



Corporation  
for Public  
Broadcasting

## Request for Proposals

### **National Communications and Marketing Support for American Graduate: Let's Make It Happen Initiative July 2014**

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) is seeking to engage a marketing and communications agency to support American Graduate: Let's Make It Happen initiative. This nationwide public media initiative is designed to help communities improve high school graduation rates and prepare more students for college and career success. Specifically, the agency will assist CPB and public media stations in developing the strategy and executing on a national communications campaign for phase two of the American Graduate initiative, consistent with two goals:

- 1) Increasing understanding around the issue of high school dropout and those who are disproportionately affected, and providing access to solutions beginning in early childhood through college readiness; and
- 2) Celebrating local leaders and champions for students, and inspiring more citizens to get involved in their community as "American Graduate Champions."

The agency will work with CPB to achieve overall initiative goals and showcase the value of public media to key stakeholders through targeted low-cost-entry marketing and PR tactics (e.g. thought leadership and speaker's calendar, media relations and publicity, message development, social media, video and print creative, celebrity endorsements, seasonal campaigns, digital marketing and social media, partnership development, research and white papers, national and community-based events, station collaborations, etc.), manage an American Graduate Champion Leadership Awards Program, and incorporate promotion-related measurement targets as part of the larger American Graduate impact evaluation.

The agency will work in consultation with the Nine Network in St. Louis and issue experts from Civic Enterprises. The Nine Network will manage and coordinate the local efforts of 33 public media station grantees, work with national producers to align associated content and educational resources, manage the American Graduate website and social media channels, and measure community level impact.

The comprehensive communications strategy will consist of 1) a national communication and marketing plan including media relations, social media promotion, and tools and templates that can be shared with and customized by participating local stations, 2) creating and launching a nationwide American Graduate Champions Leadership Awards campaign to include the planning and execution of at least one annual national event; and 3) developing messaging and tactics that connect public media's early childhood education efforts (PBS KIDS and the Ready To Learn program) with on-going American Graduate work as part of a long term solution to the dropout challenges.

The agency must have experience working both autonomously to drive planning and implementation, and working collaboratively to gain buy in and participation across multiple teams. The agency will be required to participate in weekly status conference calls with CPB and the Nine Network, provide updated written status reports, and lead in-person planning meetings at CPB located in Washington, DC. While the applicant agency need not be headquartered in Washington, DC, the team assigned to work on the project must be based in DC.

CPB expects to retain the agency under fixed hourly rates for a 1 year term, renewable on an annual basis for up to 2 additional years, at CPB's discretion. The agency will work an estimated 25 hours per week for the initial 3 month period to meet project start-up needs, after which the agency will work an estimated 40 hours a month.

## **I. ABOUT THE AMERICAN GRADUATE INITIATIVE**

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According to the 2014 [Building a Grad Nation report](#) published by the America's Promise Alliance, the national high school graduation rate currently stands at 80 percent. Graduation rates have risen most dramatically among African-American and Hispanic students (currently at 76% and 68% respectively), however these gains are in the populations that have the farthest to go. While our nation has made real progress toward the national goal of a 90% graduation rate by 2020, America still loses about one out of five young people to the dropout crisis each year. High school graduates are more likely to be employed, make higher taxable incomes, and generate jobs than those without a high school diploma, and are less likely to engage in criminal behavior or receive social services. Raising the graduation rate in 2011 to 90% would have increased the GDP by \$6.6 billion.

American Graduate launched in 2011 with 25 public media stations in high need communities to spotlight the issue and focus on middle and high school student interventions. Through national and local content, innovative and wide-ranging partnerships, town halls with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and tools to support teachers and engage students in their education, stations invited every members of the community to bring their voice and perspective to the discussion. According to a report from the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Education, American Graduate has told the story about the dropout crisis in a way that allowed citizens to understand the complexities of the issue and get involved, and allowed community organizations to break down silos and work more effectively together.

Over the next two years, American Graduate public media stations will build awareness and understanding around remaining challenges and long terms solutions to reach students disproportionately affected, including the importance of a strong foundation in early education, the role of local leadership and surrounding supports for students outside of school, and the need for engaged, caring adults as consistent champions for every student throughout the entire education continuum.

CPB will continue to advance public media stations education services and engagement practices building on the momentum of American Graduate success to date with additional national resources, local support, and measurement of impact across communities. Full details about the project are available at [www.americangraduate.org](http://www.americangraduate.org).

