

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

July 25, 2019

TO: SBCCOG Board of Directors

FROM: SBCCOG Steering Committee

SUBJECT: Contract with Communications Consultant for SBCCOG Needs Assessment

Adherence to Strategic Plan:

Goal C: Member Networking and Communications. Sustain and strengthen Board and member commitment to SBCCOG and its initiatives.

Background

During our Social Media Working Group meetings, we have learned that the SBCCOG is not always getting our messages out in the most effective and efficient way. This is not just with our use of social media, but also our printed information and other announcements. We also want to make sure that we are presenting the work we do and our value to our members in an easily accessible and understandable format.

For this reason, SBCCOG staff contacted the South Bay City Managers and asked for the names of communications firms that they are using or have used. With that information, 5 firms were contacted. After phone calls with several of them, 2 firms declined because they felt that we couldn't afford them or they didn't have the time.

Steve Lantz, Kim Fuentes and Jacki Bacharach then interviewed 3 firms: Tripepi Smith, Ignited, & Cornerstone Communications. During the interviews, it became clear that instead of plunging in to an ongoing consultant contract, we should start with an assessment of what we do now and what are most immediate needs would be. Therefore, we asked the 3 firms for proposals on what an assessment would cost with the understanding that there would be no obligation to hire any of them once we had the assessment.

We received proposals from Tripepi Smith and Ignited but Cornerstone declined. We also received a proposal from a fourth firm – Consensus - that had been referred to us by one of the firms that had declined to bid. SBCCOG staff spoke with Consensus on the phone but they were not interviewed.

Submittals – please note that the full proposals will be available at the meeting

1. Tripepi Smith

Their fee includes visit onsite, executing an assessment meeting with senior staff and board members who are interested, and then also participating in a brown bag lunch with staff and delivering a three to five-page write-up at a cost of \$2,630. Three members of their team will facilitate an onsite discussions about our communication platforms and goals as well as identify

strengths and weaknesses of existing communication tools and processes. They will then develop a roster of areas that could use improvement and identify specific action items towards stronger communications from SBCCOG.

2. Ignited

They submitted 2 proposals mapping out what they heard as our highest priority. The first covers the Discovery Phase (stakeholder interviews and an audit of work done to date) and Strategic Communications Plan (update to Vision, Mission; Development of Communications Hierarchy, etc.). The second proposal focuses on the Website Discovery. They purposefully split these up due to our limited budget.

Discovery Phase – 3 weeks - \$8,625

Strategic Communications Plan -\$11,150

Website Discovery – 3 weeks - \$16,850

3. Consensus

Their proposal included the following Tasks: Stakeholder Interviews & Surveys; Communications Assessment & Recommendation; Marketing Material & Graphic Development; Communications & Infrastructure Development. They were not able to provide a not to exceed cost but gave us their hourly rates which range from \$425 for their President & CEO to \$125 for their Account Coordinator.

All three firms have experience with local governments.

RECOMMENDATION

After review of the information provided from the 3 proposers, the Steering Committee is recommending that the SBCCOG contract with Tripepi Smith for a needs assessment and evaluation report not to exceed \$2,630 to be conducted in the July/August 2019 timeframe. This was also the staff recommendation. While it appears to be the least extensive of the other proposers, we have a very small budget for this purpose and believe that we can benefit from their expertise in identifying our communications needs and messaging. There was extensive discussion at the Steering Committee and the vote was split.

The 2019-2020 budget includes funding for additional consultant work in the communications areas as needed. The budget also includes funding for creative and production assistance from an outside expert to help us with our communications and messaging if we decide we need additional services after the assessment. All proposers are aware that task orders beyond the initial assessment are not part of the initial task order or a formal option in the initial contract.