

**Eastern West Virginia Economic Alliance
– EWVEA**

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

For

Strategic Communications Plan

January 2025

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
REGARDING QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE FOR
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

The Western Potomac Economic Partnership d/b/a The Eastern West Virginia Economic Alliance (EWVEA) is requesting Qualification and Experience Proposals from consultants/professional marketing and design firms to provide design and rebranding assistance to its agency.

EWVEA will be evaluating submissions to this request and select a firm judged to be responsible and responsive to the request. EWVEA reserves the right to interview some or all prospective firms to discuss qualifications and experience. The format for submittals, information regarding the scope of work, and selection criteria used by EWVEA is available from the EWVEA Office, 226 Pilot Way, Martinsburg, WV 25405 or by visiting www.region9wv.com.

One (1) original and five (5) copies of submittals of Qualification & Experience information from consultants must be enclosed in a sealed envelope marked **"Q&E Strategic Communications Plan" clearly labeled**. Proposals must be submitted and time-stamped into the EWVEA office no later than **February 3, 2025 at 2PM. Digital submissions in PDF format will also be accepted by emailing rsnavely@region9wv.com. Digital submissions are subject to the February 3, 2025 2PM receipt deadline**. Failure to comply with the above-required information for EWVEA's review may result in disqualification of that firm.

The EWVEA Selection Committee shall evaluate the statements of qualification, technical proposals and other material submitted by interested properly licensed firms. This competitive process is used to objectively select the organization that will provide the highest quality consulting services. Accordingly, technical credentials and experience will be weighed heavily.

EWVEA shall make positive efforts to utilize Disadvantaged Business Enterprises for its supplies and services and shall allow these sources the maximum feasible opportunity to compete for contracts. EWVEA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age and disability in employment or the provision of services.

EWVEA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, to waive technicalities, and to take whatever action is in the best interest of the EWVEA Council.

I. INTRODUCTION

Qualifications and Experience Proposals are being requested from professional service firms to provide the Eastern West Virginia Economic Partnership (EWVEA) with a Strategic Communications Plan. Only written responses to this RFQ will be considered. All materials submitted shall become part of the proposal.

II. BACKGROUND

EWVEA is a designated 501c3 non-profit economic development organization working in partnership with the State of West Virginia, local government, county economic development authorities, sector and business leaders, and other partners in order to showcase and build economic vibrancy in a four-county region in West Virginia. Its mission is to attract new investment by showcasing the advantages of locating in the Panhandle. Its work is with local partners in the following West Virginia Counties: Berkeley County, Morgan County, Hampshire County, and Jefferson County. The website is www.EWVEA.com.

Membership of the board is specified in its bylaws and includes: the Eastern Panhandle Regional Planning & Development Council (Region 9), the Berkeley County Development Authority, the Jefferson County Development Authority, the Morgan County Development Authority, Hampshire County Development Authority and the Eastern West Virginia Regional Airport.

III. SCOPE OF REQUIRED SERVICES

EWVEA is requesting proposals from firms who can create a robust Strategic Communications Plan to include the following:

- A. Earned Media – Creating awareness about who EWVEA is and what the Eastern Panhandle looks like for business development;
- B. Prospecting Opportunities – Create prospecting packet; Develop booth/tabling design; Create site selector engagement calendar;
- C. Public Relations Campaign
- D. Targeted Direct Mail Campaign – Development of site selector packet;
- E. Stakeholder engagement plan regarding infrastructure and workforce development weaknesses and opportunities;
- F. Development of fact sheets that showcase economic advantages of West Virginia utilizing economic development data and case studies;
- G. Prospector engagement plan regarding region’s workforce readiness

IV. Q&E/TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

Respondent shall respond to and reference each section and subsection for portion(s) of RFQ proposal will cover. As a minimum, your Q&E shall include the following information. Failure to discuss each item may deem the submittal non-responsive and may result in non-consideration of respondent's services.

A. Firm Information

1. Name, address, telephone number, fax number of firm and parent company, if any, from which the project will be managed
2. Nature of firm and parent company, if any
3. All applicable West Virginia professional licenses and certifications

B. Firm Capabilities

Describe the size of your firm/project office as related to professional staff.

C. Principals and Background

1. Submit the names, titles, and resumes of the "principal" staff member(s) who will be responsible for the service during the performance of the contract.
2. Describe in depth the management team available to the "principal" staff member(s). Include an organizational chart of manpower, titles, qualifications, roles in contract performance, and availability for telephone consultations and on-site meetings.
3. Provide a list of up to five (5) relevant projects firm has successfully completed over the last ten years, including project references for each specified project which includes business name, contact person, address, email, and phone number.

D. Conclusions

Remarks and/or supplemental information pertinent to this request

V. PRICE PROPOSAL

- A. Your proposal must include a fully executed Non-Collusion Certificate – Attachment A.
- B. Conclusions, remarks, and/or supplemental information pertinent to this request is permitted.

