



Request for Proposals – Communications and Public Relations Consultant First 8 Memphis

Background on First 8 Memphis

[First 8 Memphis](#) (F8M) is implementing Shelby County, Tennessee’s first high-quality early care and education system which aims to prepare 90% of our children to be Kindergarten ready and to ensure that 90% of 3rd graders are reading on grade level by 2025. F8M is building up to be an advocacy, coordinating and convening organization working on behalf of children ages prenatal to eight age and specifically supporting the following early childhood programs: home visiting, childcare, Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) and Kindergarten - 3rd grade. F8M is a start-up and beginning to build its staff capacity; the organization will engage in a strategic plan in 2021. F8M is governed by a highly regarded Board of Directors (Board) who partners with staff to help reach our community and organizational goals.

F8M is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in our internal and external work. We are committed to having a diverse vendor/consultant base, and vendors/consultants that reflect the communities in which we serve.

Purpose of Request For Proposals

F8M is accepting proposals for a communications and public relations consultant that will aid us in our day-to-day communications work as well as facilitate an early childhood communications campaign for Shelby County. The consultant will work closely with F8M staff and our Board Communications Working Group to engage in both the day-to-day management of communications efforts and a communications campaign featuring early childhood and the impact of investing in early care and education. Since our inception, F8M has engaged two communications firms to launch our organization’s brand and to support day-to-day communications. The organization recently hired its inaugural Executive Director and with that role in place, the Executive Director and Board are partnering to think about the organization’s consultants to ensure alignment with organizational needs.

F8M intends to conduct a fair and extensive evaluation on the basis of criteria listed herein and select candidates who best represent the strategic direction and values of our organization. The result of this Request for Proposals (RFP) will be used to award a contract for a communications firm to manage both pieces of work or either one of the two.



The selected communication's firm will demonstrate the following requirements:

- Leading day-to-day communications for non-profit organizations with a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Guiding 501©3 organizations and agencies in communications efforts, including communications and public relations strategy, and public relations training and capacity building
 - Strong media relationships a plus
- Creating content-based public relations/communications campaign (experience creating an early childhood or education communications campaign a plus)
- Commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and working with communities reflective of Shelby County's population including African American, Latinx and/or low-income communities
 - Spanish/English bilingual capabilities are a plus
- Familiarity with Memphis and Shelby County's cultural context, particularly how communication is shared within and across communities

Project Deliverable and Timeline

F8M is soliciting proposals from qualified firms to provide full-scope communications and public relations needs for a start-up non-profit organization with limited staff capacity. The consultant(s) will develop F8M's communications strategy to help F8M in its effort to become an early care and education advocacy, coordinating and convening organization. F8M's communications efforts should reach all audiences, including parents and families; local and national early childhood and/or early learning organizations; community partners; funders; and policymakers. This work should include:

- Brand communications support
 - Website maintenance and strategy
 - Board and staff media coaching, training, message building and technical assistance
 - Copywriting for press releases/newsletter/key messages, Op-Eds, etc.
 - Planning and delivering any related media/press events (in-person and virtual)
 - Design and formatting meeting materials, grant applications, grant or investor reports, annual reports, and/or PowerPoint presentations
- Social media strategy and content
 - Draft and deploy F8M e-newsletter
 - Social media responses if needed
- Reputation management
 - Keeping fingers on pulse of online reviews, articles and interviews related to F8M staff, the organization as a whole and/or early childhood/early learning and related organizations
 - Keeping up with how people and other organizations are talking about F8M



- Media management for any issues that may pose reputation risk for F8M
- Potential crisis support
- Evaluation
 - Ongoing qualitative evaluation and analysis of success measured against goals
 - Analysis of e-newsletter, social media posting and strategy for improving outreach

Other duties may include but are not limited to drafting a copy of meetings, events, and other invitations; holiday cards; and how-to documents for staff and teams.

Instructions and Guidelines

This RFP showcases the requirements for an open and competitive process. Proposals will be accepted via email to LaDora Watkins, ladora@first8memphis.org until February 1, 2021. Questions about the RFP may also be directed to LaDora Watkins. The review and selection will occur in February and March with an intended start date on or before April 15, 2021.

RFP requirements

1. Cover sheet: Cover sheet should contain key contact information
2. Narrative: A written narrative of the overall proposal, including your firm's general philosophy and approach to the project (maximum of 5 pages). Narrative should also include:
 - a. Firm's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
 - b. Proposed Work Plan: The narrative should include work plan should include approach, components, tools, and strategies used to carry out the project. A timeline should be included as appropriate
3. Qualifications: Provide a brief description of your firm, including but not limited to:
 - a. Firm's history and experience providing communications and public relations; provide examples of firm's day-to-day communications effort for non-profit organizations
 - b. Firm's history and experience leading and managing content-specific communications campaign with an emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion; provide examples of campaign
 - c. Describe role and responsibilities of staff (bios can also be included)
4. Budget: Please provide a cost proposal for providing the scope of work. The budget should include:
 - a. Detailed information on costs by component, fee structure, and expenses, including for key personnel and overhead costs. Any costs included in the proposal must be all-inclusive, that is, covering any outsourced or subcontracted work
 - i. Budget must differentiate between day-to-day communications cost and the content-based communications campaign
 - b. Cost should be classified as one-time or non-recurring cost, and ongoing costs



- c. All costs must be itemized to include an explanation of all fees. Any consultant(s) need to outsource or subcontract any work to meet the requirements contained herein must be clearly stated in the proposal
5. References: Provide three references for past clients for whom you have conducted similar services and highlight key challenges and successes

Contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon selection of the consultant for this RFP. All contractual terms and conditions will be reviewed by F8M's team and will include scope, budget, schedule, and necessary items pertaining to the project.

