

# **REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

## **Media Services and Public Relations Firm The Atlanta Development Authority**

### **Background**

The Atlanta Development Authority (ADA) is the official economic development agency for the City of Atlanta (Atlanta). ADA represents Atlanta, with a city population of 420,000 and growing. As a research-based economic development organization, it focuses on residential, business and investment growth in Atlanta. ADA is governed by its own nine- member board of directors, chaired by the mayor of Atlanta. ADA's core competency is promoting the economic development of Atlanta, thus attracting and retaining businesses and creating jobs. ADA has approximately 40 employees and partners with over 55 economic development partner organizations regularly. For additional information on ADA go to: [http://www.atlantada.com/aboutADA/documents/annual\\_report\\_2010\\_final\\_feb21.pdf](http://www.atlantada.com/aboutADA/documents/annual_report_2010_final_feb21.pdf).

The contract term shall be for one year from the date of execution of the contract.

### **Purpose of RFQ**

The purpose of this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is to identify and select a Media Services and Public Relations vendor/partner for the development and execution of a strategic public relations program. The potential vendor must be an established Media Services and Public Relations firm with the requisite experience and resources to partner with ADA to accomplish the public relations objectives of ADA, which are detailed within this RFQ.

This RFQ has been sent to a list of interested parties and has been posted on ADA's website ([www.atlantada.com](http://www.atlantada.com)) to invite submittals from any interested firms.

### **Media Services and Public Relations Overview**

ADA believes that strengthening our national and international profile and increasing awareness and understanding among strategic audiences is critical to our accelerating job growth and increasing competitiveness. As economic development organizations, cities and regions compete for business attraction and job creation and much rides on the awareness among key decision-makers of the Atlanta narrative and city assets.

Externally, ADA has three main objectives as it begins to raise the level of awareness and understanding:

- Attract donations by distinguishing ADA from other municipalities and development authority organizations and identify new opportunities to serve the public;
- Increase the number of business relocation leads coming to the ADA directly from companies and/or their brokers; and
- Create a high level of trust and goodwill among residents, local media and elected officials that promotes and protects ADA and its programs for many years to come and empowers the agency to continue serving.

ADA seeks to engage a firm to manage an aggressive, proactive and integrated-approach communications and public relations program. There are many new and existing opportunities on the horizon and the ADA seeks to tell its story and shape its identity and reputation for the long term.

To achieve its' objectives, ADA intends to implement a number of strategies, including, but not limited to the following:

- Enhance the depth and breadth of ADA media coverage to increase overall awareness and to raise the profile of Atlanta's economic development efforts and accomplishments;
- Promote the strategic industry clusters identified in the economic development plan to enable the city and ADA to compete more aggressively and strategically for business attraction;
- Cultivate proactive relationships with reporters to improve the quality and substance of the media coverage the City and ADA receive;
- Further develop an online community that includes a strong approach to social networking;
- Develop a spokesperson program for ADA.

### **Scope of Work**

The selected respondent shall provide media services to ADA and all related entities in support of the vision and mission of ADA. Activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Manage and coordinate media relationships facilitating positive media coverage to include press releases, advisories, media pitching, coordinating media interviews, media inquiries and similar activities for ADA.
2. Ensure publication of timely and regular news stories that generate quantifiable earned media value. Achieve at least 8-10 media placements per month for the ADA.
3. Create an annual comprehensive strategic communication plan for ADA and related entities.
4. Provide guidance, training and professional development to ADA staff for improving media communications skills, use of social media, and emerging media.
5. Develop and produce creative informational materials, such as newsletters, videos, annual reports, brochures, ads, PSAs and mailing pieces.
6. Archival of online and multimedia coverage of ADA activities in hardcopy and electronic formats for permanent storage and reference purposes.
7. Plan special events, press tours, press conferences, etc. Promote ADA led housing fairs and bus tours to increase attendance and drive mortgage applications.
8. Monitor local, national and other on-line press articles and news stories relevant to ADA and related entities for dissemination to project stakeholders.
9. Provide crisis management training, as necessary, and execute crisis management in situations where such is deemed appropriate or necessary.
10. Assist in development of communications plans for all ADA programs.
11. Create trade show materials.
12. Identify opportunities to establish meaningful rapport between ADA and the city's diverse community resulting in grassroots and community support.
13. Secure placements or mega profiles in trade publications and international publications such as Site Selection, Expansion Magazine, National Real Estate Investor and major international publications.

14. Provide assistance in the planning and execution of public forums related to all aspects of ADA, including talking points and powerpoint presentations.
15. Develop the ADA's new mission and value statement and boilerplate language to be used in press releases, RFP's, on the website and in legal documents.
16. Insure posting of new content developed by public relations team to website and social media channels.

Deliverables shall include weekly reports, press releases, media tours, media scheduling of ADA staff interviews, media follow-up discussions, public relations outreach, archiving media documentation and monthly tracking reports.

