

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING
Request for Proposals for a Native Radio Distribution Service
RFP Release Date: December 9, 2005
Deadline for Response: January 9, 2006

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RFP AT A GLANCE

Part of the mission of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting is to provide programming to underserved audiences. CPB seeks to engage a firm to provide national radio program distribution services to Native American public radio stations, Native American public radio producers, and others with an interest in providing or broadcasting such programming. The selected vendor will have a three-year contract to provide distribution services via the Public Radio Satellite System (PRSS) Content Depot.

BACKGROUND

For more than ten years, Native producers and stations have been served by the American Indian Radio on Satellite (AIROS) service of Native American Public Telecommunications (NAPT) in Lincoln, Nebraska; via the PRSS managed by National Public Radio (NPR). In October 2005, CPB conducted a consultation with stakeholders to update requirements for a Native Radio Distribution Service (NRDS). The services requested in this RFP are based on that consultation.

WHO SHOULD RESPOND TO THIS RFP

CPB seeks a vendor that can reliably provide the services listed below at a reasonable cost for the next three years. While CPB welcomes all proposals, ideally CPB is looking for a vendor who has a proven background and demonstrated ability in:

- managing contracts and projects,
- distributing public radio programming nationally,
- working with the Native public radio system,
- interacting with stations and producers,
- developing websites and web content, and
- streaming audio programming over the Internet.

In summary, the successful Applicant will be able to provide reliable, affordable, national radio programming distribution services for the Native public radio system of producers and stations.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE SERVICE

CPB expects that the proposal will describe a service that includes:

- distributing programming via the new on-demand Content Depot system,
- maintaining a website, including program-related content,
- providing a 24/7 Internet stream of programming, and
- acquiring/maintaining a catalogue of Native programming for on-demand access.

The respondent may also propose additional services of value to stations, while keeping costs reasonable. In addition, the proposal should reflect the best use of limited resources. The service must be ready to launch when the Content Depot automation service comes on line, or July 1, 2006, whichever is earlier.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE OPERATING ENTITY

In addition to being able to provide the services described above, the successful Applicant must have strong operational capabilities and provide accountability to stakeholders in the Native American radio system.

While CPB will provide most of the initial funding for the Native Radio Distribution Service (NRDS), the Service is expected to generate some of its operating budget, and become self-sustaining over time. A proposal for the NRDS must provide a sustainable, five-year business plan that demonstrates:

- declining CPB financial support,
- increasing reliance on fees-for-service,
- establishing and generating support from revenue sources, and
- ensuring equal treatment of programs produced by both the operating entity (if any) and outside producers.

In addition to the above requirements, the successful Applicant must be eligible to operate the in-kind channel from the Public Radio Satellite System. Eligibility requirements are described in the Appendix. The operating entity will establish a system for appropriate Native radio system input on key decisions.

PROPOSED RFP TIMELINE

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|----------------------|---|
| • December 9, 2005: | RFP posted |
| • December 16, 2005: | Questions on RFP due |
| • December 19, 2005: | RFP resubmitted with answers to questions |
| • January 9, 2006: | Deadline for proposals |
| • February 9, 2006: | Project award (approximate date) |

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

In your proposal, please provide as much specific and detailed information as possible regarding each of the items below:

- relevant experience,
- description of services to be provided,
- operations plan, including governance,
- capital budget including required equipment,
- staffing plan with job descriptions, and
- detailed five year business plan with annual revenue and expense budgets.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Experience in national distribution of public radio programming; including operational, technical, and financial expertise.
- Experience working with the Native public radio system.
- Experience working with program producers and stations.
- Demonstrated ability to provide programming information to stations and producers.
- Experience in budgeting, project management, and governance.
- Appropriately sized operation with cost-effective budget.
- Sustainable, realistic five year business plan.

REFERENCES

Please provide three references, with contact information, and a brief description of relevant experience. References for vendors being considered *will* be contacted by CPB.

QUESTIONS AND SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

CPB welcomes your questions or requests for clarification. Please submit any questions by 5pm Eastern time on December 16, 2005 to the contact listed below. We will submit a revised RFP with answers to relevant questions on December 19, 2005.

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APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Apply at <http://www.cpb.org/grants/nativeradio/application.html>. Applications must be submitted electronically.

Applications must consist of:

- Application Form**, filled out in its entirety.
- Project Narrative**, a written (maximum of five pages) description of the project that clearly articulates:
 - o project activities,
 - o how the activities relate to the priorities of this RFP,
 - o project timeline
 - o project deliverables
- Itemized Project Budget**, the financial plan for the project presented in spreadsheet format, tailored to the request, and identifying how each line amount was calculated.

