



Request for Proposal

Title: Communications Consultant

**Proposal Deadline:** 12:00 PM EST, May 23, 2022

### **I. Introduction and Background**

Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council, Inc. (BBF) is seeking a dynamic and talented Communications consultant or team to support the organization's external communications for the period of July 1, 2022-June 30, 2024.

BBF serves as Vermont's Early Childhood State Advisory Council, the mechanism used to advise the Governor and legislature on the status of children in the prenatal period through age 8 and their families. BBF's mission is to improve the well-being of children and families in Vermont by using evidence to inform policy and bringing voices together across sectors and within regions to discuss critical challenges and problem-solve. BBF maintains the vision and strategic plan for Vermont's Early Childhood system. BBF has a multi-tiered infrastructure consisting of 12 Regional Councils, the State Advisory Council, and committees that move the Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP) forward. BBF informs this infrastructure by identifying and presenting the most up-to-date high-quality data through Vermont's Early Childhood Data and Policy Center, the VECAP Data Dashboard, and the State of Vermont's Children report. BBF's regional and statewide infrastructure allows them to have a presence in every corner of the state. This network allows for the communication and escalation of barriers, and challenges and recommendations from both regions and from the State Advisory Council to policy makers. As decisions are made, the BBF infrastructure facilitates changes to the Early Childhood system to improve the lives of children and families across the state.

The Consultant(s) will support a dynamic team dedicated to our social impact and mission-oriented efforts, and work collaboratively to produce, improve, and finalize content to provide consistent and effective communication to our 450-person network and non-traditional audiences. Communication and marketing strategies are necessary to more effectively conduct our business. Our team of skilled professionals with broad expertise in human service policy and

governance, data systems, and early childhood development can be leveraged to provide thought leadership through diverse communications strategies. Responsibilities of the contractor include:

- Develop, manage, and execute BBF's comprehensive communications plan that includes paid, earned, social, and owned media and advertising.
- Increase awareness and clarity of BBF's mission and role within Vermont's early childhood community among target audiences.
- Write and edit short-form content for communications materials and tools, including but not limited to meeting or program announcements, content-oriented blogs, website updates, press releases, advisories, statements, reports, grants, newsletters/emails, etc.
- Editing of long-form content written by the BBF team (data and policy briefs, reports).
- Provide rapid response and support for communications opportunities in local, state, and national news.
- Manage production calendar to support project management of communications needs.
- Review and update the BBF website and content updates with Wordpress.
- Promotion of brand awareness and management.
- Coordination with BBF staff on social media which is managed in-house.

The Consultant selected from the RFP will be engaged after competitive evaluation by BBF. The Consultant will bring diverse skills to support Building Bright Futures' strategic external communications as described in the Scope of Work on page 2 of this RFP.

## **2. Scope of Work**

### **Deliverable 1: Strategic Communications (5% estimated time for this deliverable)**

At the start of the project, the consultant will gather information to develop a communications plan that will guide the two years of the project. This will include the deliverables listed below as well as implementation of a communications plan based on contractor's suggested strategies to leverage external communications to meet BBF's mission and vision. Identify measurable benchmarks for bi-annual reporting.

### **Deliverable 2: Content Development and Production (80%)**

Develop short-form content in the form of blogs featuring BBF programs and accomplishments, meeting announcements, and press releases. Provide timely copy editing for BBF produced content. Support distribution of communications guided by the communications plan.

### **Deliverable 3: Website Clean Up (5%)**

Review websites to update content, improve navigation, clean up links, and remove outdated content.

### **Deliverable 4: Coordination with BBF team and activities (5%)**

Communicate with the BBF team to ensure coordination of outreach including language and

timing, and to coordinate with BBF team for complimentary social media posts and program activities (promotion of upcoming meetings or publication releases etc.) Plan for monthly meetings shifting to as needed and use of Google calendar, Google docs and Slack for asynchronous communication and coordination.

### **3. Reporting and Record Keeping**

The Consultant will be required to meet monthly with representatives of the BBF team AND contribute to bi-annual reporting. All time will be positively reported through a monthly timesheet. The Consultant shall submit monthly invoices to BBF's Executive Director by the 15th of the subsequent month and the Company agrees to pay such invoices within 15 days.

### **4. Applicant Eligibility and Requirements Desired Qualifications**

- Strong organizational and project management skills, attention to detail and accuracy a must
- Demonstrated creative skills and ability to think outside of the box desired
- Excellent writing and verbal communication skills
- Ability to maintain clear communication and work collaboratively and effectively with the BBF team
- Ability to successfully network and cultivate existing relationships or form working relationships with members of the media and opinion leaders
- Ability to maintain BBF message consistency and brand standards
- Demonstrated ability to work well under pressure and manage work under tight deadlines
- Proven computer skills a must, including Wordpress, Constant Contact, and Google Docs
- Understanding of the human service and early childhood system in Vermont preferred
- When not dependent on meeting with or collaborating with BBF team members, work may be completed on a flexible and/or irregular schedule

**Location:** This is a location independent position.

### **5. Funding and Submittal Process**

A budget of up to \$30,000 is available. Contract can begin as early as July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2024, contingent upon the availability of funds.

