



BAY AREA  
AIR QUALITY  
MANAGEMENT  
DISTRICT

June 1, 2023

Request for Proposals# 2023-029

**Public Relations Services**

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**SECTION I – SUMMARY**

In carrying out its mission to improve air quality in the San Francisco Bay Area, The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (“Air District”) seeks proposals from all qualified, experienced consultants or contractors in the field of public relations (“PR”) to support the Air District in media relations and crisis communications services. Through this Request for Proposal (“RFP”) process, the Air District expects to enter into a one-year professional services contract with a PR firm to provide services upon Air District’s request. The Air District may extend the contract for an additional one-year terms at the Air District’s sole discretion.

To respond to this 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. pacific daylight time (PDT) on Friday, June 30, 2023 (“deadline”).  
Late submissions 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 by the deadline.**

## **SECTION II – BACKGROUND**

### **A. Air District Overview**

The Air District is the government agency responsible for protecting air quality in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Air District is tasked with regulating stationary sources of air pollution in the nine counties that surround the San Francisco bay: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, southwestern Solano, and southern Sonoma counties. It is governed by a 24-member Board of Directors composed of locally-elected officials from each of the nine counties. The Air District's mission is to create a healthy breathing environment for every Bay Area resident, while protecting and improving public health, air quality and the global climate.

The Air District aims to achieve its mission through many strategic goals, including reducing and eliminating health problems caused by air pollution, achieving, and maintaining air quality standards, leading the Bay Area's efforts to fight global climate change, creating high-quality regulatory programs, and applying environmental best practices in all operations. To do so, the Air District regulates air pollution emissions from stationary emission sources such as factories, refineries, and power plants, and from smaller facilities like gas stations and dry cleaners. The Air District ensures that such facilities comply with air pollution laws and regulations, provides incentives to replace older, higher-emitting vehicles and equipment with cleaner alternatives, and gives grants and provides outreach to encourage healthy clean air choices by businesses and consumers. The Air District implements these efforts with an equity focus, aiming to reduce air quality disparities and promote environmental justice by targeting air pollution in overburdened communities.

### **B. Public Relations Services**

The goal of this RFP is to identify a qualified PR firm to assist the Air District with as-needed public relations counsel including media pitching, press event support and crisis communications.

Through this RFP, the Air District seeks to select one public relations firm to provide services upon the Air District's request. The selected PR firm will work with the Air District's Communications Office. Firms interested in submitting a proposal to provide such services are required to follow the recommended guidelines and instructions contained in this RFP. If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, revisions will be provided by addenda posted on the Portal.

## **SECTION III – SCOPE OF WORK**

### **A. Services Needed**

The Air District requires the following skilled resources for public relations services.

Interested firms will need to provide a comprehensive action plan for how the interested firm would approach each of the categories below. The scope of services includes the following major components:

**1. Media Pitching**

- Maintain lists of key Bay Area media contacts;
- Provide input on media outreach and targeting strategy;
- Provide creative and engaging communications strategies that are meaningful and effective at amplifying key messages;
- Proactively pitch local, regional, and multicultural media outlets to place stories;
- Generate wide press coverage of Air District health alerts, initiatives, events, and related topics;
- Leverage storytelling to deliver unique messages with clear calls to action;
- Reputation management: maintain and build upon the Air District's distinction to garner support and increase public trust; and
- Support for multicultural media outreach including audience mapping and multicultural media engagement.

**2. Press Events:** may occur as often as three times per quarter.

- Assist with the coordination and logistics of press conferences and/or speaking engagements;
- Beginning-to-end event management including securing locations, notifying media, and making follow-up calls to media after the events;
- Drive media attendance at press events from local, regional, and multicultural media outlets;
- Press materials development and production of media kits; and
- Media training assistance for staff subject matter experts.