## **II. PROPOSAL COMPONENTS**

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Creative proposals should include the following components presented in the order shown below:

- Campaign Approach & Firm Background and Experience:
  - A narrative describing the applicant's strategy and process to achieve outlined goals for the Project and top-level perspective and recommendations on how public media could promote its role in advancing solutions -- from preschool education through workforce development – in education with key national stakeholders.
  - Major milestones and proposed timeline of activity for elements described
  - A statement of the background and experience of the project lead and other staff, and organization, to include:
    - Qualifications of key personnel assigned to the project, estimated number of hours and hourly rate for the personnel assigned to the project each year

- Organizational structure and capabilities (i.e. in-house research, creative, production and training departments or ability to outsource).
- Case Studies:
  - Campaign Management Case Studies – not more than three recent examples demonstrating applicant’s success advancing a national community engagement initiative with multiple partners in different locations, and/or online. Please describe elements of the campaign, to include:
    - Sample Creative Work and Process – Graphics, slogans/taglines, videos, graphics, campaign advertising, message development, and/or PSAs recently developed
    - At least one of the three examples must involve the agency developing and evaluating the project’s outcomes and success using PR tactics and metrics.
  - Stakeholder Engagement Case Studies – not more than three recent examples demonstrating applicant’s success in building knowledge within targeted stakeholder groups and cultivating new or existing partnerships with relevant affiliate organizations and diverse audience segments.
    - Examples should include evidence of experience working with and through organizations, celebrities and issue experts, foundations and thought leaders and media to influence local and national campaign outcomes, including but not limited to third party endorsements, increased partnerships, targeted consumer segments, and philanthropic support.
    - Examples should include evidence of the applicant’s experience supporting a client’s overall goal to articulate the impact of the client’s activities, investments, partnerships, etc.
- Issue Awareness:
  - A narrative describing the applicant’s top-level perspective and recommendations on how public media could play a more impactful role in responding to the national high school dropout crisis going forward.

Cost proposals should include the following:

- Budget:
  - A budget detailing the number of hours and hourly rate for the personnel assigned to the project each year assuming 25 hours per week (100 hours month) during the first 3 months of the project, and 40 hours per month thereafter. Please identify all subcontractors, the work they will perform and their costs each year.

### III. EVALUATION CRITERIA

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Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria with the associated weight:

1. Campaign Approach/Design, Branding, and Project Management (45%)
  - a. How well the agency’s examples demonstrate a comprehensive approach to planning, design, and management of a national campaign.
    - i. Were the planning and relevant processes effective and efficient?
    - ii. Did the campaign include a creative mix of tactics and products?
    - iii. Do the examples demonstrate the applicant’s ability to develop metrics and achieve a successful outcome?
  - b. Does the agency possess the skills to successfully support and drive the work of multiple affiliates, and their organizational and influential capacity to advance a national issues-based campaign based on activities from multiple independent partners?
    - i. Does their expertise and staffing meet the needs of the project?

- c. The agency's approach to the project and reasonableness of the suggested timeline
2. Case Studies (25%)
  - a. The agency's ability to solidify third party endorsements, partnerships, philanthropic support, etc.
  - b. The agency's ability to engage and mobilize a variety of population segments, e.g. students, teachers, or minority group.
3. Public Media's Role and Issue Awareness (10%)
  - a. The agency's understanding of community impact, public media's role in education, and recommendations on steps CPB might take to have a more impactful role in responding to the dropout crisis.
4. Cost (20%)
  - a. Reasonableness of the budget: Please show a breakdown of the information set forth in Section II above, for each year, assuming a fixed fee contract and a breakdown of the same for each of the two potential renewal years.

#### **IV. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS**

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Proposals are due no later than July 24, 2014 at 5pm Eastern. Applicants must submit separate creative and cost proposals. Creative proposal and sample work must be emailed (as attachments in PDF format) to Kimberly Bowser, CPB Project Manager, Public Media Engagement, [kbowser@cpb.org](mailto:kbowser@cpb.org). Cost proposals must be provided by email (as attachments in Excel format) to Jackie Livesay, Vice President, Procurement, [jlivesay@cpb.org](mailto:jlivesay@cpb.org). CPB will acknowledge by email receipt of each proposal. CPB reserves the right to disqualify applicants including cost information in their creative proposal.