Please submit proposals to: [kmobbs@buildingbrightfutures.org](mailto:kmobbs@buildingbrightfutures.org). The email must be clearly identified with the subject line of the email "Building Bright Futures Communications RFP". The name of the consultant and contact person must be listed in your proposal and in the body of the email. Attach to the email your entire proposal in as a PDF.

Assemble a 3 page proposal including:

1. Interest in the identified project

2. Proposed approach to the process and required funding
3. Summary of experience, qualifications and availability to provide service to BBF
4. Two professional references
5. Link or attach an example of relevant completed work

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All proposals must be submitted as detailed in the manner described herein. Exceptions nor extensions to established deadlines will not be granted. Please submit questions via email to Katie Mobbs at [kmobbs@buildingbrightfutures.org](mailto:kmobbs@buildingbrightfutures.org).

**6. Proposal Terms and Milestones for Payment**

BBF reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received in response to this Request for Proposal. If a proposal is selected, it will be the most advantageous in terms of quality of service, the Consultant’s qualifications, and capabilities to provide the specified service, and other factors that BBF may consider. BBF reserves the right, at its discretion, to waive informalities or irregularities in proposals or proposal procedures, and to accept or further negotiate cost, terms, or conditions of any proposal determined by BBF to be in the best interests of BBF even if not the lowest bid. The price quotations stated in the Contractors proposal will not be subject to any price increase from the date on which the proposal is opened by BBF to the mutually agreed-to date of bid. Proposals must be signed by an official authorized to bind the Contractor to its provisions for at least a period of 90 days. Failure of the successful Contractor to accept the obligation of the bid may result in the cancellation of any award. A service contract will be executed between BBF and the awarded Contractor. The selected Contractor may not subcontract any of the work specified in this RFP without prior written consent of BBF.

**7. Evaluation and Selection**

BBF’s Communications Consultant proposals will be evaluated based on the Evaluation Criteria listed below. Proposals will be ranked in order of the highest numerical score first. BBF may select as many top ranked vendors as it deems necessary for inclusion within the negotiating list.

<b>CRITERIA FOR SCORING</b>	<b>Total possible points</b>	<b>Applicant Score</b>
<b>I. INFORMATION FROM THE BIDDER</b>		
<b>A. Quality of the Bidder's Experience</b>	<b>55</b>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bidder demonstrates knowledge of, and expertise with developing and executing organizational external communications strategy, demonstrated creativity, strong writing and verbal communication skills</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bidder demonstrates experience to maintain BBF message consistency and brand standards</li> <li>• Bidder demonstrates experience with project management, data analysis evaluation.</li> <li>• The bidder has experience working with Vermont human services, government agencies, and nonprofits</li> <li>• Bidder demonstrates relevant qualifications and experiences outlined in the RFP</li> <li>• Experience with Wordpress, Constant Contact, and Google Docs</li> </ul>		
<b>B. Bidder's Capacity to Perform</b>	<b>40</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bidder demonstrates capacity to execute this scope of work</li> <li>• Bidder demonstrates capacity to provide organizational and project management for this project</li> <li>• Bidder demonstrates communications strategy, creativity, strong writing and verbal communication skills</li> <li>• Bidder demonstrates ability to maintain clear communication and work collaboratively and effectively with the BBF team and engage with press and partners across the state</li> </ul>		
<b>2. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL/PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS</b>		
<b>A. Responsiveness to Specifications</b>	<b>15</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bidders description of how they will respond to the scope of work contained in section 2 of the bid.</li> <li>• Completeness and reasonableness of the bidder's budget which will include project costs</li> </ul>		
<b>OVERALL TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>CRITERIA FOR SCORING</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Score</b>

**Appendix A**  
**Sample Consulting Services Agreement**



**CONSULTING AGREEMENT**

This Consulting Services Agreement (the "Agreement") is by and between Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council (the "Company") and [Chosen Vendor] (the "Consultant").

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### **5. Term and Terms of Payment**

**Terms of Payment:** The Consultant will be paid at a rate of XXX per hour for consulting time. The Consultant will work no more than XXX hours. The total cost paid to the Consultant from July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2024 will not exceed \$30,000. The Consultant shall submit monthly invoices to the Company's Executive Director by the 15th of the subsequent month and the Company agrees to pay such invoices within 15 days. Either party may terminate this Agreement upon thirty (30) days written notice to the other party.

**Expenses:** The Consultant shall pay all of Consultant's expenses incurred as a result of work under this contract unless otherwise agreed in writing.

**Work Location:**The Consultant understands that work will be carried out remotely as well as at scheduled meetings.

**Independent Contractor Status:** The parties to this Agreement acknowledge and agree that the Consultant is acting as an independent contractor in connection with its services and other



provisions of this Agreement. The Consultant is not the agent or employee of the Company. The Consultant understands that the Company will not provide to the Consultant benefits and services available to Company employees, nor will the Company withhold any federal or state taxes except as required under applicable tax laws, which shall be determined in advance of the execution of this Agreement. The Consultant understands that all tax returns required by the Internal Revenue Code and the State of Vermont including, but not limited to, income, withholding, sales and uses, and rooms and meals, must be filed by the Consultant. This Agreement is a contract among independent and separate parties who agree to carry out separate and distinct duties and/or services as set for in this Agreement.