Applicants are responsible for providing all required materials. CPB may, at its discretion, initiate discussion with any Applicant to obtain clarification or additional information.

Proposals must be submitted electronically. Do not submit proposals by fax or mail. They will not be accepted.

Any submission to CPB will become the property of CPB (not including any intellectual property rights contained in such submission).

Each Applicant guarantees that the full and complete rights to all information and materials have been secured. Each Applicant also guarantees that all such materials are not defamatory and do not infringe upon or violate the privacy rights, copyrights, or other proprietary rights of any third party. CPB is not responsible for any violation of copyright, trademark, patent, trade secret, or other rights that may result from disclosure made by response to this RFP.

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, each Applicant grants to CPB the right to duplicate, use, disclose, and distribute all of the submitted materials for purposes of evaluation, review, and research. CPB will not consider the proposal or any of its supporting materials to be confidential. CPB intends to disclose the materials to various employees and possibly to experts outside CPB's employ to determine the merits of the

proposal. It is understood that no confidential relationship is entered into by reason of CPB's consideration of the proposal or any of the materials.

CPB is not responsible for loss or damage to the materials submitted to CPB, or for any unauthorized use or misuse of the submitted materials by any third party.

CPB is not required to return any submitted materials to any Applicant.

Applicants may withdraw a proposal at any time by written notice to CPB.

Solicitation of proposals by CPB does not constitute an agreement by CPB to extend funding to any party under this RFP. CPB may, in its sole discretion, elect not to pursue projects under this RFP in any manner.

DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted electronically. Applications must be received at CPB by 5pm ET on Monday, January 9, 2006.

REVIEW AND SELECTION

The process will begin with CPB staff review, after which Applicants may be invited to submit additional detail, if appropriate. CPB may forward such additional materials to outside experts, who will advise CPB regarding each project's merits and consistency with the CPB System Support Fund's purpose and priorities. While we may seek outside input and advice, funding decisions are CPB's alone.

OTHER

Projects selected for funding may receive requests for additional detail, including project timeline and cash flow projections. CPB may ask Applicants to work with other individuals or institutions to achieve proposed outcomes. Applicants may neither begin work nor announce funding before a grant document or contract has been executed.

When CPB selects a project, CPB will require the Applicant to sign a binding CPB grant document or contract containing terms acceptable to CPB. Until a grant document or contract is signed by both the Applicant and CPB, CPB makes no express or implied commitment to support a project financially. CPB cannot authorize Applicants to commence work on a project until the grant document or contract is fully executed. If an Applicant opts to commence work, it will be at the Applicant's own financial risk, and CPB will not reimburse any expenses if CPB elects not to enter into a contractual relationship with the Applicant. No oral or written statements other than the signed, written grant document or contract will govern or modify the relationship.

Those receiving funds from CPB must be able to comply with a number of requirements that will be included in the operative agreement. All Applicants are advised to familiarize themselves with these [Grant Requirements](#) before applying.

APPENDIX: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

FROM THE NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO DISTRIBUTION POLICY

The following policy and processes shall be established for consideration of any request for PRSS in-kind services:

Applicants for PRSS in-kind services must submit a written request to the Vice President for Distribution detailing the specific type and scope of in-kind service requested, and the criteria upon which such request is based. The Vice President for Distribution shall review each such request based upon the following criteria:

1. **Mandatory Criteria.** All of these mandatory criteria must be satisfied in order for an applicant's request for PRSS in-kind services to be considered further:
 - a. The party seeking in-kind service provides or will provide public radio program services for unserved or underserved audiences;
 - b. The party seeking in-kind service will provide regular, on-going program services at a minimum of five (5) original hours of programming per week;
 - c. The programming is noncommercial;
 - d. The programming has the potential to increase significantly the diversity of the public radio audience;
 - e. The requested service will make best use of available and appropriate technology;
 - f. The programming assists public radio's overall performance of its mission and demonstrates that mission to public radio's constituencies;
 - g. The party seeking the in-kind service can demonstrate that the in-kind support is part of an overall business plan that has a reasonable likelihood of succeeding;
 - h. The programming meets all professional broadcast standards;
 - i. The applicant has demonstrated significant support within the public radio community, including significant support from public radio organizations and interconnected stations;

j. The party will accept the terms of the in-kind services as provided;

k. The party has demonstrated financial need; and

l. Adequate capacity is available on the PRSS.

