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# DOWNTOWN HOUSTON REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS PUBLIC RELATIONS

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## **Project Overview**

Central Houston Inc (CHI), the Houston Downtown Management District (HDMD) and the Downtown Redevelopment Authority (DRA) are seeking a qualified firm with a proven track record and experience assisting districts and urban places in effective public and media relations. Houston is a rapidly changing urban center that is home to major industries, innovation and becoming one of the world's most dynamic mixed-use neighborhoods. CHI, HDMD, & DRA seek to be the voice of, to, and for the community - connecting the growing residential and workforce populations within the commercial district and bringing a sense of cohesion and placemaking to the area. The outward-facing voice of the organization, and how it is represented in the media, should honor all three of the organization's legacies and purposes, and should create a nod to their future operating under one newly-developed shared vision and mission statements.

## **Organizational Overview**

CHI is a 501(c)6 nonprofit corporation formed in 1983 that has led or assisted in countless efforts that have reimagined, reshaped, catalyzed, and improved Downtown Houston. CHI has historically convened business, real estate, non-profit, and governmental agencies, and philanthropic leaders together to advance strategic planning, investments, and other community-building initiatives. CHI serves as the operator to both HDMD and the DRA.

The HDMD is a locally applied, state created public entity, that has been in operation since 1996. The HDMD implements a special assessment on real estate within Downtown Houston and operates under the direction of a 30-member board of directors. CHI has provided the staff and administration to HDMD since its inception. The HDMD was renewed most recently in 2020 for a term of 5 years.

The DRA, comprised of a 9-member board of directors appointed by the taxing entities, manages Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) #3. A TIRZ is a public, local government tool created by the City of Houston which captures incremental increases in property tax value generated over time within a defined geographic area. Since 2014, CHI has provided the staff and administration to the DRA via a contract with the City of Houston. TIRZ #3 is currently authorized through 2043.

## **Vision**

At the intersection of global commerce and local culture, Downtown is Houston's heart of opportunity, excitement, and joy.

## **Mission**

Champion and enhance Downtown Houston as a connected and thriving place for everyone

## Project Scope and Deliverables

The contract period shall commence on or around March 1, 2023 and conclude on February 29, 2024, with options for renewal and extensions for up to a 3-year period. The PR Firm will work directly with the President & CEO, the Director of Engagement, and the Communications Manager.

This will include but not be limited to the following:

- Promote introduction of new projects and initiatives of the organization
- Relationship building and in-person meetings with media, executive speaking opportunities and thought-leadership positioning
- Develop and maintain a targeted media list
- Cultivate and maintain relationships with reporters, editors, social media influencers, and bookers at key media publications, outlets, programs, etc.
- Proactively pursue stories and respond to inquiries – targeting all forms of media: broadcast, digital, podcasts, print, as appropriate for each opportunity.
- Develop media kits, as needed.
- Promote special events and ongoing media relations for new development and business activities on behalf of the organization occurring within Downtown Houston.
- Develop strategies to put Downtown Houston plus CHI, DRA and HDMD and their activities and investments in the best light
- As needed, develop crisis communications strategies and other expedient messages in response to community challenges
- Manage media requests about opportunities, issues, and events that occur within the district, and
- Draft press releases, messaging documents, talking points, media Q&As, etc.

## Metrics, Reporting & Evaluation

- Weekly virtual meetings for status reports and updates
- Monthly reports should be received by 5<sup>th</sup> of the succeeding month
- Quarterly reports should be received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the first month in the next quarter
- Annual report should be received by January 31, 2024. This report should also include a competitive analysis of the state of the industry, HDMD's position in the market, and issues that could adversely or positively affect the organization's strategic position going forward

## Proposed Timeline:

Notice to Distribute	February 7, 2023
RFP Distribution	February 7, 2023
Deadline for Receipt of Questions	February 24, 2023
Submittal Deadline	March 4, 2023 @ 5pm
Evaluation of Proposals	March 4-7, 2023
Oral Presentations (if required)	TBD
Firm Selection	March 8, 2023

## **Budget**

The current budgeted amount for the contract is \$90,000 annually. Additional components may be added as developments occur, and subject to agreement by both parties.

