



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

May 31, 2022

Request for Proposals 2022-007

**Strategic Communications and Evaluation for the Flex
Your Commute Program**

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SECTION I – SUMMARY

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) seeks proposals from qualified and experienced consultants in the field of Strategic Communications and Evaluation to assist the Air District with its *Flex Your Commute* program.

The Air District anticipates entering a service agreement with the selected consultant in an amount not to exceed \$250,000.00 per contract year, for up to three (3) years to the consultant selected as the most responsible and whose response conforms to the RFP and meets the Air District’s requirements.

To respond to this Request for Proposals (RFP), an interested company should submit one (1) electronic copy (in Adobe Acrobat PDF file format) of its proposal to the Air District’s Procurement Portal (Portal):

Michael Chao, Staff Specialist
Bay Area Air Quality Management District
375 Beale Street, Suite 600; San Francisco, CA 94105
Portal link: <https://baaqmd.bonfirehub.com>

**Proposals must be submitted and received by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 21, 2022
(deadline).**

Late proposals will not be considered.

Proposals must address all information requested in this RFP. A proposal may add information not requested in this RFP, but the information should be in addition to, not instead of, the requested information and format. Minority business enterprises, women's business enterprises, veteran's business enterprises, and Certified Green Businesses are encouraged to submit proposals. **Any questions regarding this RFP should be submitted through the Portal.**

SECTION II – BACKGROUND

A. Air District Overview

The Air District was created by the California Legislature in 1955 as the first regional agency to deal with air pollution in California. The Air District jurisdiction includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Santa Clara, San Francisco, San Mateo, southwestern Solano, and southern Sonoma counties.

The State Legislature originally gave the Air District the authority to regulate stationary sources of air pollution, such as factories, oil refineries, chemical plants, gasoline stations, and agricultural burning. With more recent legislation, the Air District was granted authority to enact certain transportation and mobile source measures.

The Air District is governed by a twenty-four-member Board of Directors, consisting of elected officials, including county supervisors, mayors, and city council members from the 9-County San Francisco Bay region.

B. Flex Your Commute

The Air District launched the *Flex Your Commute* program in May 2021 in tandem with the announcement of the Commuter Benefits Program Option 5 Telework. Transportation is the largest source of Bay Area air pollution and the source of region's largest greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The *Flex Your Commute* program's goal is to encourage a commute program partnership between employers and employees to reduce transportation related stress, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Commuting to and from work is a significant factor employees consider when making decisions about employment. Encouraging commuting using public transportation, carpool/vanpool, bicycle, telework, or walking eases commute related stress improving employee health and productivity. ***Flex Your Commute encourages a Bay Area wide transportation shift from driving alone to sustainable commuting.*** The *Flex Your Commute* commuting partnership will create a culture of commuting innovation in the Bay Area by rethinking and actively encouraging sustainable commuting.

The *Flex Your Commute* program is a messaging and partnership program designed to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging employers to partner with their employees to actively encourage commuter choices, provide commuter benefits and inspire the use of transit, carpool/vanpool, bicycle, shuttle or telework to eliminate drive-alone commuting. *Flex Your Commute* encourages a Bay Area wide transportation transformation from driving alone to sustainable commuting.

In the Bay Area, transportation is the number one source of greenhouse gas emissions, traffic congestion, and air pollution. Commuters spend hours driving alone, costing them and their employers considerable time and money. Employers encouraging smarter commute habits help employees reduce stress, improving employee health and retention.

As stated above, the *Flex Your Commute* program aims to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gases by encouraging commute options such as transit, telework, biking, carpooling/vanpool, and other active transportation modes to eliminate driving alone to work. Its values include but are not limited to:

- Flexibility: Greater commute choices will make for a healthier, more productive Bay Area.
- Retention: Employers actively supporting and encouraging smarter commuter options can help retain quality employees in the Bay Area.
- Equity: Inclusive and equitable commute management for all commuters.
- Sustainability: Multi-modal transportation choices help companies achieve regional GHG reduction goals.
- Public health: Smart commute choices enhance regional wellness by lowering stress and improving air quality.
- Resilience: Investments in commute modes to insulate the workplace from transportation disruptions.
- Leadership: Advancing commute programs on a regional scale as a national model.

