



THE TOWN OF UNIVERSITY PARK

REQUEST FOR BID PROPOSALS

FOR A

COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT

CONTRACT UP-2012-01

Issued by:

**Town of University Park
STEP UP Program
6724 Baltimore Avenue
University Park, MD 20782**

**Bid Submission Deadline
4:00 p.m.
Friday, February 17th, 2012
Town Hall
6724 Baltimore Avenue
University Park, MD 20782**

**TOWN OF UNIVERSITY PARK, MARYLAND
REQUEST FOR BID PROPOSALS
FOR A COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT
CONTRACT UP-2012-01**

I. GENERAL

Sealed bids addressed to Suzanne Parmet, Energy Coach, STEP-UP program, for a communications consultant to serve as the lead for a number of communications activities related to the Town of University Park's ("Town") STEP-UP program, including: outreach to media, graphic design, editing, development of a media, photo and video depository, design and production of case studies and event support, will be received at the Town of University Park, 6724 Baltimore Avenue, University Park, Maryland 20782, until Friday, February 17th, 2012, at 4:00 p.m., at which time and place they will be publicly opened and read. One (1) printed and one (1) electronic copy of the Proposal shall be submitted to Suzanne Parmet at the following addresses:

Electronic: energycoach@upmd.org
Printed: Attn: Suzanne Parmet, Energy Coach
c/o Town of University Park
6724 Baltimore Avenue
University Park, MD 20782

Award of the contract is subject to approval of the Mayor and Council of the Town of University Park.

Copies of the Bidding Documents may be obtained at the University Park Town Hall, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, on or after January 25th, 2012, or on the web site of the Small Town Energy Program for University Park (STEP-UP): www.mystep-up.org.

The Town of University Park is an equal opportunity employer. Discrimination based on age, race, sex, handicap, or national origin is expressly prohibited.

The Town of University Park reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids based on the best interests of the Town. The contact person for this project is Suzanne Parmet, Energy Coach, STEP-UP program, 301-927-4262, energycoach@upmd.org.

2. BACKGROUND

The Town of University Park, MD (the "Town") is implementing the *Small Town Energy Program for University Park* ("STEP-UP"), a 3-year program designed to achieve energy efficiency market transformation within University Park and to serve as a roadmap for energy transformation in small towns across the US. STEP-UP includes a full suite of model activities for replication, including: energy audits and retrofits for homes, financial incentives, and local community delivery partners. More information about STEP-UP can be found at www.mystep-up.org. Bidders are presumed to have accessed and read the information on the website.

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The purpose of this Request for Proposals (“RFP”) is to solicit bids from individuals and/or firms interested in serving as a Communications Consultant to STEP-UP (the “Communications Consultant”). Directed by the STEP-UP Energy Coach, the STEP-UP Program Director or designate(s) from the STEP-UP Advisory Committee, the Communications Consultant will serve as the lead for a number of communications activities related to STEP-UP, including: outreach to media, graphic design, editing, and event support. The Communications Consultant will also design and produce a number of case studies and profiles of STEP-UP participants, and will research and develop a repository of media, photos and videos related to STEP-UP. The full scope of expected communications services is found in Section 4 below.

The Communications Consultant will be engaged on an as needed consulting basis, as and when called upon to do so by the Energy Coach or the STEP-UP Program Director, at an agreed upon hourly rate and number of hours per month. The consulting engagement with STEP-UP shall commence as of March 1st, 2012, or such other date as is mutually agreed upon by the parties.

3. RFP BID TERMS & CONDITIONS

- a) For purposes of this document, the party to whom this RFP is addressed shall be referred to as “Bidder” and any materials submitted in response to this RFP shall be referred to as a “Proposal.”
- b) The Town is not liable for any costs or expenses incurred by a Bidder or any other person or entity in the preparation of their Proposal.

The Town reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals received from Bidders as a result of this RFP, as is in the best interests of the Town, as determined solely by the Town. In determining which Proposal is best, the Town will take into consideration the bid price and the experience, qualifications, references, responsibility and current availability of the Bidder to perform the Services. The Town may waive any technicalities or formalities in determining how best to serve the interests of the Town. The Town of University Park reserves the right to cancel the award of the contract at any time prior to execution of the Contract without liability on the part of the Town.