### **Content for Description of Qualifications**

Responses to this Request for Proposals shall include the following sections:

- 1) Organizational Overview
- 2) Media Strategy and Public Relations Program Development
- 3) Client Services and Partnership
- 4) Budget and Fees
- 5) Equal Business Opportunity

#### **Organizational Overview**

- Provide a firm profile indicating length of time the firm has been in operation and describe the firm's core competencies.
- Provide a brief history of the firm. Include the firm's mission statement and values, if applicable.
- Provide the firm's organizational structure, together with the number of full-time, part-time and contract employees. List any contractors or third-parties which will be potentially involved in providing services to ADA.
- Provide three references which are the firm's current clients. Please include the company name, address, phone number and contact name for each reference. References will not be contacted prior to an on-site presentation.
- Summarize the firm's experience working with:
  - the nonprofit industry
  - economic development agencies
  - real estate developers and property owners
  - site selection firms

#### **Media Strategy and Public Relations Program Development**

- Describe the firm's philosophy and strategy for developing media and public relations programs.
- Provide a description of successful media and public relations programs that the firm has developed that have relevancy to the objectives of the ADA. Include innovative approaches that were successful in achieving the client's public relations objectives.
- What metrics does the firm use to quantify program effectiveness?
- Describe the firm's expertise developing alternative media, including social networking program development.
- Describe the firm's media contacts, including international and national media relationships and/or partnerships, as well as those based in the Metropolitan Atlanta Area.
- Provide the firm's training capabilities in connection with preparing ADA staff to be interviewed and field questions from the media.

- Describe the firm's approach to cultivating opportunities for speaking engagements for identified spokespeople at ADA.
- Please include samples, case studies, program summaries and/or other communications that exemplify the firm's capabilities and successes. Include examples from crisis management, public relations and marketing.

#### Client Partnership

- Describe in detail the team that will be involved on a day-to-day basis.
- Describe each person's role. Provide a biography for key individuals, including tenure with the company.

#### Budget and Fees

- Include the firm's proposed budget and fees. Provide a detailed list specific to the objectives provided herein. Indicate the firm's willingness to consider a flexible fee arrangement, i.e. a monthly retainer in lieu of hourly charges.

#### Equal Business Opportunity

- Describe the firm's plan, if any, to utilize disadvantaged, minority-owned, woman-owned and small business enterprises in performing the scope of work.

### **Assessment of Consultant Qualifications**

The following criteria will form the basis upon which ADA will evaluate the firm's qualifications:

Overall capabilities to meet the media services and public relations objectives as described in this RFP

- Ability to deliver creative and innovative ideas and solutions
- Expertise in development of thought leadership programs
- Capabilities in alternative media, including social networking websites and advocacy
- Experience in the nonprofit, real estate and economic development industries
- Crisis management experience

Strength and reach of relationships

- Local/regional government leaders, corporate executives, real estate developers, financial and investment community
- Regional and Atlanta-based media
- National top-tier media
- International media experience or partnerships

Internal and external communications expertise

- Positioning the ADA name
- Shaping ADA's economic development messages
- Motivating and inspiring employees
- Leveraging communication as a component of economic development marketing and business attraction
- Leveraging public relations as a component of telling the narrative of Atlanta and ADA
- Training (including media training capabilities)

Account Team

- Qualifications, tenure and commitment
- Commitment to service, flexibility and responsiveness
- Cultural fit with ADA

- Enthusiasm for ADA's mission and programs

Reputation and stability of the firm

- Quality of the overall team, to include current and past client work
- Competitive nature of the fee proposal

Responses to this RFQ will be evaluated based on the respondent's response to all relevant criteria stated in the RFQ. ADA has the right to reject any and all proposals. Proposals will be evaluated by a committee consisting of ADA's staff. Committee members will review the proposals individually and collectively to determine total points and rank them accordingly. After reviewing submittals, ADA will select the winning proposal. The cost of preparing and submitting a response to this RFQ is the burden of the respondent, and ADA will not reimburse respondent for any costs incurred in responding to this RFQ.

It is the policy of ADA to prohibit discrimination against any person or business in pursuit of business opportunities on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or geographic location and to conduct its contracting and purchasing programs so as to prevent such discrimination.

Responses to this RFQ are limited to 50 pages. Responses are due by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 7, 2011.

### ***Submittal Information***

#### **Timeline**

**August 16 – RFQ distribution**

**August 24 – Submission of questions**

**August 30 - Responses to questions posted on website**

**September 7, 5:00pm – Submittals due**

**September 14 – September 16 – Finalist interviews**

All questions should be directed in writing to the following e-mail address:

**RFP-RFQquestions@atlantada.com**

All responses to questions will be posted on The Atlanta Development Authority website ([www.atlantada.com](http://www.atlantada.com)) by Tuesday, August 30, 2011.

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**All respondents should submit four (4) hard copies and one (1) disc of its response to this RFQ to :**

**Ernestine W. Garey  
Chief Operating Officer  
The Atlanta Development Authority  
86 Pryor Street, SW  
Suite 300  
Atlanta, GA 30303**

**BY NO LATER THAN WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2011 5:00PM**

Responses should be inserted into an envelope clearly labeled as follows:

**RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS  
[Respondent Name]  
Media Services and Public Relations Firm**