SECTION III – SCOPE OF WORK

The selected bidder (Contractor), working with the Air District's External Affairs Officer will develop, produce and implement the *Flex Your Commute* strategic communications campaign. Work performed under this Agreement may include, but is not limited to:

1. Strategic Communications

Contractor will aid in the development of the *Flex Your Commute* strategic communication and marketing campaigns and will include; Assisting with strategic communication planning and development, written and web-based information; Proactively develop and produce local, regional and multicultural media communications/campaigns generating Bay Area wide press coverage; social media content development, sharing and engagements requested, collect, report, and analyze program data in comparison to industry standards, and best practices. Bidders are encouraged to describe how, in close consultation with Air District staff, bidders will test their approach(es), develop, and document insights, and use findings to update the Messaging strategy.

2. Media/Social Media Strategy

Contractor will develop a media/social media strategy that drives ongoing coverage of *Flex Your Commute* messaging. Contractor will coordinate closely with the Air District's Communications Office as the lead for the agency regarding media and social media efforts.

3. Partnership Development, and Training and

Contractor will work with the External Affairs Office to develop and implement an effective *Flex Your Commute* employer outreach, training and partnership program. The Air District believe employees are more likely to change their commuting behavior when actively and enthusiastically encouraged by their employers. Employees have learned over the two years of the pandemic that additional time, flexibility, and their healthy wellbeing are key benefits they want to maintain. Daily commutes impact employee's wellbeing and health, causing additional stress. The *Flex Your Commute* program aims to encourage employers to recognize their role in partnering with their employees to encourage adoption of sustainable commuting habits. Components of a successful *Flex Your Commute* program could contain:

- Brand development
- Social media content and engagement
- Development and execution of marketing campaigns
- Employer partnership development, training and outreach,
- Website and materials content development
- Media and social media messaging strategy
- Development of program materials in multiple languages for the diverse population of the Bay Area

Contractor's training and marketing materials must be produced in an editable electronic format. The electronic format must be printer-friendly for reproduction and distribution. Contractor will also develop and implement a process for continuous communication with Air District's External Affairs Officer.

Contractor will provide website design, print and production design, production coordination, exhibition development and design, and project collateral (banners, brochures, posters, presentations, cards and other promotional items). Contractor's services must be provided at a level consistent with professional graphic design standards, printing and fabrication services. Contractor will work with in-house staff on small- and large-scale projects relating to the *Flex Your Commute* program.

4. Anticipated Schedule of Services

Contractor will complete frequent (weekly/bi-weekly) small- and large-scale projects with tight time frames, including materials for public forums, meetings, and events; internal and external distribution of information (in a broad range of formats) relating to *Flex Your Commute* program(s); mass media distribution; advertising; and website graphics.

5. Additional Services:

The following items are also required as part of contract fulfillment:

1. **Program Management:** Contractor and Air District's External Affairs Officer will meet in-person for a kick-off meeting. Following the kick-off meeting, Contractor will prepare a final work plan, including project milestones, staffing resources, timelines, and other pertinent details. The Contractor will take part in team meetings/conference calls with Air District staff weekly or bi-weekly, as needed. The Contractor will develop and disseminate call minutes and action items following each call.
2. **Deliverables:** Contractor will finalize the strategic communication and marketing proposals, outreach, and marketing plan recommendations within four (4) weeks of contract signature. Program implementation will begin upon Air District's approval. Contractor's plan will include additional deliverables as identified by the Contractor and External Affairs Officer. Contractor will provide the Air District's External Affairs Officer with bi-weekly reports summarizing the percentage of work completed and percentage of the project budget expended.

SECTION IV – INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

A. General

1. Interested firms must create an account through the Portal described on p. 1 of this RFP to view RFP documents and addenda, and to submit questions and bid documents.
2. All proposals must be made in accordance with the conditions of this RFP. Failure to address any of the requirements is grounds for rejection of this proposal.
3. All information should be complete, specific, and as concise as possible.
4. Proposals should include any additional information that the respondent deems pertinent to the understanding and evaluation of the bid.
5. The Air District may modify the RFP or issue supplementary information or guidelines during the proposal preparation period prior to the due date. Please check our [Portal](#) for updates prior to the deadline.
6. Proposals shall constitute firm offers. Once submitted, proposals may be withdrawn, modified and resubmitted through the Portal up until the June 21, 2022, deadline.
7. The Air District reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.
8. The total quotation for this project should not exceed two hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000.00) per contract year for up to three years.

9. All questions must be in written form and submitted through the Portal no later than **4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 10, 2022**. Firms will not be able to submit questions after this time. All questions will be answered in writing and posted on the [Portal](#) by **6:00 p.m. on Wednesday June 15, 2022**.
10. The cost for developing the proposal is the responsibility of the bidder and shall not be chargeable to the Air District.