2. Discretionary Criteria. The following discretionary criteria may be considered (in addition to the mandatory criteria) as additional reason(s) to provide (or to deny) in-kind support:

a. The service will target stations with limited ability to otherwise participate in the public radio interconnection system;

b. Providing the service will leverage investment in or by the public radio system; and

c. The party has the support of organizations outside of public radio.

d. If management determines that an applicant's request for PRSS in-kind service complies with the criteria for eligibility as set forth in this Policy, the Vice President for Distribution shall forward such request, along with his/her conclusions, to the Distribution/Interconnection Committee for its consideration and the formulation of a recommendation to the Board for its action on the application. Determination of the provision of any in-kind services to a requesting applicant may be made upon a formulation of a recommendation of the Distribution/ Interconnection Committee, and a vote of the Board.

e. If the Vice President for Distribution declines to forward an applicant's request for PRSS in-kind services to the Distribution/Interconnection Committee based upon management's determination that the applicant does not meet the mandatory criteria for eligibility as set forth in this Policy, such unsuccessful applicant may petition the Distribution/Interconnection Committee within thirty (30) days after notice of management's negative determination to request its de novo review of any such unsuccessful request. Determination of the provision of any in-kind services to a requesting applicant may be made upon a formulation of a recommendation of the Distribution/Interconnection Committee, and a vote of the Board.

d. For purposes of this policy, the "PRSS in-kind service" consists of: up to full time distribution on a standard channel, or other appropriate technology to provide access similar to that of a standard channel; and up to full-time uplinking from the Washington, DC uplink, as needed, including related scheduling and technical support.

e. The in-kind service may be discounted up to 100% of the applicable rate of the service (channel and uplinking) prices.

f. The initial term of an in-kind service arrangement may be for up to four (4) years. The period of any renewal of such initial arrangement is at the discretion of the Board.

All terms of the provision of any in-kind service shall be reviewed by the Vice President for Distribution, on at least an annual basis, to verify that all mandatory criteria continue to be met, including a demonstration by the applicant of continued, compelling financial need. This review could result in an adjustment of any of the terms of the in-kind service arrangement, including reduction and/or elimination of the discount on channel and uplinking prices. Any term of an in-kind service arrangement may be renewed in Accordance with the provisions of this Policy, provided, however, that the applicant continues to meet the eligibility criteria as set forth herein.

APPENDIX: RFP QUESTIONS

Q: How much money has CPB set aside for this project?

A: CPB has not set a specific dollar amount for this project. CPB is interested in developing an effective and efficient service that will be self-sustaining. The services that will be provided should have strong potential to be supported by Native public radio system.

Q: Will CPB extend the deadline for proposals beyond January 9, 2006?

A: CPB does not plan to extend the application deadline.

Q: Is there a Native preference in this RFP?

A: CPB does not have a Native preference policy. CPB is seeking proposals from organizations and/or individuals with a proven background, experience, and demonstrated ability in working with the Native public radio system.

Q: What is the Public Radio Satellite System Content Depot?

A: Information about the Public Radio Satellite System is available at: www.prss.org . A full description of the Content Depot Service of the Public Radio Satellite System is available at: www.prss.org/contentdepot/ .

Q: Are all the Native public radio stations prepared to receive programming via the Content Depot?

A: Most of the stations have indicated that they are prepared for the Content Depot distribution platform. The issue of stations requiring technical assistance with Content Depot will be handled separately from this RFP.

Q: Where is there information about the Native American public radio stations?

A: A listing of the stations along with other information, including maps, is available on the website for the Center for Native American Public Radio: www.cnapr.org .

Q: What programs will the service distribute?

A: The programs currently being distributed, and the current schedule, are shown at: www.airos.org. CPB does not have a requirement that specific programs be carried, but expects the service to carry programming that serves the Native radio stations. The successful applicant will need to work out distribution arrangements with producers.

Q: What would constitute a *detailed business plan* in the context of the RFP?

A: A full-blown business plan is not required; however, applicants should provide enough detail and explanation so that CPB can evaluate the feasibility of the proposed budget. The business plan elements that should be included in the proposal are (1) a detailed five-year budget and (2) a budget narrative providing explanations and assumptions for major revenue and expense line items. Also, in-kind line items should be clearly indicated.

Q: How much detail is required for the staffing plan?

A: The proposal should include a brief job description for each position proposed.

Q: Should information about partnerships, collaborations and subcontracts be included in the proposal?

A: Some proposals may include partnerships, collaborations, and/or subcontracts. While CPB will contract directly with a single vendor, information about key partners and subcontractors should be included in the proposal. CPB will be looking for appropriateness of the partner's role, and how the partnership contributes to efficiently achieving the mission of the project.

Q: May we expand on the scope of services that are requested in the RFP?

A: The RFP specified a limited set of services in order to keep costs to a minimum. The proposal may include additional services of value to stations and/or producers; however, applicant must indicate how and who will pay for these expanded services.

Q: What sorts of references are required? Will letters of support be useful?

A: The best references will be firms or individuals who have relevant experience with the applicant. Letters of support should also help inform CPB about the applicant's relevant experience.