than sixty (60) calendar days after final payment is provided under any contract. The Hampton Roads Workforce Council will respond in writing within ninety (90) calendar days of receipt of the claim, unless both parties agree to a longer response period. In the event the Hampton Roads Workforce Council does not respond within this time period, the contractor may institute legal action pursuant to Section 2.2-4364 of The Code of Virginia.

W. **EXTENSION OF CONTRACT:** All RFPs will include statements specifying if contracts will be able to be extended past their original term and for how long thereafter.

X. **HUMAN TRAFFICKING:** Executive Order 1333 requires the termination without penalty of any contract if the contractor engages in human trafficking.

Y. **ROLE OF THE VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM (VCCS):** In Virginia, the VCCS at the State level is responsible for the formula distribution of WIOA funds; the award of certain Dislocated Worker WIOA Grants; ensuring the integrity of the funds; oversight and monitoring of local workforce development boards; and, developing and implementing WIOA operational guidance and policies in coordination with the Virginia Board of Workforce Development. The aforementioned documents can be found at <https://www.elevatevirginia.org/practitioners-corner/>.

Z. **CONTRACT AWARD:** The Hampton Roads Workforce Council will enter into a contract with the selected proposer under this RFP for an initial performance period. Thereafter, the contract may be renewed for additional performance periods as stipulated in the RFP, at the discretion of the Hampton Roads Workforce Council. The initial contract amount will remain in force throughout that performance period, unless otherwise authorized by the Hampton Roads Workforce Council and subject to the provisions of Paragraph P of these Terms and Conditions. Amounts for any subsequent contract extensions will be negotiated with the contractor prior to execution of the extension.

A.A. **HAMPTON ROADS WORKFORCE COUNCIL EO POLICY:** The EO Policy is posted on the Hampton Roads Workforce Council website at <https://www.vcwhamptonroads.org>. Please note that program facilities must be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.

B.B. **CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES:** The following Certifications and Assurances, which can be found on the Internet as cited, are incorporated by reference and will be made part of any contract(s) entered into by the Hampton Roads Workforce Council as a result of all RFPs:

1. Certification Regarding Lobbying (29 CFR Part 93).
2. Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters (29 CFR Part 98).
3. Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Assurance (29 CFR Part 37).
4. Drug-Free Workplace Requirements Certification (29 CFR Part 98).
5. Standard Form 424b Standard Assurances (Non-Construction Programs) as applicable to HRWC vendor contracts. ([grants.gov/forms](https://www.grants.gov/forms))

PROPOSED COSTS FORM FOR RFP# CS-PY'21-I

Organization: _____

Fixed Price Projects Specified under Section VI. (A) of the RFP

Project	Detailed Cost
Development of a Comprehensive Communications Plan for HRWC	\$
HRWC Annual Report	\$
Email Newsletter Template	\$
Production of Email Newsletter	\$
Production of Labor Market Information Bulletin	\$
Development of Standard HRWC Presentation Template	\$
Production of Strategic Plan Booklet	\$

Ongoing Services Specified under Section VI. (B) of the RFP

Overall Monthly Fee Fixed for First Year Contract	\$
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NOTE: If more space is needed, please attach additional pages.

