Request for Qualifications

Public Relations Services

Deadline:

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. will receive proposals until May 29, 2025

Deliver Electronically to:

Andy Guy
Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.
aguy@downtowngr.org

DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

Background

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI) is the organization responsible for city-building and place-management in the urban core of Grand Rapids at the heart of Michigan's fastest growing region. Established in 2013, DGRI serves as the singular management entity for the combined operations of the Downtown Development Authority, Downtown Improvement District and the Monroe North Tax Increment Finance Authority.

DGRI also is incubating the Grand River Network, a backbone agency working cross-sector to facilitate the coordination and action required to revitalize the Grand River Corridor and establish the Grand River Greenway. More info can be found at downtowngr.org and grandriver.network.

This RFQ aims to identify experienced and interested firms with demonstrated ability to advance nonprofit and public-sector communication goals, raise community awareness, build public trust and shape understanding of complex community development issues.

Scope of Services

DGRI invites qualifications from experienced public relations, strategic communications and public affairs firms to support the organization's public outreach and information efforts. Selected firms may be asked to support a range of activities, including but not limited to:

- Strategic communications planning
- Message development and storytelling
- Media relations and press engagement
- Public affairs strategy
- Event organizing and program development (ie project groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings, etc)
- Community relations and outreach
- Crisis communication planning and response

Projects may be issue-specific, campaign-based or ongoing advisory in nature.

Qualifications

Respondents should demonstrate:

- Experience working with mission-minded nonprofit and public sector clients
- Capacity to provide strategic guidance and tactical implementation
- A track record of successful public relations outcomes

- Familiarity with local, regional and state-level media landscapes (especially in West Michigan)
- Cultural competence and humility and an ability to lead communication initiatives that reach and connect with the diverse communities/audiences that call West Michigan home

Submission Requirements

Responses to this Request for Qualifications should be no longer than 10 pages and include the following information:

- Cover Letter – Brief overview of the firm's interest and relevant experience
- Firm Profile – Including team bios and organizational structure
- Relevant Experience – At least 3 examples of past PR projects, including outcomes
- Client References – Contact information for at least two current or recent clients
- Hourly Rates / Billing Structure – Or preferred pricing models
- Disclosures – Any potential conflict of interests

Responses should be submitted in digital format to Andy Guy (aguy@downtowngr.org). PDF submissions are preferred.

Consultant Selection

Responses will be reviewed based on the criteria below. DGRI may conduct interviews with short-listed firms.

- Qualifications and capacity to perform the work
- Understanding of local community development issues, context and ambitions
- Professional excellence
- Rates, fees and cost competitiveness
- Responsiveness and clarity of submission

Project Schedule

May 14, 2025 – RFQ Issued
May 29, 2025 – Qualifications Due from Interested Applicants
June 4, 2025 – Notice of Award
June 2025 – Anticipated Contract Start