B. Submittal of Proposals

All proposals must be submitted according to the specifications set forth in Section V (A) – Contents of Proposal, and this section. Failure to adhere to these specifications may be cause for the rejection of the proposal.

1. **Deadline** – All proposals are due no later than **4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 21, 2022**, and should be submitted via the Portal:

Michael Chao, Staff Specialist
Bay Area Air Quality Management District
375 Beale Street, Suite 600; San Francisco, CA 94105
Portal link: <https://baaqmd.bonfirehub.com>

2. **Uploading large documents** may take significant time, depending on the size of the file(s) and Internet connection speed. Bidders should plan sufficient time before the due date to begin the uploading process and to finalize their submissions. Bidders will not be able to submit documents after the due date. Proposals received after the date and time previously specified will not be considered.
3. **Signature** – All proposals should be signed by an authorized representative of the bidder.
4. **Submittal** – Submit one (1) electronic copy (in Adobe Acrobat PDF file format). Electronic submissions submitted via the Portal will be acknowledged with a confirmation email receipt. Late proposals will not be accepted. Any correction or re-submission of proposals will not extend the submittal due date.
5. **Grounds for Rejection** – A proposal may be immediately rejected at any time if it arrives after the deadline, or is not in the prescribed format, or is not signed by an individual authorized to represent the firm.
6. **Disposition of the Proposals** – All responses to this RFP become property of the Air District and will be kept confidential until a recommendation for award of a contract has been announced. Thereafter, submittals are subject to public inspection and disclosure under the California Public Records Act. If a respondent believes that any portion of its submittal is exempt from public disclosure, it may mark that portion “confidential.” The Air District will use reasonable means to ensure that such confidential information is safeguarded but will not be held liable for inadvertent disclosure of the

information. Proposals marked “confidential” in their entirety will not be honored, and the Air District will not deny public disclosure of any portion of submittals so marked.

By submitting a proposal with portions marked “confidential,” a respondent represents it has a good faith belief that such portions are exempt from disclosure under the California Public Records Act and agrees to reimburse the District for, and to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the District, its officers, employees, and agents, from and against any and all claims, damages, losses, liabilities, suits, judgments, fines, penalties, costs, and expenses, including without limitation, attorneys’ fees, expenses, and court costs of any nature whatsoever, arising from or relating to the District’s non-disclosure of any such designated portions of a proposal.

7. Modification – Once submitted, proposals, including the composition of the contracting team, may be altered up until the due date. Proposals may not be modified after the due date. All proposals shall constitute firm offers valid for ninety (90) days from the **June 21, 2022**, deadline.

C. Interviews

1. The Air District, at its option, may interview bidders. The interviews will be for the purpose of clarifying the proposals.
2. Submittal of new proposal material at an interview will not be permitted.
3. Interviews may involve a presentation and/or a question-and-answer session.
4. Interview teams should be representative of the project team.

SECTION V – PROPOSAL FORMAT, CONTENT, AND SUBMITTAL

A. Contents of Proposal

Submitted proposals must follow the format outlined below and include all requested information. Failure to submit proposals in the required format can result in the proposal being eliminated from evaluation and consideration. Please number your responses exactly as the items are presented here.

1. Technical Proposal
 - a. Cover Letter (Section I) – Must include the name, address, and telephone number of the organization, and must be signed by the person(s) authorized to represent the firm.
 - b. Contact Information – Provide the following information about the organization:
 - Address and telephone number of office nearest to San Francisco, California and the address and phone number of the office that each