**3. Crisis Communications**

- Assist with creating and implementing crisis communications plans to disseminate information and provide support in community awareness during incident response;
- Perform timely and effective response to unplanned incidents that leads to high awareness among Bay Area residents;
- Communicate facts and updates about the situation to rapidly increase public awareness of potential emergency situations and protective actions;
- Assist with collecting information, creating, and disseminating key messages and working with the media; and
- Monitoring of response to the crisis and crisis communication.

**4. Measurement**

- Evaluation of success through media coverage analysis and reporting.

The work will be conducted on an as-needed basis by Air District request. Press events may occur as often as five times per quarter. All work will be conducted within the Air District's nine-county jurisdiction.

## 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, truthful, 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 submission preparation period prior to the due date. Please check our [Portal](#) regularly for updates prior to the due date.
6. Proposals shall constitute firm offers. Once submitted, proposals may be withdrawn, modified, and resubmitted through the Portal up until the **Friday, June 30, 2023**, deadline.
7. The Air District reserves the right to reject any and all proposals for any reason, as allowed by law.
8. The Air District has established a budget of One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (**\$150,000**) for PR services.
9. All questions must be in written form and submitted through the Portal no later than **4 p.m. PDT on Friday, June 9, 2023**. Bidders will not be able to submit questions after this time. All questions will be answered in writing and posted on the [Portal](#) by **6 p.m. PDT on Friday, June 16, 2023**.
10. The cost for developing the proposal is the responsibility of the bidder and shall not be chargeable to the Air District.
11. A bidder's selection and the execution of a contract with the Air District does not guarantee any particular amount of work.

### B. Submittal of Proposals

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

1. Deadline – All proposals are due no later than **4:00 p.m. PDT, Friday, June**

**30, 2023**, 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 proposals. Bidders will not be able to submit documents after the due date and time. 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 to 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 deadline and must be submitted before the deadline, or they will not be considered.
5. Grounds for Rejection – A proposal may be immediately rejected at any time if it arrives after the deadline, does not include any required information, 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, as allowed by law. 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 the inadvertent disclosure of the information, or disclosure required by law. 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 that it has a good faith belief that such portions are exempt from disclosure under the California Public Records Act (Gov. Code, §§ 7920.000 et seq.), and agrees to reimburse the Air District for, and to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Air 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 deadline. All proposals shall constitute firm offers valid for ninety (90) days from the **June 30, 2023**, 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 materials at an interview will not be permitted.
3. Interviews may involve a presentation and/or a question-and-answer session.
4. Firm interview teams should be representative of the firm's project team.

**SECTION V – PROPOSAL CONTENTS**

**A. Contents of Proposal**

Submitted proposals should follow the format outlined below, and include all requested information. Failure to submit proposals in the required format may result in the proposal being eliminated from consideration.

1. Technical Proposal
  - a. Cover Letter (Section I) – Include the business name, address, and telephone number of the firm. The cover letter must be signed by the person(s) authorized to represent the firm.
  - b. Business Contact Information – Provide the following information about the firm:
    - Business address and telephone number of the office nearest to San Francisco, California, and the business address and phone number of the office that each of the proposed staff members are based out of, if different from the office nearest to San Francisco, California.
    - Name of firm's representative designated as the contact and the contact's business email address.
    - Name of project manager, if different from the individual designated as the contact, and the project manager's business email address.
  - c. Table of Contents – Clearly identify material contained in the proposal by section.
  - d. Summary (Section II) – State overall approach to the PR services, including the objectives and scope of work.
  - e. Experience and Qualifications (Section III) – Provide a statement of your firm's background and related experience in providing similar services to

governmental organizations, if any. Describe the technical capabilities of the firm and, in particular, the firm's experience working with environmental regulations, if any.

