



Request for Proposals State Capitol News Survey

Proposals Due February 1, 2021

I. OVERVIEW

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (“CPB”) is seeking a qualified entity or individual (the “Contractor”) to conduct a survey of state capitol news and legislative affairs coverage by public media radio and television stations (the “Survey”). CPB’s objective in commissioning this Survey is to inform its strategic investments in local journalism, particularly accountability reporting and government transparency, which are vital to a democracy.

In consultation with CPB, the selected Contractor will identify up to 150 stations to participate in the Survey and design a Survey tool that captures the capacity of public television, public radio, and joint public television/radio licensees to cover state capitol news and legislative proceedings. The resulting dataset must provide an overview of public media newsrooms that cover state capitols as well as public media stations that livestream statehouse proceedings on broadcast and/or digital platforms. Working with CPB to solicit station participation, the Contractor will manage the process of data collection and provide a complete, 50-state dataset to CPB in an electronic format.

The Contractor will present the Survey findings to CPB as a publication-quality report, with a state-by-state compilation of the survey data as well as an analytical narrative that summarizes the survey findings. Because CPB expects to share the report publicly, CPB requests that applicants include a copy editor in their proposals to ensure that the reports and documents are of publishable quality. The Survey must be in the field no later than April 2021, with the final report due four months later.

The Contractor will be compensated on a fixed fee basis for the project and the contract will be renewable for two additional four-month periods to assist with related follow-up work, at CPB’s discretion. During the renewal terms, the Contractor will be compensated on an hourly basis.

II. BACKGROUND

CPB is a private, non-profit corporation authorized by Congress in 1967 to receive federal government appropriations and to use those funds to promote the growth and development of public broadcasting and public telecommunications services. The mission of CPB is to facilitate a public media system that is valued by all Americans and reflects a diversity of ideas, content, talent and delivery. CPB invests in approximately 1,400 local radio and television stations – their programs, services and other initiatives to serve and engage the public.

Over the past several years, one of CPB's priorities has been to augment journalism quality and quantity in local public media. As newspapers fail or cut back on coverage, public media stations can play an important role delivering accountability reporting and information that is critical to a vibrant, participatory democracy. About 200 public media stations report having five or more journalists on their staff. In at least 12 states, public television stations broadcast state legislative sessions, but no formal assessment has ever been commissioned to take a comprehensive look at state capitol coverage across the public media system.

Since 2010, CPB has supported the establishment of journalism collaborations, designed to help small networks of public media stations achieve scale and impact beyond what any one station could accomplish alone. Collaboration allows stations to prioritize their limited resources, a practice that could help public media stations augment their state capitol coverage capabilities.

III. WORK SCOPE

To evaluate the overall capacity of statehouse reporting and coverage in public media, the Contractor will provide the following services:

A. Meetings and Communication with CPB

Hold virtual conference calls with CPB as needed throughout the project to plan and discuss issues related to the Survey design, data collection, findings, and communication strategies. These virtual meetings should include at least one at the start of the project to discuss the overall project methodology; at least two to discuss Survey questions; one when early findings are available, to discuss emerging trends; and one at the end of the project to present the findings.

B. Station Survey Design and Implementation

The Contractor will create, in consultation with CPB, a Survey of local public media stations' capacity to cover state capitol news and events, including gubernatorial, state cabinet, and legislative activities. The Contractor will design the Survey to be brief and easy for stations to complete, in the interest of getting the highest possible response rate. The questions would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Information about station-based public media journalists who report on state capitols, including the amount and type of coverage they provide;
- Information about public affairs shows that include reporting on state capitol news and events, their frequency on broadcast and/or digital platforms;
- Information about public media organizations that have the capability to livestream statehouse proceedings and the extent to which they make the sessions available to the public.

The Contractor will work with CPB to identify stations to survey and then administer the Survey via SurveyMonkey or a similar online survey tool, managing the dissemination of the Survey to station general managers and/or other relevant station personnel. CPB communicates regularly with the stations and will work with the Contractor to inform them about the Survey. CPB will provide the Contractor with the contact information required for each station surveyed, and the Contractor will work with CPB to follow up with individual stations via email or phone to ensure

they respond to the Survey. The Contractor will analyze the data resulting from the Survey by station format and other relevant characteristics, to be identified by CPB.

