



Request for Proposal: Marketing Plan for the Stratford Library Association

A. Objective

The Stratford Library Association of Stratford, CT seeks a consultant or firm to develop a comprehensive Marketing Plan for the Stratford Library. The Stratford Library seeks to strengthen its current marketing practices to promote the library, with a desire to see increased utilization of the library and increased community engagement.

B. Deadline for Receipt

Proposals must be received via email before 10:00 a.m. October 9, 2023. Proposals should be addressed to Sheri Szymanski, Director, Stratford Library and PDF file emailed to sszymanski@stratfordlibrary.org.

C. Background

The Stratford Library Association (SLA) opened its doors in 1896, and as an Association Library, is the public library for Stratford, CT. The Library is governed by a 22-member Board. The Stratford Library Association operates the Library. The Town of Stratford provides 90% of the annual budget of \$3.7 million, with the other 10% coming from endowment proceeds, fundraisers and gifts. The SLA and Town jointly own the premises.

The Library serves a diverse town of 52,355 persons. Based on the 2020 census, 62% of residents are White, 18% are Hispanic and 17% are Black. Further, 14% residents were born outside of the United States and 49 languages are spoken by students enrolled in the Stratford Public Schools (Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, Arabic and French-Creole being the most common). The median household income is \$79,480, with approximately half of all students eligible for free or reduced school nutrition programs.

53% of Stratford residents are current library card holders (significantly higher than the state-wide percentage of 35%). The Library averages 400 visitors per day. The collection consists of nearly 160,000 physical items, with an annual circulation of 290,465. Downloadable books and media are growing in popularity, representing 16% of total items borrowed last year.

The Library has 42 Staff members (16 Full-Time Equivalents). SLA is open 58 hours a week 10am-8pm, Mon.- Thurs.; 10am-5pm Fri. & Saturday; open Sundays, 1-5pm October-May). Library programs are a high priority, and are a significant factor in driving traffic to the facility. In FY22-23, 1,486 on-site programs were held, with 27,906 people attending.

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D. Scope of Work

The selected firm is expected to complete the following:

1. Work with Library staff to develop a marketing plan, including strategic goal setting, aligned with the Stratford Library Association's Strategic Plan (attached).
2. Meet with SLA's Marketing Team and conduct a SWOT analysis of the Library's current marketing and publicity practices.
3. Develop integrated marketing materials including graphics for online and print formats, utilizing the Library's current branding.
4. Include methods for reaching Stratford's diverse community, including multilingual options.
5. Develop templates for marketing materials in online and print formats (SLA will provide 'brand' files).
6. Provide guidance for use of the marketing plan.

E. Deliverables

1. **Initial Report:** written SWOT analysis of Stratford Library's current marketing & publicity practices.
2. **Draft of final Plan** including any graphics for review by SLA's Marketing team.
3. **Final Plan and Materials** which take into consideration written feedback of the draft. This shall include:
 - a. A Marketing Plan comprised of clearly defined priorities, goals, and objectives that are measurable and for which the Library will hold itself accountable.
 - b. Graphics and templates for use in online (visual and audio) and print formats.
 - c. A meeting with SLA's Marketing Team to review the Plan and accompanying materials.

F. Proposal Content Requirements

1. A **cover letter** providing a brief description of the firm or individual, including name, address, phone number, and email of the principal contact person.
2. A **brief approach** that the consultant/firm will take to creating a marketing plan. This should include a description of the methodology, tasks, timeline, and estimated total amount of time that would be spent on the project.
3. **A description of the consultant(s)/firm.**
4. **A list and Curriculum Vitae/Resumes** of individual(s) involved in the process.
5. **Examples of two prior similar engagements**, either with public libraries or other non-profit organizations.
6. **Exclusions or exceptions.** Please note and explain any part of the proposal that is beyond the expertise of the consultant.
7. **References and contact information for three (3) library or non-profit organizations** for which the consultant/firm has provided similar services.

G. RFP Standards and Selection Criteria

1. The Stratford Library Association reserves the right to cancel the award of contract any time before the execution of the contract by both parties. The responding consultants bear sole risk and responsibility for costs incurred in the preparation of the proposal.

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2. No SLA Board or Staff member shall have financial interest in this proposal.
3. In cases of disputes over difference of opinions as to the services of the proposal, ***the decision of the Board of the Stratford Library Association shall be final.***
4. The SLA reserves the right to ask for clarification of a proposal and to make a selection based solely on the proposal or to negotiate further with one or more respondents.
5. The SLA reserves the right to reject any or all responses to the RFP, including incomplete ones.
6. The proposal will be evaluated on the following criteria:
 - a. Responsiveness of the written proposal to the purpose and scope of the project.
 - b. Demonstrated knowledge, skills, and experience in the creation of marketing plans and materials for public libraries or other non-profit organizations.
 - c. Methodology for carrying out tasks in the scope of the work.
 - d. **Lump-sum cost** to complete the work described.
 - e. Feedback from references.
7. The SLA may interview those short-listed.

H. RFP and Planning Process Timeline

1. Proposals (PDF) must be received via email before 10:00 am October 9, 2023.
2. All **questions** must be submitted via email to sszymanski@stratfordlibrary.org and received no later than September 28, 2023 at 5pm. Telephone inquiries will not be addressed. Answers will be provided by September 29, 2023 on www.stratfordlibrary.org/rfpupdates
3. Work will begin no later than November 1, 2023*.
4. Completed Marketing Plan and related materials to be submitted to the Library Director no later than January 31, 2024*.

*Alternate start- and completion-dates may be set by mutual agreement of both parties.