VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS
REQUEST FOR QUOTES (RFQ)

COPYWRITING SERVICES

RFQ ISSUED: March 9, 2020

QUESTIONS DUE: March 16, 2020 at 10:00 A.M. EST

QUOTES DUE: March 23, 2020 at 10:00 A.M. EST

VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS
1500 King Street, Suite 202
Alexandria, VA 22314
P: (703) 684-1001
F: (703) 684-1313
www.vre.org

Submit Quotes To:
Amanda Vitko
Purchasing and Contract Compliance Specialist
Telephone/Facsimile: (703) 838-5414
Email:avitko@vre.org
1. PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

A. INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Railway Express (VRE) is soliciting Quotes to establish a firm-fixed hourly rate Blanket Purchase Order with one (1) qualified and experienced Contractor to provide copywriting services.

B. VRE BACKGROUND

1. VRE is a commuter rail service linking the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia. The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) are transportation districts established under Virginia law and jointly own this service. An Operations Board consisting of members from each of the jurisdictions within the VRE service area governs the development and operation of VRE and serves as an advisory board to the NVTC and PRTC governing boards. Use of the term VRE in this RFQ refers to NVTC and PRTC.

2. VRE began operations in 1992 and carries an average of approximately 19,000 weekday trips on two (2) lines. In January 2014, VRE’s Operations Board adopted System Plan 2040 which calls for expansion of service, requiring the addition of rail cars, expansion of station and maintenance and storage facilities, as well as expanding operations to meet the goal of doubling ridership by 2040. VRE’s multi-prong program addresses short term growth needs, as well as longer term capacity improvements and investments in maintaining and servicing VRE’s equipment and facilities.

3. The primary mission of VRE is to provide commuter-oriented passenger rail service between the outlying suburbs and the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria urban core. Some tourists and “day-trippers” also ride the trains. The service is heavily oriented towards the core area in the morning peak and in the opposite direction in the evening peak.
2. SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS

A. DEADLINE

1. All questions and requests for clarification regarding the meaning or interpretation of this RFQ and other solicitation documents, or any ambiguities, discrepancies, inconsistencies, or conflicts in or between any of the technical, pricing, or contractual provisions, must be submitted no later than the date and time specified on Page 1 of this RFQ. Questions and clarifications requested after such time will not be answered unless VRE elects, in its sole discretion, to do so.

2. Any interpretation of a question made by VRE will be in the form of an addendum to the RFQ. Questions and responses will be posted on VRE’s website at www.vre.org/about/procurement for all interested Contractors.

B. FORMAT FOR QUESTIONS

Questions must be submitted to VRE in writing via electronic mail to the email address listed on Page 1 of this RFQ. No questions or requests for additional information, clarification or any other communication should be directed to any other individual.

C. VRE POINT OF CONTACT

VRE’s Marketing Administrator will be the point of contact following award of a Blanket Purchase Order.

D. NO ORAL COMMUNICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED

VRE will not be bound by any oral communications, written interpretations or clarifications that are not set forth in an addendum to the RFQ.
3. SCOPE OF WORK

A. QUALIFICATIONS

The Contractor shall, at a minimum, have the following qualifications:

1. Bachelor’s Degree or Master’s Degree in English, Communications, Marketing or related field of study.
2. Five (5) or more years of copywriting experience in an agency and/or in-house corporate environment.
3. A minimum of five (5) published articles.

B. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The Contractor shall be responsible for the following tasks:

1. Compose articles on an as-needed basis.
   a. RIDE Articles (400-750 words each)
   b. Website/Blog Copy (300-500 words per page)
   c. Articles for Trade Publications (2000 words each)
   d. Marketing Collateral Copy (475-1000 words per piece)
   e. Templates for Operational Messaging (200-400 words per template)
   f. Social Media Content Set (140 characters per post; each set constitutes 6 posts)
2. VRE will provide the Contractor with a topic, source material and/or contact with a Subject Matter Expert.
3. Follow Associated Press (AP) style guidelines.
4. Edit written material to promote simplicity and clarity, as well as to correct errors in grammar, spelling and syntax.
5. Proof original content, update existing content, or edit content developed by VRE staff for a variety of purposes that may include reports, invitations, advertisements, newsletters, fact sheets, website content, formal letters, press releases, social media outreach, etc.
6. Ensure copy aligns with VRE’s brand.

C. DELIVERY

1. The VRE Project Manager shall initiate a request for service and provide parameters to the Contractor either by phone or email.

2. The Contractor shall submit copy electronically to VRE via a pre-approved file sharing platform.

3. The first draft shall be delivered by the Contractor within seven (7) calendar days of the request from VRE. If VRE agrees that delivery in seven (7) calendar days cannot be met, VRE will extend the timeline to an agreed upon date.

4. The Contractor shall provide up to three (3) revisions upon request.

5. Any deviation or delay from the established schedule must be presented to VRE in writing for approval.
4. SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A. TERM

1. The Blanket Purchase Order shall be valid for one (1) calendar year.

2. VRE shall not be obligated to expend all funds authorized for the Blanket Purchase Order.

B. SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT

The Contractor shall assign a single point of contact that must be available between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time., Monday through Friday.

C. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The Contractor shall comply with ATTACHMENT 1 – VRE GENERAL PROVISIONS, as applicable to the Scope of Work.

