



**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Communication and Public Relations Services
Request for Proposals**

Summary

The Mobile Bay National Estuary is seeking proposals for strategic communications to assist with messaging, branding, stakeholder engagement initiatives, and proactive media relations outreach that earns coverage of its activities, achievements, and initiatives. This effort includes making media pitches, facilitating interviews, and drafting press releases, articles, flyers, quotes, op-eds, and blog posts. This contract will extend through December 31, 2024 with opportunities to extend beyond.

Background/Problem

The National Estuary Program was created by the U.S. Congress through amendments to the Clean Water Act in 1987 to ensure effective management of 28 economically and socially significant U.S. estuaries. Coastal Alabama is home to one of these nationally significant estuaries and the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP), in existence since 1995. Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) is a non-regulatory program of the U.S. EPA and a division of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab.

For more than a quarter century, the MBNEP has worked to promote the wise stewardship of Alabama's estuaries and coast. To achieve this, MBNEP brings together community members, government agencies, businesses, nonprofits, academics, and other key partners to develop and implement a comprehensive conservation management plan for Mobile and Baldwin counties (the CCMP) prescribing specific actions to address the challenges of water quality, living resources, and community resilience across coastal Alabama. MBNEP is guided by a Management Conference of more than 300 local leaders and constituencies.

From large-scale watershed restorations to environmental monitoring, citizen input, local capacity building, invasive species eradication, pollution prevention and reduction, and citizen education—MBNEP focuses on protecting what people value about living on the Alabama coast: access, shorelines, fish and wildlife, heritage and culture, ecosystem and community resilience, and water quality.

The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program—the NEP for coastal Alabama—has been a leader for restoring and protecting our coastal environment since its establishment. MBNEP is non-regulatory and works collaboratively with constituents to conserve and protect local control of our natural resources so they will continue to provide unparalleled quality of life for people, fish, and wildlife along the Alabama coast.

At present MBNEP needs communications support to better position the work we do across the local, regional, and statewide landscape. Due to the comprehensive nature of our program's activities and the complexity of our management conference structure, MBNEP has struggled to communicate what it

does, what our partners are doing, and how we are collectively achieving impact across the Alabama coast. To improve the public's knowledge about who we are, what we do, and how we do it, we need professional help to differentiate us from the other organizations in this same space. Specifically, we need to do a better job of telling our story.

Components of MBNEP's Work needs

1. Program Wide & General messaging and publishing
 - a. "Who we are", "MBNEP 101"
 - b. The impact of our work, especially specific watersheds/projects
2. CCMP messaging and publishing
 - a. Highlight accomplishments of prior CCMPs
 - b. Stressor evaluation developed by Science Advisory Committee
 - c. Testimonials from those involved with or who benefited from past CCMPs
 - d. Current engagement opportunities with CCMP development process
3. Ongoing project related messaging and publishing
 - a. Fowl River Spits Restoration Project
 - b. Deer River Shoreline Stabilization and Marsh Creation Project
 - c. D'Olive Watershed Restoration Initiative
 - d. Weeks Bay Watershed Restoration Initiative
 - e. Projects in partnership with Mobile and Baldwin Counties
 - f. Watershed Planning (ongoing)
 - i. Western Delta
 - ii. Eastern Delta
 - iii. Grand Bay
 - g. WKRG Partnership
 - i. Wisdom from the Water (short video series) Examples:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCbt8dEm90Q>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-LJHLbU68U>
 - h. State of the Alabama's Estuaries and Coast, an upcoming publication, relevant to all who live, work and play in Coastal Alabama

Project Scope

The purpose of this effort is to enable MBNEP to further promote the wise stewardship of the water quality and living resources of Alabama's estuaries and coast.

The goals of this effort are three-fold:

1. Increase the understanding of the MBNEP, its role in protecting coastal resources, and how the MBNEP can serve government, business, and community through presentations to civic, philanthropic, academic, business and housing sectors
2. Improve communicating the value of the MBNEP through periodic updates of MBNEP Management Conference accomplishments and MBNEP-led activities; and showcase MBNEP-led activities in diverse media outlets, special events and job site tours
3. Increase communications of the MBNEP Management Conference story (both of MBNEP work as well as other partners) through procuring assets, including but not limited to the production of

photography; graphic design; and both short and feature length stories videos, cobranding and other materials as needed.

Objectives of this effort include:

1. Publication of a minimum of four technical or creative writing pieces for media/newsletter distribution
2. Procurement of a minimum of 25 quality pieces of photographic content of MBNEP and other partner projects for use in communications
3. Graphic Layout of a minimum of 6 flyers for use in community engagement activities
4. Posting of a minimum of 12 social media content pieces on LinkedIn, Facebook, other
5. Development of PowerPoint Template for use in community engagement activities
6. Other services as recommended

Stakeholders & Audience

The primary audience to be reached through this project is the general public. The secondary audiences are key stakeholders including local and state government officials, business and industry, board members of local non-profit and grassroots organizations, academic institutions (including but not limited to member institutions of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab).

MBNEP Resources

The MBNEP has several professional resources currently available to support this effort, including:

- Outreach and Engagement Lead (focused on face-to-face relationship building)
- Kris Skoda, Videographer Contractor (focused on developing a library of drone and project site footage as well as interviews with coastal residents for use in storytelling)
- Mary Mullins/Ramona Hill, Organizational Support Contractors (focused on CCMP development process)
- Symphonic Contractor (focused on website redesign)
- Michelle Wise/Michael Dumas- Graphic Artist/Writer Team Contract (focused on Website redesign elements, community signage, newsletter production).

This contract will coordinate with them as part of their scope. In addition, we work with a local videographer who is amassing a.

Performance Metrics

To ensure success of the activities described herein, we will measure performance based on the following metrics:

- Reach- Increase in number of people who have seen or heard the message, such as views, impressions, downloads, etc.
- Engagement- Increase in the number of people who have interacted with messages, such as likes, comments, shares, clicks, etc.
- Conversion- Increase in the number of people who have taken the action that you want them to take, such as meeting attendance, survey responses, etc.

- Satisfaction- Increase in the number of people who respond positively to questions about what the MBNEP is and what it does.

Budget

The budget for this contract is \$30,000-\$50,000 for a one-year period, variable depending on the comprehensiveness of the proposal.

Timeline

The timeline for awarding the contract is as follows:

Request for Proposals issued: June 10, 2024

Submission of Proposals deadline: June 28, 2024

Review of Proposals: by July 8, 2024

Interviews: July 9-12, 2024

Notice of Award/Negotiation of Scope: Week of July 15, 2024

Award Time Period: July, 2024-December, 2024, with option to extend through 9/2025.

Submission Requirements

Proposals shall include:

- Cover letter or executive summary
- Proposed approach and methodology, including a detailed vision of proposed work based on the three components of need outlined above
- At least two relevant examples of similar work
- An itemized budget
- Overall project timeline of key milestones.

The proposal shall be submitted electronically to Herndon Graddick at hgraddick@mobilebaynep.com.

Disclaimer

This RFP is conducted under applicable provisions of **Alabama Bid Law**. Please note that Statements in response to this RFP are sought only from experienced consultants. **Respondents** who submit a Proposal are responsible for becoming fully informed, regarding all circumstances, information, laws and any other matters that might, in any way, affect the **Respondent's** submitted Proposal. The Dauphin Island Sea Lab/MBNEP assumes no responsibility for any interpretations made by **Respondents** based on information provided in this offer or through any other sources. The MBNEP, and its employees, and/or agents shall not be liable at any time for any costs associated with or related to this Request, which are incurred by any **Respondent** to the RFP, subsequent amendments or cancellation.