

**CITY OF AUSTIN
PURCHASING OFFICE
SOLICITATION NO. APC0464
COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT FOR AUSTIN ENERGY**

SCOPE OF WORK

1. PURPOSE

Austin Energy (AE) is seeking proposals from highly qualified firms or individuals to perform a communications audit in an effort to determine the strengths and weaknesses in AE's communications materials and tools. The findings of this audit will inform AE's strategic communications plan, which aligns with the utility's Strategic Plan for 2017 through 2021.

Specifically, the communications audit will:

- Evaluate existing content, both internal and external, for messaging, quality, consistency and continuity.
- Assess writing, organization, storytelling, reporting and presentation for each channel.
- Compare to best practices in writing, editing, design, display and delivery, with recommendations for improvement.
- Identify types of communications—and current communication vehicles—that can be changed, consolidated or even discontinued and provide rationale.
- Recommend communications processes, support, tools and/or training for Austin Energy Corporate Communications staff need to be more effective.

2. BACKGROUND

Austin Energy (AE) is the City of Austin's municipally-owned electric utility. Its mission is to provide clean, affordable and reliable energy with excellent customer service. Our operations are funded entirely through energy sales and services, and the utility operates within the Electric Reliability Council of Texas statewide market. Austin Energy further supports the City of Austin and its other departments through an annual transfer into the general fund of more than \$100 million.

AE serves approximately 323,500 residential customers and 43,670 commercial customers within the Austin city limits. Outside the Austin city limits, AE serves approximately 53,180 residential customers and 6,350 commercial customers. AE provides the customer billing services for all City of Austin utilities, including electricity, water, wastewater, solid waste, transportation, drainage and other related fees.

Austin Energy's Corporate Communications department is organized into two areas of specialty: the Public Information Office (PIO) and Marketing Communications. The Public Information Office handles the public relations, public affairs and internal communications functions for Austin Energy. PIO is responsible for developing corporate-level messaging and communications strategy. The Marketing Communications team, comprised of marketing professionals and graphic designers, functions as an in-house marketing agency that provides services to Austin Energy's business units. Marketing Communications primarily supports energy conservation and renewable energy programs in encouraging participation.

All materials related to Austin Energy studies are the property of Austin Energy, and are private and confidential.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

Contractor shall review and assess internal and external communications vehicles and determine areas where adjustments or changes can be made to enhance communications. The Scope of Services shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. Meet with key staff members to ensure a complete understanding of the overall goals and objectives, target audiences, communications strategies and tactics, perceived strengths and weaknesses of communications materials and the expected outcome of the project.

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- B. Identify key documents, information and data that should be compiled and provided by Austin Energy to provide an understanding of the existing communications materials.
- C. Review and assess communications tools used by Austin Energy in its delivery of information to the public and to its employees, including printed collateral, online content, social media, newsletters, news releases, advertising, video, infographics, internal content, and other communications and marketing materials. The assessment will include both corporate-level communications and program/service-related communications and will be limited to materials developed since June 2014.
- D. Review and assess message dissemination strategies to determine whether key audiences are being reached.
- E. Review and assess measurement tools and processes to learn how communications and marketing effectiveness is tracked and return on investment is measured.
- F. Conduct media content analysis and identify Austin Energy's "share of voice" in online content and conversations around energy and the environment.
- G. Prepare and present a final report, to include but not be limited to, the following:
 - i. Evaluate existing content, both internal and external, for messaging, quality, consistency and continuity.
 - ii. Assess writing, organization, storytelling, reporting and presentation for each channel.
 - iii. Compare to best practices in writing, editing, design, display and delivery, with recommendations for improvement.
 - iv. Identify types of communications—and current communication vehicles—that can be changed, consolidated or even discontinued and provide rationale.
 - v. Evaluate message dissemination strategies and make recommendations on ensuring proper reach and effectiveness.
 - vi. Assess measurement tools and processes.
 - vii. Conduct media content analysis. Assess how others are reporting and writing about Austin Energy specifically and the industry in general. Identify potential partners and outlets for Austin Energy content and opportunities to establish Austin Energy experts as thought leaders. Identify topics and areas of coverage where Austin Energy can increase its share of voice in online content and conversations around energy and the environment.
 - viii. Recommend communications processes, support, tools and/or training for Austin Energy Corporate Communications staff need to be more effective. This includes making recommendations on integrating corporate-level processes with program/service-level marketing.
 - ix. Provide a complete evaluation of Austin Energy's current communications strategies and tactics, as well as include recommendations for eliminating, replacing or improving communications to ensure consistency, clarity and effectiveness

4. RESPONSE PREPATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. A description of your work process by tasks. Detail the steps you will take in proceeding from Task 1 to the final tasks using the Project Milestones listed in Section 5 below as a baseline.
- B. The amount of progress payments you are requesting upon successful completion of milestones or tasks.
- C. Describe your public relations and public affairs expertise.

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- D. Describe your experience working with the City of Austin and the electric utility industry.
- E. Provide bios and/or resumes for staff members who will work on this project and describe roles/responsibilities.
- F. Provide case studies that highlight your experience creating and executing research-based strategic communications programs and achieving desired results.

5. PROJECT MILESTONES

Task	Approximate Number of Days from Start
I. Agree to final Scope of Work, timeline and work products	1
II. Complete information gathering, including meetings with key staff members	30
III. Provide comprehensive report on findings and recommendations	60

6. COST

Information described in the following subsections is required from each Proposer. Your method of costing may or may not be used but should be described. A firm fixed price or not-to-exceed Contract is contemplated, with progress payments as mutually determined to be appropriate. Ten percent (10%) of the total contractual price will be retained until submission and acceptance of all work products. Be specific in your description of the fees and how they apply to the deliverables identified in the requirements above.

- A. Manpower. Itemize to show the following for each category of personnel with separate hourly rates:
 - i. manager, senior consultant, analyst, subcontractor, etc.
 - ii. estimated hours for each category of personnel
 - iii. rate applied for each category of personnel
 - iv. total cost
- B. Itemize cost of supplies and materials
- C. Other itemized direct costs

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The City will score proposals on the basis of the criteria listed below. The City may select a “short list” of Proposers based on those scores. “Short-listed” Proposers may be invited for interviews with the City. The City reserves the right to re-score “short-listed” proposals as a result of the interviews and to make award recommendations on that basis.

- A. Completeness of the response and responders understanding of the requirements
- B. Applicable experience
- C. Qualifications of staff to be assigned to the engagement
- D. Cost proposed