All questions must be submitted via email to Ms. Bowser at the email address above preferably before July 21, 2014.

CPB may request offerors with the top scores to meet with and present their proposal to senior management at CPB's offices in Washington, DC. If so, CPB will notify applicants to schedule these meetings.

#### **V. CPB TERMS**

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Quotes submitted in response to this RFP by an applicant ("Offeror") shall be valid for at least 90 days following the closing date of this RFP.

Proposals must provide a straightforward, concise description of the Offeror's proposals to meet the requirements of this RFP. Neither multiple nor alternate proposals will be accepted. An Offeror should give specific attention to the clear identification of those portions of its proposal that it considers confidential, proprietary commercial information or trade secrets.

The selected Offeror shall be responsible for all services required by this RFP. Subcontractors must be identified and a complete description of their role relative to the proposals must be included in the Offeror's proposals.

By submitting an offer in response to this RFP, an Offeror, if selected for award, shall be deemed to have accepted the terms of this RFP. Any exceptions to this RFP must be clearly identified in the proposal. A proposal that takes exception to these terms may be rejected.

As part of the RFP review process, CPB may share materials, data, other information and analyses (collectively, "Information") with Offerors. As a condition of receiving such Information, Offerors responding to this RFP 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 your possession.

CPB is not responsible for loss or damage to material submitted with or in support of this RFP. Any submission to CPB shall become the property of CPB (not including any intellectual property rights contained in such submission), and CPB is not required to return any submitted materials to any Offeror. 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 RFQ.

Solicitation by CPB of proposals does not constitute an agreement by CPB to extend funding to any party for the project under consideration. CPB may, in its sole discretion, elect to select multiple parties or elect not to pursue this project in any manner.

By submitting a proposal, each Offeror 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, each Offeror guarantees that the Offeror has full and complete rights to all of the information and materials included in the proposal. Each Offeror 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.

## **VI. CONDITIONS OF AGREEMENT**

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- If a quote in response to this RFP is selected for funding, Offerors will be required to sign a binding agreement. Until both parties have signed an agreement, no express or implied commitment has been made to provide financial support. Offerors are not authorized to commence work until the agreement is fully executed. If Offerors opt to commence work, they do so at their own risk. No oral or written statement other than the signed, written agreement will govern or modify the relationship.
- As a condition of agreement, Offerors must guarantee that, among other things, any work they undertake on behalf of CPB is not defamatory and will not violate or infringe upon the privacy rights, copyrights, or other proprietary rights of any third party. Offerors must also agree to indemnify CPB against any loss resulting from breach of any of the guarantees contained in the agreement.
- Those receiving funds from CPB must be able to comply with a number of requirements that will be included in the operative agreement. These requirements include but are not limited to:
  - A demonstration of adequate financial support to complete the work for which they have been contracted and to deliver reports and/or other intellectual property created pursuant to the Agreement;
  - Maintenance, for 3 years following receipt of relevant funds, of all financial records to the project, which records shall be accessible to CPB, and to the U.S. Comptroller General or other representatives for examination and audit purposes. (Offerors will additionally ensure that any subcontractors or advisors under the agreement shall also maintain such records for the period specified and under the same terms);
  - Maintenance, for 3 years after approval of a final financial report, of a complete file of all subcontracts and other agreements, licenses, clearances, and other documents related to the work undertaken, copies of which shall be made available to CPB on request;
  - Submission to CPB of a copy of any U.S. Comptroller General final audit report in connection

- with the project;
  - Compliance with equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination laws and policies;
  - Offerors will be required to provide documentation as to actual costs, and provide supporting detail demonstrating that all costs are reasonable, necessary and allocable to the requirements and objectives of the work undertaken; and
  - 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 the Offeror will be required to assign all right, title and interest in and to such research and materials to CPB. Offerors further agree that neither they, nor any of their 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.
- The agreement will be governed by construed in accordance with the laws of the District of Columbia without regard to its conflict of law provisions.
  - Other material terms and provisions will be set forth in the documents provided to the Offeror that successfully completes the selection process.
  - CPB will have complete rights to the reports created as deliverables for this project.
  - CPB will not be responsible for any costs incurred by an Offeror in preparing and submitting a proposal, or in performing any other activities relative to this solicitation.