C. The Report and Communicating Findings

The report will feature an executive summary and provide a detailed analysis of the station Survey data. The report should be written for a general audience. The Contractor will include engaging graphics, as needed, in the report to demonstrate the Survey results in a compelling fashion. The Contractor will submit the report to CPB in the form of a single indexed PDF file, not to exceed 5MB and suitable for downloading from a website or as an email attachment.

The Contractor will also provide to CPB the complete data set, including all Survey responses and any supplemental data collection, arranged in state-by-state order. Any supplementary material will be shared as digital files.

D. Renewal Terms

During any renewal term and as requested by CPB, the Contractor will provide CPB with related follow up work, which could include counsel regarding proposals for innovative statewide news services.

IV. REQUIRED PROPOSAL CONTENTS

The Contractor must provide CPB with separate technical and cost proposals, which include the information below.

A. The technical proposal must include the following elements:

- 1) Primary Contact including the following information, preferably in the form of a cover sheet:
 - a. name;
 - b. mailing address;
 - c. e-mail address; and
 - d. telephone number.
- 2) Summary paragraph with a short description of the applicant's qualifications for the Survey based on the requirements stated above and a concise description of the applicant's approach to accomplishing the project. The summary paragraph should be no more than half a page in length.
- 3) Detailed proposal describing Contractor's approach for conducting the Survey, including a thorough description of the tools and methodologies that will be utilized, and a timeline with major milestones. Please include in the narrative any significant challenges that may arise during the project and describe how those will be resolved.
- 4) The Contractor's staffing plan and proposed approach to completing the project within the contemplated timeframe (i.e., the number and qualifications of staff to be assigned to this project, their division of responsibilities and the estimated hours for each staff assigned to each task).

- 5) The Contractor’s previous experience providing services similar to those required for this project. Preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate:
 - a. Experience conducting surveys
 - b. Knowledge of journalism, preferably state capitol reporting
 - c. Familiarity with public media
 - d. Management capacity and skills to oversee the various aspects of the Project described above.

Please provide no more than three examples of relevant projects that the Contractor’s proposed team has recently completed, and a reference for each of the examples provided, including a telephone number and email address.

- B. A detailed budget in Microsoft Excel must be built on a Flat-Fee basis and include a detailed breakdown of the costs by task, including the hourly rates for each of the assigned staff and any sub-contractors that have been identified.

V. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following factors with the associated weight

- A. Approach (35%): The quality of the Contractor’s proposed approach to the Work Scope, and whether the proposed breakdown of tasks, subcontractors, and allocated resources is reasonable.
- B. Examples (20%): The quality of the examples provided and whether they demonstrate that the Contractor’s team has the necessary skills and experience to conduct the Survey.
- C. Skills (20%): The quality of the Contractor and its staff’s experience relevant to conducting evaluations of this type. Whether the experience reflects knowledge of public media journalism.
- D. Price (25%): The reasonableness of the proposed cost.

VI. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Technical and cost proposals are due no later than 5:00pm ET on February 1, 2021 through CPB’s grants management system. To gain access please email jlin@cpb.org.

All questions concerning the RFP must be submitted to Joy Lin, VP, Journalism at the e-mail address above, with “State Capitol News Survey” in the subject line. The questions and CPB’s responses will be posted on the CPB’s Website without attribution.

CPB may request Contractors with the top scores to virtually present their proposals to CPB. If so, CPB will notify each of the time and date.

VII. TIMETABLE

Below is the anticipated timetable.

ACTIVITY	DATE
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Proposal Submissions Due 5 pm EDT	2/1/2021
Proposal Review & Selection	2/17/2021
Proposal Presentations to CPB - if required	TBD
Contract Drafting & Execution	3/15/2021

VIII. PROPOSALS

This RFP does not constitute an agreement by CPB to extend funding to any party. CPB may, in its sole discretion, elect not to pursue this project. Proposals submitted in response to this RFP shall be valid for at least 90 days following the closing date. Additional terms follow.