VI. TERM OF CONTRACT

- A. The contract shall begin at date of award with deliverables expected to be completed no later than ninety days after date of award.
- B. If the Consultant fails to comply with the specifications, they will be given thirty (30) calendar days' notice to render satisfactory service. If at the expiration of such thirty (30) calendar days' notice, the unsatisfactory conditions have not been corrected, EWVEA reserves the right to terminate the contract.

VII. USE OF EXISTING DOCUMENTS

EWVEA will cooperate to the fullest extent by making available to the Consultant all documents pertinent to this service that may be in EWVEA's possession. EWVEA makes no warranty as to the accuracy of existing documents nor will EWVEA accept any responsibility for errors and omissions that may arise from the Consultant having relied upon them.

VIII. COMPENSATION TO THE CONSULTANT

The Consultant shall invoice EWVEA at the completion of the work or at intervals in the contract term as negotiated with EWVEA. All invoices shall include a description of the work effort covered for that period. Failure to include the description of work with the invoice may result in rejection of the invoice. Payment shall be made within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of invoices for services satisfactorily rendered and approved by EWVEA.

IX. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

Professional Liability – The service provider must show evidence of professional liability insurance coverage in the amount of one million

(\$1,000,000) dollars, with a minimum coverage of one million (\$1,000,000) dollars ~~procure~~ and one million (\$1,000,000) dollars aggregate and must include coverage for errors, omissions and negligent acts, prior to execution of a contract with EWVEA.

X. SELECTION PROCESS

- A. EWVEA shall not be liable for any costs not included in the proposal, not contracted for subsequently, or in regard to preparation of your proposal.
- B. The Selection Committee may be comprised of the following: the Director of Region 9, the Director of each respective Development Authority, the Director of the Eastern WV Regional Airport.
- C. It is EWVEA's intent to open and review each firm's Qualifications & Experience to determine a firm's qualifications, experience and technical approach to the services requested. The Selection Committee will evaluate responses to this request and select the firms ~~judged~~ to be most qualified for an oral presentation.
- D. Since it is EWVEA's desire to select the most qualified firm, the Selection Committee reserves the right to schedule oral presentations of those firms it deems most qualified, to take place within ten (10) business days following notification.
- E. Selection criteria to be used by the Committee are:
 - 1. Responsiveness to the scope of work and these instructions to firms;
 - 2. Past performance of the firm including timely completion of services, compliance with scope of work performed within budgetary constraints, and user satisfaction;
 - 3. Specialized experience and technical competence in performing relevant services in the past ten (10) years, including qualifications of staff members who will be involved in these services;
 - 4. Composition of the principals and staff assigned to provide these services, particularly the proposed manager and immediate staff, and their qualifications and experience with services such as that being proposed;
 - 5. Adequacy of the personnel of the firm to accomplish the proposed scope of work in the required time;
 - 6. Firm's capacity to perform the work, giving consideration to current

workloads;

7. Firm's familiarity with problems applicable to this type of service;
8. References from previous clients, including size and scope of the services, name and telephone number of contact person.
9. Oral presentations, if required;

XI. PROPOSALS AND AWARD SCHEDULE

- A. Proposals received prior to the deadline will be treated as confidential. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered in the evaluation process and will be returned unopened.
- B. It is expected that the contract award will be made within twenty-five (25) calendar days after the opening of proposals. The contract will be awarded to the Vendor whose proposal, conforming to this request, will be the most advantageous to EWVEA.
- C. Proposals must give the full name and address of the proposer and the person signing the proposal shall indicate his or her title and/or authority to bind the firm in a contract.
- D. Proposals cannot be altered or amended after they are opened.
- E. The approval or disapproval of Consultants will be determined by their response to this request and on past performance. No assumptions should be made on the part of the Consultant as to this Committee's prior knowledge of their abilities.
- F. EWVEA reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted and to request additional information of one or more applicants.

XII. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- A. EWVEA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or to award the contract to the next recommended Consultant if the successful Consultant fails to execute an agreement within ten (10) calendar days after being notified of the award of this proposal.
- B. EWVEA reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted and to request additional information of one or more applicants.
- C. Any proposal may be withdrawn up until the date and time set within this RFP for the opening of the proposals. Any proposal not so withdrawn will constitute an irrevocable offer, for a period of ninety (90) calendar days, to sell to EWVEA the services set forth above.
- D. The selected Consultant shall be required to enter into a contract agreement with

EWVEA. Any agreement or contract resulting from the acceptance of the proposal shall be made on forms approved by EWVEA and shall contain, as a minimum, applicable provisions of this request for proposal. EWVEA reserves the right to reject any agreement that does not conform to this request for proposal and any EWVEA requirements for agreements or contracts.