- c) This RFP may be sent as a courtesy to known interested individuals and firms. The receipt of this RFP from the Town in no way implies that the recipient is a qualified bidder.
- d) Any Proposal submitted to the Town is not confidential. All materials submitted become the property of the Town. The Town has the right to use any or all un-copyrighted concepts presented in any Proposal. Approval or disapproval of a Proposal does not affect this right.
- e) If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, an addendum will be provided to all respondents or Bidders who respond to the original RFP, and will be posted on the STEP-UP website – www.mystep-up.org.

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To be considered, Bidder's Proposal must be complete and in the format indicated in this RFP, and delivered by the date and time indicated in this RFP. Bidders will not be given an opportunity to change any part of a Proposal after submission. A Bidder may submit only one proposal for the Contract. More than one proposal from an individual, firm or partnership, corporation or association under the same or different names will not be considered on any given Contract, and will be considered grounds for disqualification and/or rejection of the proposals involved, unless prior approval has been given by the Town.

- f) The Bidder to whom the Contract has been awarded must execute a Contract substantially similar to the one attached within ten business days after the award and submit such other Documents as required by the Contract Documents. Failure by the Contractor to execute the Contract and submit such other documents as required by the Contract Documents shall be just cause for annulment of the Award. If the bidder to whom the award is made shall fail to execute the Contract as herein provided, the award may be annulled and the Contract awarded to the second lowest responsible bidder, and such bidder shall fulfill every stipulation embraced herein, as if he were the original party to whom the award was made, or the Town may reject all of the bids, as its interest may require.
- g) From the issue date of this RFP until a determination is made regarding the qualification of Bidders, all contacts with the Town concerning this RFP must be made through the STEP-UP Energy Coach, Suzanne Parmet, at energycoach@upmd.org. All questions about the meanings or intent, discrepancies or omissions of the RFP shall be submitted in writing to Suzanne Parmet. Replies to these inquires shall be made in writing. The written responses become part of the RFP and will be provided to each Bidder who has received a Bid Package.
- h) After execution of the Contract, the Contractor will initiate work within five days of Notice to Proceed. Materials ordered or work done on the site prior to these dates shall be at the Contractor's risk.
- i) The Bidder shall obtain any license or permit required by law to undertake the work as described in the Contract Documents.
- j) Documents to be submitted with bid include:
 - Proposal
 - Affidavits
 - Information Regarding Bidder
 - Vendor Certification
 - Certificate of Compliance

4. SCOPE OF COMMUNICATION SERVICES

The Communications Consultant shall provide the following communications services (the “Services”), as and when needed and directed to do so by the Energy Coach or the STEP-UP Program Director, on behalf of STEP-UP generally and/or specific STEP-UP participants. The amount of time to be dedicated to each series of tasks is approximate.

Media and Communications Materials (~30% of Service time)

- a) Draft monthly articles for the Town Newsletter. Maintain a monthly blog about STEP-UP for The Patch.
- b) In consultation with the Energy Coach and STEP-UP Program Director, develop press releases about STEP-UP, and serve as the primary media liaison for the program.
- c) Lead in the development of a solicitation for a graphic designer, who will be engaged to provide a consistent look and branding to all STEP-UP communications collateral, including the website.
- d) In consultation with the Energy Coach and STEP-UP Program Director, work with the graphic designer in the development of a consistent suite of STEP-UP promotional materials, including flyers, fact sheets, program tools, and survey summaries.
- e) Ensure proper permissions have been obtained for use of partner logos in all STEP-UP promotional materials.
- f) Provide editing input for consistent style and grammatical correctness for all STEP-UP communication materials, including website communications.

Web Support (~10% of Service time):

- g) Provide editorial oversight of website content, in collaboration with the STEP-UP website consultant at www.mystep-up.org. Coordinate webpage maintenance, with the goal of ensuring that new information (article links, stories, and events) is posted regularly.
- h) Research and establish links between www.mystep-up.org and relevant partner websites. Periodically review links to ensure functionality and relevance.
- i) In collaboration with the STEP-UP website consultant, and in consultation with STEP-UP program personnel, take the lead in defining the specifications to upgrade www.mystep-up.org with additional functionalities and features.

Social Media (~30% of Service time):

- j) Compile and maintain a list of STEP-UP participants willing to undertake interviews about their program participation experiences with STEP-UP.