1. Multiple Applications. Neither multiple nor alternate applications will be accepted.
2. Confidential Information. Applicant should clearly identify any portion of its proposal that it considers confidential, proprietary commercial information or trade secrets. In addition, Applicant must identify all subcontractors and advisors and include a description of their roles.
3. Exceptions. Applicants selected for funding are deemed to have accepted the terms in this RFP. Any exceptions to these terms must be clearly identified in their proposals. CPB, at its sole discretion, may reject proposals that include exceptions.
4. CPB Information. In reviewing Applicant's proposal, if CPB's shares materials, data, other information and analyses (collectively, "Information") with Applicant, Applicant shall be deemed to agree to protect, preserve and maintain all such Information on a strictly confidential basis, and to promptly return to CPB, upon its request, all tangible copies of such Information in Applicant's possession.
5. Proposal Materials. By submitting a proposal, Applicant grants to CPB the right to duplicate, use, disclose, and distribute all of the materials submitted for purposes of evaluation, review and research. In addition, Applicant guarantees that it has full and complete rights to all information and materials included in its proposal and guarantees that 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 loss or damage to material that Applicant provides to CPB in conjunction with this RFP. Upon submission, said information shall become CPB's property (not including any intellectual property rights contained in such submission), and CPB is not required to return the same. Applicant is responsible for any violation of copyright, trademark, patent, trade secret, or other rights related to such material.

IX. CPB TERMS

CPB is not responsible for any costs incurred by Applicant in preparing and submitting its proposal in response to this RFP, or in performing any other activities relative to this solicitation. If a proposal is selected for funding, Applicant must sign a binding agreement that meets with CPB's approval (Agreement). Until the Agreement is executed by both parties, no express or implied commitment has been made to provide funding. Applicant is not authorized to commence any work until the Agreement is fully executed, nor will CPB compensate it for the same.

Applicant must guarantee that, among other things, any work it undertakes is not defamatory and will not violate or infringe upon the privacy rights, copyrights or other proprietary rights of any third party. Applicant must also agree to indemnify CPB against any loss resulting from breach of any of the representations and warranties in the Agreement.

The Agreement will contain additional requirements, including but not limited to the following:

1. Applicant's Financial Position. Applicant must demonstrate that it has adequate financial support to complete the work and to deliver reports and/or other intellectual property set forth in the Agreement;
2. Record Keeping. Except for the work that Applicant completes pursuant to a fixed price fee structure, Applicant must provide CPB with documentation that evidences the actual costs of the project (including timesheets or other relatively contemporaneous record-keeping documents), and supporting documentation that demonstrates that all costs were reasonable, necessary, and incurred for the project;

Applicant must maintain, for three years following the final payment for the project, all financial records to the project, which shall be accessible to CPB and to the U.S. Comptroller General or other representatives of each for examination and audit purposes. Applicant will additionally ensure that any subcontractors or consultants it engaged for the project also maintain such records for the same period and under the same terms;

3. Applicant must maintain, for three years following the final payment for the project, all subcontracts and other agreements, licenses, clearances and other documents related to the work undertaken, copies of which shall be made available to CPB and to the U.S. Comptroller General or other representatives of each upon request;
4. U.S. Comptroller Audits. Applicant must provide CPB with a copy of any U.S. Comptroller General audit report issued in connection with the project;
5. Equal Employment Laws. Applicant must comply with all applicable equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination laws and policies;

6. Governing Law. The Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the District of Columbia without regard to its conflict of law provisions;
7. Restrictions. Applicant is strictly prohibited from using any funds provided by CPB:
 - a. for any activity designed to influence legislation or appropriations pending before the United States Congress or any state legislature; or
 - b. to conduct any reception or provide any other entertainment for any officer or employee of the federal government or any state or local government.
8. CPB's Appropriation. CPB's primary source of funding is appropriations made by the U.S. Congress. Therefore, if CPB's appropriation is reduced and that reduction materially affects CPB's ability to meet its obligations under the Agreement, then CPB and Applicant, at CPB's discretion, may agree to enter good faith negotiations to modify the Agreement.
9. Research and Materials. All research and materials created, developed, compiled or produced pursuant to or as a result of this project (including but not limited to all reports) will be considered ordered and commissioned by CPB as works made for hire under the copyright laws, and made in the course of services rendered. If, for any reason, the proposed research and materials to be provided are not considered works made for hire under the copyright laws, then Applicant will be required to assign all right, title and interest in and to such research and materials to CPB. Applicant further agrees that neither it, nor any of its subcontractors, will have any copyrights or other intellectual property rights whatsoever in any research and/or materials created, developed, compiled or produced by them or by any subcontractor, or by any third party participating in the preparation of research or materials for this project.