D. MODIFICATION OF THE SCOPE OF WORK

VRE reserves the right to modify the scope of work at its discretion when it is in the best interest of VRE. See Clause 15. CHANGES of the General Provisions.

E. OWNERSHIP OF WORK PRODUCTS

1. This Blanket Purchase Order does not confer on the Contractor any ownership rights or rights to use or disclose VRE’s data or inputs. VRE shall have unlimited rights, for the benefit of VRE, in all work products including, but not limited to, drawings, designs, specifications, notes and other work developed in the performance of this Blanket Purchase Order. VRE shall have the right to use the work products on any other VRE work without additional cost to VRE.

2. All work products, in any form, that result from this Blanket Purchase Order are the property of VRE and must be provided or returned to VRE upon completion, termination, or cancellation of this Blanket Purchase Order. The Contractor shall not use or allow others to use the work products for any purpose other than performance of this Blanket Purchase Order without the written consent of VRE.

3. The work products are confidential, and the Contractor may neither release the work products nor share their contents. The Contractor shall refer all inquiries regarding the status of any work product to the VRE Project Manager or to his or her designee. At VRE’s request, the Contractor shall deliver all work products, including hard copies of electronic files, to the VRE Project Manager.
F. QUOTE ACCEPTANCE PERIOD

The Quote and any modification thereof shall be binding upon the Quoter for ninety (90) calendar days following the Quote closing date. Any Quote in which the Quoter shortens the acceptance period shall be rejected, although the acceptance period may be extended by mutual agreement between VRE and the Quoter. At the end of the Quote acceptance period, the Quoter may withdraw its Quote by giving written notice to VRE.
5. DELIVERABLES

A. CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE

1. By signing and submitting a Quote under this solicitation, the Contractor certifies if issued the Blanket Purchase Order, the Contractor will have the insurance coverage identified and described in ATTACHMENT 2 – VRE INSURANCE COVERAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR SMALL PURCHASE OF GOODS/SERVICES.

2. The Contractor shall furnish VRE proof of compliance with these insurance requirements in the form of an original Certificate of Insurance signed by an authorized representative or agent of the insurance company(ies). The Certificate of Insurance must be furnished within three (3) calendar days of request by VRE.

3. Failure to provide the Certificate(s) when required may be cause for VRE to issue a Purchase Order to the next responsive Contractor. However, in no event shall work be performed until the required Certificate(s) of Insurance have been furnished and approved by VRE.

B. REFERENCE LETTERS

Provide three (3) business letters of reference upon request by VRE prior to award of the Blanket Purchase Order.

C. PROJECT REPORTS/DOCUMENTS

The Contractor agrees that all reports, drawings, studies, specifications, estimates, maps, computations and other data prepared by or for it under the resultant Purchase Order shall become the property of VRE. VRE shall have the right to use the same hard copies or electronic files without restriction or limitation and without compensation to the Contractor other than that provided for in the Blanket Purchase Order. Documents shall be directed to:

Cindy King, Marketing Administrator
Virginia Railway Express
1500 King Street, Suite 202
Alexandria, VA 22314-2730
cking@vre.org
6. INVOICES

A. INVOICES

1. Invoices shall be submitted by the Contractor for services/goods ordered, delivered, and accepted by VRE on a monthly basis.

2. Invoices shall be submitted via VRE’s electronic mailbox.

3. Invoices shall be submitted electronically in one (1) continuous electronic copy in PDF to ebills@vre.org. The VRE Project Manager shall be copied on the email.

4. The VRE Marketing Administrator shall be indicated on the invoice cover sheet.

5. At a minimum, invoices shall contain the following information:
   a. Name, address and telephone number of the Contractor
   b. VRE Blanket Purchase Order number
   c. Invoice number and invoice date
   d. Description of work product
   e. Number of labor hours
   f. Labor rate
   g. Total invoice amount

6. If invoices fail to meet all of the above requirements, they will not be processed for payment and will result in the invoice being returned to the Contractor for correction and resubmission. VRE may request additional substantiating documentation as necessary.

B. PAYMENT

Payment will be made on monthly basis upon receipt and acceptance of the Contractor’s invoice by VRE.
7. PRICE INFORMATION

*Quoters are strongly encouraged to read this section carefully. INCOMPLETE QUOTES WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY DISQUALIFIED*

A. The price information must be submitted in ATTACHMENT 3 – QUOTE FORM included herein.

B. The price shall be quoted in U.S. Dollars.

C. Quotes shall be inclusive of all costs and shall include full compensation for all taxes, fees, shipping/delivery charges, materials, equipment, tools, transportation, labor, insurance, permits, overhead and profit, etc. necessary to complete the work in conformance with the scope of work and to the satisfaction of VRE. Extra charges will not be allowed.

D. The prices, without exception shall be net, not subject to discount, and shall include all royalties and costs arising from patents, trademarks, and copyrights in any way involved in the work.

E. No erasures or other handwritten changes may appear on the Quote Form.
8. ATTACHMENTS

The following documents are incorporated in this Request for Quotes and the resulting Purchase Order by this reference.

A. Attachment 1 – VRE General Provisions

B. Attachment 2 – VRE Insurance Coverage Requirements for Small Purchase of Goods/Services

C. Attachment 3 – Quote Form