



Request for Proposals (RFP): Communications & Media Partner

Date Issued: December 3, 2019

PART ONE: OVERVIEW

US Ignite seeks communication and/or public relations firms to provide contracted graphic design, media relations, and communications support for the Washington, DC- based non-profit.

This document is a request for proposal (RFP) regarding partner capabilities in several aspects of graphic design, media relations, and communications support. Potential partners can offer to provide all or any of the described services, either bundled or separately, to US Ignite.

US Ignite is soliciting bids from all interested parties for a one-year contract. This proposal includes the option to renew for four additional one-year periods, should both parties elect to extend the contract.

The RFP process will proceed according to the following schedule. The target dates are subject to change.

Target Date	Description
Dec 3, 2019	RFP made available to select organizations and posted on US Ignite’s website.
Dec 18, 2019	Responses are due to meghan.histand@us-ignite.org by 12:00 pm eastern.
Dec 20, 2019	Responses to be evaluated by US Ignite. Follow-up interviews and negotiations, as necessary.
Jan 8, 2020	Vendor selected.
Jan 14, 2020	Master Services Agreement and Task Order(s) finalized.
By Jan 15, 2020	Period of Performance begins (or sooner).

PART TWO: US IGNITE OVERVIEW AND GOALS

US Ignite is a national nonprofit, a 501(c)(3), that is accelerating the smart city movement – and creating value for an entire ecosystem – by guiding communities into the connected future, creating a path for private sector growth, and advancing technology research that’s at the heart of smart city development. Why is this important? Because local governments need to improve quality of life and ensure economic development in their communities, particularly during a time of rapid technological change. Businesses recognize the importance of the emerging market around smart communities and need to find commercial strategies that are repeatable, scalable, and sustainable. And foundations and federal agencies need to channel their institutional aims into efforts ranging from cutting-edge research to practical economic development initiatives that deliver measurable benefits.

As a trusted partner, US Ignite brings this entire smart city ecosystem together, successfully pairing financial investment with technical and organizational expertise. Through the public-private partnership programs we run, US Ignite is a catalyst for communications network advancement, and for innovation in smart city services that are powered by a new generation of technologies. Please visit [US Ignite’s website](#) to learn more about US Ignite and its programs.

US Ignite is requesting proposals from interested organizations to provide communications and public relations services that will help US Ignite achieve its following key goals:

1. Tell the US Ignite story, that advanced networking infrastructure and data-driven technologies are the foundation for a smart community, and credit US Ignite for developing and pushing that mission.



2. Inspire potential private funders, including foundations, corporations, and individuals to consider joining our programs or providing financial support (cash and in-kind) to US Ignite.
3. Bolster US Ignite's standing in the smart city community and help US Ignite's real, tangible mission and results stand out from the "smart cities" noise.
4. Expand the general awareness of US Ignite and promote US Ignite as the leading national organization in the "smart cities" space.

PART THREE: IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PROPOSERS

Below is important information for proposers to consider:

1. **Who May Respond:** Communication and/or public relations firms may respond to this RFP.
2. **Submission Date:** Proposals must be submitted no later than **Noon Eastern on December 18, 2019**.
3. **Term of Contract:** US Ignite intends to enter into a contract with the winning proposer for an initial 1-year term beginning by January 15, 2020. This proposal includes the option to renew for four additional one-year periods, should both parties elect to extend the contract.
4. **Questions and Requests for Clarification:** Proposers may submit written questions and requests for clarification regarding the RFP. The questions or requests for clarification must be submitted via email no later than **Noon Eastern on December 12, 2019**. Please direct any questions or clarifications to Meghan Histan at meghan.histan@us-ignite.org.
5. **Cost of the Proposal:** All costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal responding to this RFP will be the responsibility of the Proposer and will not be reimbursed by US Ignite.

PART FOUR: SCOPE OF SERVICES

The following provides a general overview of the work assignments US Ignite anticipates the selected firms to complete. **Please note that proposers are not required to respond to the full criteria outlined in the scope of work. Your organization will not be penalized in the Proposal Evaluation Phase should your organization choose to respond to a subset of assignments noted in the Scope of Work.**

While US Ignite's project budget for outsourced graphic design and communications support has been variable over the years, it has averaged around \$150,000 annually. However, US Ignite is open to spending more or less depending on the services offered by prospective partners.

The items noted below should not be considered an exhaustive listing of tactics to be employed to meet the goals stated above. US Ignite welcomes proposer's recommendations to change or add strategies and tactics to this list that can further enhance US Ignite's ability to create awareness of its offerings in the smart city community.