- of the proposed staff members are based out of if different.
 - Name of organization's representative designated as the contact and email address.
 - Name of project manager, if different from the individual designated as the contact.
- c. Table of Contents – Clearly identify material contained in the proposal by section
- d. Summary (Section II) – State overall approach to Strategic Communications and Evaluation for the Flex Your Commute Program, including the objectives and scope of work.
- e. Program Schedule (Section III) – Provide projected milestones or benchmarks for completing the project within the total time allowed.
- f. Firm Organization (Section IV) – Provide a statement of your organization's background and related experience in providing similar services to governmental organizations, if any. Describe the technical capabilities of the firm and the firm's exposure with working with environmental regulations, if any. Provide references of other, similar projects including contact name, title, and telephone number for all references listed.
- g. Project Organization (Section V) – Describe the proposed management structure, program monitoring procedures, and organization of the engagement team. Provide a statement detailing your approach to the project, specifically addressing the organization's ability and willingness to commit and maintain staffing to successfully conclude the project on the proposed schedule.
- h. Assigned Personnel (Section VI) – Provide the following information about the staff to be assigned to the project:
- List all key personnel assigned to the project by level and name. Provide a description of their background, along with a summary of their experience in providing similar services for governmental agencies, and any specialized expertise they may have. Background descriptions can be a resume, CV, or summary sheet. Substitution of project manager or staff will not be permitted without prior written approval of the Air District's assigned program manager.
 - Provide a statement of the availability of staff in any local office with requisite qualifications and experience to conduct the requested project.
 - Provide a statement of education and training programs provided to, or required of, the staff identified for participation in the project. Make particular mention of with reference to experience dealing with governmental agencies, procedures, and environmental regulations.

- i. Retention of Working Papers (Section VII) – All working papers are the property of the Air District. Include a statement acknowledging that if your organization is awarded the contract, you will retain project related papers and related reports for a minimum of five (5) years.
 - j. Subcontractors (Section VIII) – List any subcontractors that will be used, the work to be performed by them, and the total number of hours or percentage of time they will spend on the contract.
 - k. Conflict of Interest (Section IX) – Address possible conflicts of interest with other clients affected by contractors’ actions performed by the organization on behalf of the Air District. The Air District recognizes that prospective bidders may have contracts to perform similar services for other clients. Include a complete list of such clients for the past three (3) years with the type of work performed and the total number of years performing such tasks for each client. The Air District reserves the right to consider the nature and extent of such work in evaluating the proposal.
 - l. Additional Data (Section X) – Provide other essential data that may assist in the evaluation of the proposal (e.g. green business certification, etc).
2. Cost Proposal
- a. Name and Address – The Cost Proposal must have the name and complete address of the bidder in the upper, left-hand corner.
 - b. Cost Proposal – The Cost Proposal must list the fully-burdened hourly rates and the total number of hours estimated for each level of professional and administrative staff to be used to perform the tasks required by this RFP. In addition, costs should be estimated for each of the components of the Scope of Work.
 - c. The Cost Proposal does not need to be a separate, sealed document.

SECTION VI – PROPOSAL EVALUATION

A panel of Air District staff will evaluate all proposals. The panel will recommend the selection of the contractor to the Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO), who will, in turn, make a recommendation to the Air District Board of Directors. The Air District Board of Directors must approve the contract to carry out the work described in this RFP. A link to a typical contract for professional services used by the Air District is included in Section VII.

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Criteria	Description	Weight
Expertise	Technical expertise, size and structure of the firm and personnel assigned to RFP tasks;	15%

	firm's ability to perform and complete the work in a professional and timely manner.*	
Skill	Past experience, expertise of the firm and experience of the team working on projects of similar scope for other governmental agencies.	15%
Approach	Responsiveness of the proposal, based upon a clear understanding of the work to be performed.	15%
Cost	Cost or cost effectiveness and resource allocation strategy	15%
References	References of the firm	5%
Firm's Specialty Focus Area	Minority-owned, veteran-owned, women-owned, Certified Green, or local business designations. Experience working with government agencies.**	10%
Available Resources/Customer Relations	Speed and thoroughness of responding to inquiries, requests and number of days.	10%
Advertising	Proposed plan to target customers. The advertising plan will be evaluated for effectiveness and the ability to reach as many prospective customers in the Bay Area as possible.	15%
	Total	100%

- * "Size and structure of firm" refers to the ability of a firm's size to meet the needs of the District. It does not give absolute preference to larger or smaller firms.
- ** The Air District gives preferences to local businesses and those that are certified as green businesses or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise by a government agency or independent private rating organization. "Local business" means that a firm's headquarters is located within the nine counties of the Air District's jurisdiction.

The Air District reserves the right to reject any and all proposals submitted and/or request additional information. During the selection process, the Air District's evaluation panel may interview bidders. The interviews will be for clarification only. The submittal of new material will not be permitted at that time. Interviews may involve a presentation and/or a question-and-answer format or any combination of these.

In the event that two or more proposals receive the same number of points, the more cost-effective proposal shall be given a higher rank.

SECTION VII – SAMPLE CONTRACT

A sample professional services contract to carry out the work described in this RFP is available on the District's website at <http://www.baaqmd.gov/about-the-air-district/request-for-proposals-rfp-rfq/samples-previous>.