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- k) Draft interview questions, revise as directed, and lead interviews with willing participants about their program participation experiences.
- l) Employ a mix of audio and video media in support of interview activities. Secure as directed the required technical consultants to help with audio and video activities.
- m) Compile and archive all interview materials and responses. Secure and manage all permission waivers from interviewees. Work in close collaboration with Town staff to ensure all relevant Town guidelines are properly followed.
- n) Use interview materials, audio and video media to create vignettes, summaries and case studies about STEP-UP participant experiences.

Events Support (~10% of Service time):

- o) In consultation with the Energy Coach and STEP-UP Program Director, provide tactical support for STEP-UP community-wide events and smaller, targeted events, including development of marketing and event materials, and outreach to participants and attendees.

Information Gathering and Repository (~20% of Service time):

- p) Research, compile and archive all media related to STEP-UP.
- q) In consultation with the Energy Coach and STEP-UP Program Director, research the other Better Buildings Neighborhood grantees to secure materials and best practices for inclusion in the STEP-UP tool kit.
- r) Develop a repository of STEP-UP photos and videos.
- s) Research opportunities for the Town to apply for awards, both for leadership recognition and / or for funding (ex: EPA Climate Showcase Communities program, Alliance to Save Energy "Stars of Energy Efficiency" Awards, etc.).

5. QUALIFICATIONS

The STEP-UP Communications Consultant shall have the following qualifications:

- Minimum of 5 years experience in a Marketing Communications position or other marketing role.
- Minimum of 2 years experience working with web-based marketing campaigns.
- Excellent writing/editing and verbal communication skills.
- A strong track record as an implementer who thrives on managing a variety of key initiatives.
- Demonstrated strong attention to detail while concurrently maintaining the ability to establish and follow routine processes and procedures.
- Ability to meet strict deadlines and changing priorities.
- Demonstrated interpersonal, problem-solving and communication skills.
- Exercises initiative in undertaking routine assignments/projects without direct supervision.

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- Demonstrated experience in journalism, interviewing, writing and other media.
- Knowledge of and experience with shooting and editing video is preferred.
- Graphical design and layout experience.
- Knowledge of marketing automation tools and social media strategies highly desired.
- Bachelor's degree required. Knowledge of the non-profit sector preferred.

5. ***BIDDER'S PROPOSAL***

Required Materials. The Bidder must include the following information in the Proposal:

- a) Resume or corporate profile clearly reflecting qualifications and experiences.
- b) Samples of communication and media materials.
- c) Minimum and maximum number of hours per month that are required or preferred by the Bidder for the position to be feasible and/or desirable, and days of the week / times of the day that the Bidder is available to perform the Services for STEP-UP.
- d) Hourly rate that is required or preferred by the Bidder for the consulting arrangement to be feasible and/or desirable. Note that travel hours shall not be billable and work hours shall be billed to the nearest one-quarter of an hour.
- e) Any administrative expenses that the Bidder anticipates billing to STEP-UP (e.g. telephone, mileage, etc.). Note that out-of-pocket expenses shall require pre-approval to be reimbursed.
- f) Any other terms and/or conditions required or preferred by the Bidder for the consulting arrangement to be feasible and/or desirable.
- g) Description of the individual's or firm's current legal and financial situation, including: any bankruptcies filed; and, any material (in excess of \$50,000) claims, judgments, arbitrations investigations or lawsuits pending.
- h) Acknowledgement that the Bidder agrees to purchase and maintain during the entire term of the consulting arrangement commercial general liability insurance, professional errors and omissions insurance, and workers' compensation (if applicable), in such amounts as are reasonably required by the Town or as required by law.
- i) List of at least three (3) professional references.

Format. The Proposal shall satisfy the following formatting requirements:

- The Proposal shall not exceed more than 5-pages, excluding attachments.
- The Proposal should be organized in the order in which the requirements are presented in this RFP and should clearly indicate the section of this RFP that is being addressed.
- The Proposal shall include all of the required information indicated herein. Failure to submit all required information may result in a request for prompt submission of missing information, giving a lowered evaluation of the Proposal, or rejection of the Proposal.

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Delivery Requirements. One (1) printed and one (1) electronic copy of the Proposal shall be submitted to Suzanne Parmet no later than 4:00 PM on Friday, February 17th, 2012, at the following addresses:

Electronic: energycoach@upmd.org
Printed: Attn: Suzanne Parmet, Energy Coach
c/o Town of University Park
6724 Baltimore Avenue
University Park, MD 20782

All correspondence should be marked "STEP-UP Communications Consultant" in the subject line or on the envelope, as applicable.