- f. References (Section IV) - Provide a minimum of three (3) references from other, similar projects, including company name or government entity, contact name, title, and business phone number and e-mail address for all references listed. For each reference, include a description of services provided and dates the services were provided to that particular entity.
- g. Project Approach and Methodology (Section V) – Provide a detailed description of the approach and methodology to be used to accomplish the scope of work.
- h. Project Schedule (Section VI) – Provide projected milestones, benchmarks for completing the project within the total time allowed, or the ability to meet tight deadlines.
- i. Project Organization (Section VII) – Describe the proposed management structure, program monitoring procedures, and organization of the proposed team. Provide a statement addressing your firm's ability and willingness to commit and maintain staffing to successfully conclude the project on the proposed project schedule.
- j. Assigned Personnel (Section VIII) – 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 providing similar services for governmental agencies, and any relevant specialized expertise they may have. Background descriptions can be a resume, curriculum vitae, or summary sheet. Substitution of project manager or staff will not be permitted after the deadline without prior written approval of the Air District's assigned program manager.
  - Provide a statement of the availability of staff in any local office, and their 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 their experience dealing with governmental agencies, procedures, and environmental regulations.
- k. Retention of Working Papers (Section IX) – All working papers are the property of the Air District. Include a statement acknowledging that if your firm is awarded the contract, you will retain project-related papers and related reports for a minimum of five (5) years from the end of the project.
- l. Subcontractors (Section X) – 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.

- m. Conflict of Interest (Section XI) – Address possible conflicts of interest with other clients affected by the contractors’ actions performed by the firm on behalf of the Air District, and the procedures for identifying and resolving conflicts of interest to be used during work for 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 a description of 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.
- n. Additional Data (Section XII) – Provide other essential data that may assist in the evaluation of the proposal.
- o. Self-Certification for Local Business or Green Business (XIII) - If applicable, include a statement self-certifying that your firm qualifies as a local business and/or certified green business. “Local business” means that a firm’s headquarters is located within the nine counties of the Air District’s jurisdiction. A green business must be certified by a government agency or independent private rating organization.

## 2. Cost Proposal

- a. 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.
- b. Include a list of anticipated reimbursable expenses, such as expenses for travel, presentation materials, supplies, deliveries, black/white and color printouts and copies, faxes, photo scans, and copywriting and copyediting services, and the rate charged for each.
- c. Any other fees or charges.

## **SECTION VI – PROPOSAL EVALUATION**

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

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:



Criteria	Description	Points
Expertise	Technical expertise, size and structure of the firm and personnel assigned to RFP tasks; the firm's ability to perform and complete the work in a professional and timely manner.*	20
Skill	Past experience of the firm and, in particular, experience of the team working on projects of similar scope for other governmental agencies.	20
Approach	Responsiveness of the proposal, and whether it shows a clear understanding of the work to be performed.	20
Cost	Cost or cost effectiveness, and resource allocation strategy.	20
References	Quality and applicability of references.	10
Firm's Specialty Focus Area**	Local business.	5
	Certified green business.	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

\* "Size and structure of firm" refers to the ability of a firm's size to meet the needs of the Air 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 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. Bidder must include a statement in their proposal self-certifying that the bidder qualifies as a local business and/or certified green business to receive points for this criteria.

If two or more proposals receive the same number of points, the Air District will accept the lower cost offer.

## SECTION VII – RFP SCHEDULE

MILESTONE	DATE
RFP RELEASE DATE	June 1, 2023
WRITTEN QUESTIONS DUE	June 9, 2023
ANSWERS POSTED ON PORTAL	June 16, 2023
PROPOSAL DEADLINE	June 30, 2023
SELECTION OF FINALIST(S)*	July 21, 2023
COMMENCEMENT OF CONTRACT*	September 1, 2023

\*Dates are tentative and subject to change.

## **SECTION VIII – SAMPLE CONTRACT**

A sample contract to carry out the work described in this RFP is available on the Air District's website at <http://www.baaqmd.gov/about-the-air-district/request-for-proposals-rfp-rfq/samples-previous>. (Click the + to the left of Sample Contracts, and then click on the Professional Services Contract link)