- E. Consultant shall not assign any interest in the contract and shall not transfer any interest in the same without prior written consent of the Chairman of EWVEA.
- F. No reports, information or data given to or prepared by the Consultant under this agreement shall be made available to any individual or organization by the Consultant without the prior written approval of the Chairman of EWVEA.
- G. Consultants shall give specific attention to the identification of those portions of their proposals that they deem to be confidential, proprietary information or trade secrets and provide any justification why such materials, upon request, should not be disclosed by EWVEA under the West Virginia Freedom of Information Act.
- H. EWVEA shall not be liable for any costs incurred by the Consultant in regard to preparation of your proposal.
- I. EWVEA reserves the right to request interviews.
- J. EWVEA reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals, to waive technicalities, and to take whatever action is in the best interest of the Board.
- K. EWVEA reserves the right to not hold discussions after award of the contract.
- L. By submitting a proposal, the Consultant agrees that they are satisfied, as a result of their own investigations of the conditions set forth in this request, that they fully understand their obligations.
- M. The Consultant shall abide by and comply with the true intent of the RFP and its Scope of Work and not take advantage of any unintentional error or omission, but shall fully complete every part as the true intent and meaning of the scope of services, as decided by EWVEA, and as described herein.
- N. If awarded a contract, the Consultant hereby represents and warrants:
 - 1. That it is qualified to do business in the State of West Virginia and that it will take such action as, from time to time hereafter, may be necessary to remain so qualified;
 - 2. That it is not in arrears with respect to the payment of any monies due and owing the State, or any department or agency thereof, including, but not limited to, the payment of taxes and employee benefits, and that it shall not become so in arrears during the term of the contract; that it shall comply with all federal, State, and local laws, ordinances, and legally enforceable rules and regulations applicable to its activities and obligations under the contract;

3. That it shall procure, at its expense, all licenses, permits, insurance, and governmental approvals, if any, necessary to the performance of its obligations under the contract.
 4. That the facts and matters set forth hereafter in the contract and made a part hereof are true and correct.
- O. In addition to any other remedy available to EWVEA, breach of any of the services contracted herein shall, at the election of EWVEA, be grounds for termination. Failure of EWVEA to terminate the contract shall not be considered or construed as neither a waiver of such breach nor as a waiver of any rights or remedies granted or available to EWVEA.
- P. **HOLD HARMLESS/INDEMNIFICATION** If a contract is awarded, the successful Consultant will be required to indemnify and hold EWVEA, its agents and/or employees harmless from and against all liability and expenses, including attorney's fees, howsoever arising or incurred, alleging damage to property or injury to, or death of, any person arising out of or attributable to the Consultant's performance of the contract awarded. Any property or work to be provided by the Consultant under this contract will remain at the Consultant's risk until written acceptance by EWVEA; and the Consultant will replace, at Consultant's expense, all property or work damaged or destroyed by any cause whatsoever.
- Q. Termination for Convenience: EWVEA may terminate a contract, in whole or in part, whenever the Council determines that such termination is in the best interest of the Board, without showing cause, upon giving written notice to the Consultant. EWVEA shall pay all reasonable costs incurred by the Consultant up to the date of termination. However, in no event shall the Consultant be paid any amount that exceeds the price proposed for the work performed. The Consultant will not be reimbursed for any profits which may have been anticipated but which have not been earned up to the date of termination.
- Termination for Default: When the Consultant has not performed or has unsatisfactorily performed the contract, EWVEA may terminate the contract for default. Upon termination for default, payment may be withheld at the discretion of EWVEA. Failure on the part of a Consultant to fulfill the contractual obligations shall be considered just cause for termination of the contract. The Consultant will be paid for work satisfactorily performed prior to termination less any excess costs incurred by EWVEA in re-procuring and completing the work.
- R. All work product produced under this contract is the property of EWVEA to include, but not limited to, web content, site selector packets, facts sheets, etc., and any and all design changes.
- S. **INTERPRETATION:** The contract resulting from this proposal shall be construed under the laws of the State of West Virginia.

XIII. INTERPRETATIONS, DISCREPANCIES, OMISSIONS

Should any Consultant find discrepancies in, or omissions from, the documents or be in doubt of their meaning, they should at once request in writing an interpretation from EWVEA. All necessary interpretations will be issued to all Consultants in the form of addenda to the specifications, and such addenda shall become part of the contract documents. Failure of any Consultant to receive any such addendum or interpretation shall not relieve such Consultant from any obligation under their proposal as submitted. EWVEA will assume no responsibility for oral instructions or suggestions. **ORAL ANSWERS SHALL NOT BE BINDING ON EWVEA.** No requests received after **February 3, 2025 at 2PM** will be considered. Every interpretation made by EWVEA will be made in the form of an addendum that, if issued, will be sent by EWVEA to all interested parties.

ATTACHMENT AEW
NON-COLLUSION CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY I am the _____
(Title) and the duly authorized representative of the firm of _____
whose address is _____

AND THAT NEITHER I nor, to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, the above firm nor any of its other representatives I here represent have:

Agreed, conspired, connived or colluded to produce a deceptive show of competition in the compilation of the bid or offer being submitted herewith;

Not in any manner, directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement, participated in any collusion to fix the bid price or price proposal of the bidder or offeror herein or any competitor, or competitive bidding in connection with the Contract for which the within bid or offer is submitted; and that no member of the Eastern West Virginia Economic Partnership board has any interest in the bidding company except as follows: (complete if applicable)

I solemnly affirm under the penalties of perjury that the contents of the foregoing paper are true to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

Signature

Date Printed or Typed Name