Part A – Smart Gigabit Communities Scope (SGC) of Work

1. Conduct media outreach to secure placement of US Ignite quotes and community stories with appropriate national, regional, technology, and trade media outlets.
2. [US Ignite Annual Application Summit](#)
 - a) Expand media interest in and coverage of the US Ignite Annual Application Summit (scheduled for April 2020).
 - b) Promote key-takeaways and accomplishments from the US Ignite Annual Summit at the local and national level.
 - c) Suggest strategies for promoting and featuring US Ignite applications on social media and other appropriate venues as opportunities arise.
3. Promote [SGC Community Reverse Pitches](#) and other community activities.
4. Create SGC marketing materials to further spark interest in the program, such as SGC brochures and other marketing materials.
5. Help refine SGC PowerPoint presentations, including graphic art and/or design work.



Part B – Platforms for Advanced Wireless Research (PAWR) Scope of Work

1. Conduct media outreach to secure placement for PAWR-related stories, including:
 - a) Announcement of the final PAWR platform to be named in 2020
 - b) Operational availability of multiple PAWR platforms for general research
 - c) New partnerships with federal agencies and the private sector
 - d) Key research milestones
2. Showcase Event
 - a) Help support preparations for a showcase event in the fall of 2020
 - b) Expand media interest in and coverage of the showcase event
3. Create PAWR marketing materials to further spark national and international interest in the program, such as PAWR brochures and other marketing materials.
4. Help enhance PAWR PowerPoint presentations, including graphic art and/or design work.

Part C - General US Ignite Scope of Work

1. Address miscellaneous communications request, including communications requests for US Ignite's Smart Transportation Testbed program, Forum program, and Smart Cities Data Exchange program.
2. Attend weekly US Ignite meetings (one representative) by phone.
3. Provide graphic art and/or design work to US Ignite, including potentially creating branded templates that will communicate US Ignite's messaging to stakeholders.
4. US Ignite would like proposers to provide some metrics by which their work could be measured over the course of a year. A list of some examples might (but does not have to) include:
 - Key input metrics such as stories pitched and reporters called.
 - Key output metrics such as coverage by new media outlets, staff and partner quotes placed, and traffic to us-ignite.org.
 - Key outcome metrics such as new cities or companies signed.

Part D- General US Ignite Expected Duties

1. Spearhead public relations efforts and expand media contacts with key industry stakeholders (especially in the telecommunications, networking, and Smart City fields).
2. Aid US Ignite communities in directing media outreach about their project success stories (e.g., local media lists, press releases, letters to the editor, media kits, special events).
3. Supply thorough reporting on media outreach results and metrics to US Ignite and public and key stakeholders (i.e., number of new media outlets, website traffic, social media hits, etc.)
4. Provide intelligence on opportunities for participation in events.
5. Advocate US Ignite mentions and placement with partner and stakeholder communication channels.

PART FIVE: TERM OF CONTRACT

US Ignite intends to enter into a contract with the winning proposer(s) for an initial 1-year term beginning by January 15, 2020 and concluding on January 14, 2021. This proposal includes the option to renew for four additional one-year periods, should both parties elect to extend the contract.

PART SIX: QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATIONS

Proposers may submit written questions and requests for clarification regarding the RFP. The questions or requests for clarification must be submitted via e-mail and received by US Ignite prior to 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time December 12, 2019. Please direct any questions or clarifications to Meghan Hstand at meghan.hstand@us-ignite.org.



PART SEVEN: QUALIFICATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION

US Ignite intends to issue a time and materials contract, to a firm(s) who demonstrates the capacity to deliver quality scope of services and is the most responsive to the requirements of the RFP.

Please send your proposal to meghan.histand@us-ignite.org with a subject line of "RFP: Communications & Media Partner – Your Organization". Please include the following in your response:

- 1. Proposer Information and References (no more than 1 page, plus 1 page for each proposed staff member)**
 - a) Provide primary contact information, including name, phone number, email, and main point of contact for the staff proposed for the project.
 - b) Provide a description of your organization.
 - c) Provide a list of three professional references that US Ignite can contact – please include the following: a summary of the work provided, the name of organization, the main point of contact, phone number, and email address.
 - d) Share resumes of key staff proposed to work on this initiative, including a description of experience for each proposed staff member (1-page limit per proposed staff member). Please note that the professionals(s) promised for this project may not be substituted with any other resources to conduct project work, without US Ignite’s written prior approval.
- 2. Scope of Services:** Please detail how your organization will perform the services and meet the requirements outlined in “*Part 4: Scope of Services*”.
- 3. Case Studies:** Demonstrate how you would create marketing/media campaigns for 2 out of the 3 the below real-life US Ignite scenarios. There are no page limits associated with the Case Study component of the RFP.
 - a) Highlighting Application Examples:** Demonstrate how you would create marketing/media campaigns for applications covered in **one** of the two existing videos below.
 - 1. US Ignite Smarter Maps Make Smarter Communities**
 - Featuring the US Ignite Smart Gigabit Communities program, funded by the National Science Foundation, this video showcases two mapping solutions for smarter community planning. The first, LocaleIQ, feeds GIS data into an interactive, visual interface and enables planners to add information about services and amenities to see what drives citizen and tourist interest. The second, an underground infrastructure mapping application out of Burlington, Vermont, provides visual information on subsurface pipes, electric lines, and more.
 - [Watch the Smarter Maps video.](#)
 - Please describe how you would spread the word about one or both of these mapping applications. Describe the marketing campaign you would leverage to tell the story, specifically focusing on the US Ignite message - that applications such as these are only possible with widely available advanced networks
 - 2. Improving Public Safety with Smart City Applications**
 - Featuring the US Ignite Smart Gigabit Communities program, funded by the National Science Foundation, this video showcases app developer teams in two US Ignite partner communities that are applying technology and advanced wireless networks to improve public safety. Triangle UAS is working with the city of Wilson, North Carolina to deploy a secure, real-time streaming app for drone surveillance to help first-responders in emergency situations. iNotify out of Richardson, Texas has developed an artificial intelligence platform to identify weapons in security camera footage and automatically alert officials.
 - [Watch the Improving Public Safety video.](#)
 - Please describe how you would spread the word about one or both of these public safety applications. Describe the marketing campaign you would leverage to tell the

OR



story, specifically focusing on the US Ignite message - that applications such as these are only possible with widely available advanced networks.

- b) **Private Funder Relations:** Demonstrate how you would create a marketing/media campaign for the below partner real-life scenario.

1. Spectrum Communications (part of Charter Communications)

- Spectrum Communications has generously funded participation of one of our Smart Gigabit communities and expects to fund more in the future.
- Check out US Ignite's website for [activities related to Spectrum's participation in the program](#).
- Tell the story of US Ignite's partnership with Spectrum. Who would your intended audience for the story be, and how would you reach your intended audience? How would you communicate the benefits of this partnership to inspire another company or foundation to do the same with three more cities?

4. Cost: Please provide detailed estimated costs showing the cost to deliver the services outlined in "Part 4: Scope of Services" for the initial 1-year period. US Ignite anticipates awarding a time and materials contract.

- a) You should include the position, position qualifications, rate per hour for the position, and hours per position for the work you have proposed.
- b) Please note that after a contract is signed, US Ignite will pay organization for travel and other incurred costs associated with serving US Ignite as a client. US Ignite will reimburse these costs in accordance with Federal and US Ignite travel policies.

Closing Date and Time:

US Ignite must receive proposals by email (please email to meghan.histand@us-ignite.org) no later than **December 18, 2019 at 12:00 PM eastern**.

Proposal Preparation Guidelines:

1. All proposals must be submitted in writing.
2. All proposals must be emailed to US Ignite point of contact listed, Meghan Histand.
3. Organization may modify or withdraw proposal prior to the submission deadline.
4. Proposals may not be changed after the submission deadline.

PART EIGHT: TIMELINE FOR EVALUATION AND SELECTION

US Ignite will review all proposals submitted and will ensure that all proposals are reviewed in a fair, competitive, transparent, and in-depth manner. If a proposer is invited to make a presentation to US Ignite, the costs for such presentation will be the responsibility of the proposer. After review of the submissions the US Ignite may request to meet with organizations prior to selecting a communications firm.

No contractual obligation on behalf of US Ignite whatsoever shall arise from the RFP process. Additionally, this RFP does not commit the US Ignite to pay any cost incurred in the preparation or submission of any response to the RFP.

US Ignite may reject any or all proposals in whole or in part, waive a technicality in any proposal, make awards in a manner deemed in the best interest of US Ignite and, unless otherwise specified by the organization, accept any item in the proposal. US Ignite reserves the right to award one or more contracts, if necessary.

The proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:



1. Knowledge of project requirements as demonstrated under *"Part 4: Scope of Services"*
2. Qualifications and range of experience of the communications firm.
3. Content provided in the Case Studies.
4. Project costs and overall value.

Please direct any questions to meghan.histand@us-ignite.org.