**Workers' Compensation:** Consultant knowingly and voluntarily waives coverage of the Workers' Compensation Statute, 21 V.S.A. Section 601 et seq. (the "Statute"). In addition, the parties to this Agreement wish to set forth their understandings concerning workers' compensation coverage, as required by and in accordance with the Statute and in particular, the provisions for exemption of certain unincorporated businesses from the Statute pursuant to Section 601(14)(F) of the Statute as follows:

The Parties agree that the Consultant's services are distinct and separate from the work that is performed by the Company. The Consultant represents and warrants that he/she controls the means and manner of the services he/she shall provide under this Agreement. The Consultant warrants to the Company that he/she is in business for him/herself. The Consultant warrants to the Company that he/she holds him/herself out for work for the general public and does not perform work exclusively for or with the Company.

The Consultant acknowledges and agrees that he/she is not treated as an employee of the Company for any reason, including without limitation, for purposes of income or employment taxation. The Consultant acknowledges and agrees that he/she is not considered to be an employee (as defined by the Statute) of the Company. The Consultant represents and warrants to the Company that he/she is working independently and that he/she shall be the only person performing the services under this Agreement. The Consultant represents and warrants to the Company that he/she has no employees and agrees that he/she shall not hire any employees to perform any aspect of the services under this Agreement. The Consultant represents and warrants that he/she has not contracted with any other person(s) to perform any aspect of the services under this Agreement, and Consultant agrees that he/she shall not contract with any other persons to perform any aspect of the services under this Agreement.

The Consultant acknowledges that he/she has the right to purchase workers' compensation insurance and acknowledges that he/she has knowingly and voluntarily elected not to purchase workers' compensation insurance. The Consultant shall indemnify, defend and hold the Company harmless from any and all loss, cost and expense, including reasonable attorneys' fees, involving or arising out of any claim made by any person claiming to be an employee, contractor or

otherwise working on behalf of the Consultant in connection with the services to be performed by Consultant under this Agreement.

**Confidential Information:** The Consultant agrees that any information received by Consultant during the course of providing services to the Company will be deemed to be confidential. The information may only be used in the provision of services under this Agreement and may not be revealed to any third parties during this Agreement or after its expiration within prior written consent of the Company. Upon expiration of this Agreement, Consultant shall return all confidential information to the Company, including duplicate copies in any format.

**Conflict of Interest:** The Consultant is free to enter into this Agreement. Further, the Agreement does not violate the terms of any agreement between the Consultant and any third party. The Consultant is expressly free to perform services for other parties while performing services for the Company.

The Consultant has the duty to avoid conflicts of interest with the Company, and where one arises or becomes known to the Consultant, the Consultant will disclose the conflict to the Company's Executive Director.

**Ownership of Work Product:** All copyrights, patents, trade secrets, or other intellectual property rights associated with any ideas concepts, techniques, inventions, processes, or works of authorship developed or created by Consultant while performing the services under this Agreement (collectively, the "Work Product") shall belong exclusively to the Company and shall, to the extent possible, be considered work made for hire for the Company within the meaning of Title 17 of the United States Code. Consultant automatically assigns at the time of creation of the Work Product, without any requirement of further consideration, any right, title or interest Consultant may have in such Work Product. Upon the request of the Company, Consultant shall take such further action, including the execution and delivery of instruments of conveyance, as may be appropriate to give full and proper effect to such assignment.

**Safety:** To the extent the Consultant performs any of the services at the Company, Consultant agrees to comply with all applicable state and federal rules and regulations as to safety, OSHA, etc., and with all Company policies related to safety.

**Professional Ethics:** If during the course of work performed on behalf of the Company, the Consultant becomes aware of any practice, activity, decision, or organizational circumstance that is either unlawful, imprudent, or in violation of commonly accepted business and professional ethics, Consultant will communicate this information in a timely manner to the Company's Executive Director.

**Termination/Breach of Agreement:** Both parties to this Agreement may terminate this Agreement without cause upon thirty (30) days written notice. In the event of a material breach

of the terms and conditions of this Agreement by any party, the other party shall provide the breaching party with written notice of the claimed breach. If the party who is alleged to be in breach fails to cure the breach within one week, then the party who has asserted the breach may terminate this Agreement by written notice.

**Consultant Closeout and Reporting:** Should activities under this agreement be completed prior to the agreement term, the Consultant will provide a final close out report of all activities completed in accordance with the agreement. Any request for reimbursement of additional cost not previously submitted must be accompanied with a clear description of the work completed and the funding requested. All agreement data, reports, and work products must be provided to BBF before final payment can be made to Consultant.

**Miscellaneous:** This Agreement is the entire agreement and understanding between the parties relating to the subject matter hereof. This Agreement shall not be modified except by written agreement signed and dated by each of the parties. This Agreement shall be entered into within and shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of Vermont.

**Duly Authorized Signatures**

**Date**

Consultant: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

Building Bright Futures : \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_