## **Instructions:**

Please submit a single electronic PDF file submission via email to Jenna Beasley at [jenna@downtowndistrict.org](mailto:jenna@downtowndistrict.org) to consist of the following sections:

- Title Page: includes company name, address, phone number, email address and primary contact person
- Proposal Submission Requirements to include:
  - Your company description, including your values and approach
  - Description of due diligence and service approach, including an outline of the proposed process and specific approaches as well as key milestones
  - Experience and similar clients with services provided by your company
  - Staff, including a description of proposed staff availability, and expertise specific to the RFP
  - References, including name, phone number, email address for references from 2-3 previous clients for similar accounts
  - Budget, including proposed staff and hourly rates.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

The criteria used in the evaluation of the proposals will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Demonstrated capacity to provide public relations services for similar clients (25%)
- Experience working with media outlets within the Houston MSA (10%)
- Experience working with state-wide and national media outlets (10%)
- Firm experience; including depth and breadth of proposed project team (20%)
- Value and pricing structure (15%)
- Review of references (10%)
- Participation of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE), defined as minority- or woman-owned business enterprises (MWBE) (10%). Proof of DBE or MWBE status, such as certification by the City of Houston, may be required.

## **Due Dates and Notifications**

Proposals Due: Saturday, March 4, 2023, by 5pm

Contract Award/Project Begins: Wednesday, March 8, 2023; subject to change

## **Questions**

Qualified vendors are encouraged to send an email to [jenna@downtowndistrict.org](mailto:jenna@downtowndistrict.org) ASAP indicating their intent to submit a quote or proposal.

Faxed submittals are not acceptable. Late bids are not acceptable and will not be considered in this process.

Any questions regarding this Request for Proposal (RFP) should be emailed to Jenna Beasley at [jenna@downtowndistrict.org](mailto:jenna@downtowndistrict.org). Answers will be forwarded to all vendors who sent an email indicating their intent to submit. Phone calls and other solicitation will not be accepted.

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM FOR  
CHI, HDMD, and the DRA**

Central Houston Inc (CHI), the Houston Downtown Management District (HDMD) and the Downtown Redevelopment Authority (DRA) will receive responses to this Request for Proposal (RFP), for a public relations firm for ongoing public relation services. Proposals will be received until 5:00 P.M., local time on Saturday, March 4, 2023, by Jenna Beasley, Communications Manager, to [jenna@downtowndistrict.org](mailto:jenna@downtowndistrict.org). Proposals submitted after the submission deadline will not be accepted. Respective of this advertisement, telephone or mail queries or requests for information will not be addressed.

Beginning Tuesday, February 7, 2023, this Request for Proposal (RFP) may be reviewed and downloaded as an electronic file from the HDMD's website: <http://www.downtowndistrict.org/procurement-rfp-opportunities/>. Based on the Proposals submitted, an evaluation and selection committee will identify the highest-ranked proposal. Staff will negotiate and recommend to the HDMD Board for authorization to contract with the selected consultant based on the evaluation criteria.

Proposers shall comply with City of Houston Code of Ordinances, Chapter 15, Articles II, V, VI, and XI and the Mayor's Executive Orders No.1-7 Pay or Play (POP) Program for Houston Public Works for the public procurement procedures of the City of Houston Office of Business Opportunity (OBO) established in March 2008 and the entity responsible for the administration of the Minority/ Women-Owned (M/WBE), Persons with Disabilities Enterprises (PDBE), and Hire Houston First programs. The successful Proposer will be required to make good faith efforts to achieve an M/WBE and PDBE participation goal of ten percent (10%).