



Branding / Communication Services

Request for Proposal

Issued February 7, 2018

Responses are due Tuesday, February 27, 2018 4:00 p.m.

10107 Brecksville Road, Brecksville, OH 44141

REGIONAL INCOME TAX AGENCY

Branding / Communication Services

Request for Proposal

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February 5, 2018

The Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA, the Agency) is seeking proposals from branding and communications professionals, agencies, and firms (Firm) to assist in the development and implementation of a comprehensive messaging and communications strategy for the Agency.

Sealed proposals are due in the offices of the Executive Director of the Regional Income Tax Agency, 10107 Brecksville Road, Brecksville, Ohio, 44141 no later than 4:00 PM. E.D.S.T., Tuesday, February 27, 2018.

If any part of your proposal is printed and delivered to RITA the envelopes shall be clearly marked "**Branding / Communications - RFP Response**". All proposals must conform to the requirements of the Request for Proposals (RFP).

Copies of the RFP will be on file for inspection and may be obtained at the offices of the Regional Income Tax Agency. Any questions concerning this RFP must be directed, in writing, to Don Smith, Executive Director, via e-mail at dsmith@ritaohio.com.

The Agency reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or any part of any proposals, or to waive informalities or defects in proposals, as the Board of Trustees of the Agency deems to be in the best interest of the Agency.

Sincerely,

Donald W. Smith

Executive Director

Introduction

The Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA, the Agency) is a governmental entity established to administer and collect local income taxes for political subdivisions. As an agent for its municipalities, RITA provides substantial financial services to its members. Municipal income tax is collected from individuals and/or employer withholders on salaries, wages, commissions, fees and other forms of compensation. The tax is also collected from business entities based on net profits. As of 1/1/2018 there were over 320 taxing jurisdictions served by the Agency (approximately 45% of all taxing jurisdictions in Ohio with an income tax) and total tax collections approaching \$1.4 billion.

RITA intends to award a contract to a qualified Firm to provide general messaging, brand strategy and public relations and communications services on behalf of the Agency. The Agency has established its 2018 Total Campaign Do Not Exceed budget at \$200,000.

Please include in your proposal the Firm's proposed services and fee structure vs. estimated media buy and additional outside associated costs.

RITA is not responsible for any costs incurred by the respondent in preparation of a proposal. RITA reserves the right to negotiate with the vendors submitting proposals in order to obtain the most favorable terms, conditions and pricing for the Agency as determined by the Agency in its sole discretion. Also, as deemed in the best interest of the Agency by the Board of Trustees, RITA reserves the right to reject any or all parts of the proposals.

SCOPE OF WORK

APRIL 2018 through December 2018

RITA intends to award a contract to a qualified Firm to provide general messaging, brand strategy and public relations and communications services on behalf of the Agency. The Firm selected should, at a minimum, be able to provide the following services:

1. Strategic Communications and Brand Strategy

Develop and assist with the implementation of a strategic communications plan that supports RITA and their goals as a successful tax administration service agency. The plan should be designed to identify and engage the desired audiences effectively and in a way that reflects favorably on the Agency.

The plan should include, but is not limited to:

- General guidance and collaborative development of messaging strategies and positioning.
- Communication strategies to bolster positive public perception, support and expand awareness of RITA's services and the benefits of its role in member municipalities.
- Effective outreach strategies, goals, and objectives to be used in advertising, promoting, and appropriately communicating RITA's position with respect to ongoing litigation and legislative initiatives, while considering an evolving landscape of circumstances and appropriately employing the use of print and digital media exposure.
- Marketing and branding tools that support the efforts of RITA to establish a favorable public image and which strengthens the perceived value of RITA's role in member municipalities.
- Promotion of public awareness of RITA's efficiencies and expertise through a consistent and positive message.
- Periodic story generation and placement of RITA news-related sponsored content.
- Consultation on website redesign as an effective communication tool with a primary emphasis on aesthetic design improvements and layout, and as appropriate, recommendations that would improve content, ease of access, and functionality.

2. Media Relations

- Liaise with local and statewide media outlets as requested or as relevant.
- Develop press releases and responses to media inquiries as needed.
- Provide general media assistance; i.e., crisis management, fact checking, and developing responses to negative publicity, as needed.

CONTENT OF PROPOSALS

RITA requests that interested Firms submit a proposal containing the following:

1. Cover letter, which identifies the Firm's primary contact person(s) for the proposal.
2. Capability of the Firm – to include, but not limited to: familiarity with state and local tax laws and regulations pertaining to municipal taxes, and specifically knowledge and familiarity of Ohio municipal net profit tax laws relative to O.R.C and recently enacted revisions to municipal net profit tax administration and collection services.
3. Description of experience working with other clients in public and municipal sectors.
4. Summary of key personnel who would be assigned to represent RITA, and the specific services each would provide.
5. Description of all known fees and costs to be incurred by RITA. This should include the Firm's cost to create the initial plan and fee structure for “as needed” services after initial plan implementation (i.e., creating press releases, designing materials, writing and executing messaging and branding strategy, media placement, etc.).
6. Description of the process and tools the Firm will employ to develop the Agency's branding and messaging strategy and positioning.
7. Samples of past client work which appropriately represent: brand strategy development and execution; messaging and creative tactics (digital, print, video); logos and tag lines; website layout and aesthetic designs; press releases and sponsored content creation.

8. The Firm's Budget (in summary form) and Strategy (general overview), including the Firm's proposed outline of communication tactics and how costs, within the Agency's stated Not-to-Exceed \$200,000 budget, would be apportioned between the Firm's proposed services and fee structure vs. estimated media buy and additional outside associated costs.

RITA also asks that you describe and list any actual or apparent conflicts of interest relative to state or local government relationships, including but not limited to; direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, ongoing or anticipated work by the Firm, or any otherwise relevant circumstances that might present conflicts in the ability to impartially represent the interests of RITA as required by the terms of agreement

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals must be received by the Executive Director, Regional Income Tax Agency, by 4:00 P.M. E.D.S.T., Tuesday, February 27, 2018. The Agency prefers that proposals be emailed to rfp@ritaohio.com. If all or a portion of the proposal cannot be emailed it must be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to:

Executive Director
Regional Income Tax Agency
10107 Brecksville Road
Brecksville, Ohio 44141

If the proposal or any part of the proposal is submitted on paper it shall have marked on the outside of the envelope "**Branding / Communications - RFP Response**".

It is RITA's intention to enter into a contract as soon as practical after the proposals are evaluated and Board approval is received. The successful Firm shall enter into a contract with RITA within ten days of the notification of award or as soon as practical thereafter as determined by RITA. Implementation work is expected to begin no later than April 2018.

Proposals will be evaluated on several factors including the degree of fit to the requirements and cost.

The Agency reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or any part of any proposal, or to waive informalities or defects in proposals, as the Board of Trustees of the Agency shall deem to be in the best interest of the Agency. By submitting a proposal, each respondent is insuring that complete confidentiality of all Agency information will be maintained by all vendor personnel.

By submitting a proposal, each respondent is insuring that he/she is an Equal Opportunity Employer and that his/her employees and applicants for employment are not discriminated against because of their race, creed, color, sex, genetic information or national origin. By signing a contract with RITA, the successful vendor guarantees that he/she complies, or will comply with the above provision and all other applicable state and federal laws regarding public contract work, and agrees to indemnify and hold RITA harmless from any claims or damages incurred against or by RITA resulting from any non-compliance by the successful vendor.

By submitting a proposal, each respondent is declaring that they are not in arrears to RITA for municipal income taxes on behalf of any of its member municipalities or any other obligation to the Agency.