

Request for Proposals: APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly Strategic Planning Support

March 2020

Background

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA,) presents this request for proposals (RFP) for a Strategic Planning Consultant or firm to develop a strategic communications, marketing and public affairs strategy. The selected consultant or firm will provide the services outlined by the Scope of Work provided in Appendix A, with a primary focus on supporting the BAA's goal of promoting awareness of the impact, importance, and brand value of the Land-grant University (LGU) System.

The BAA anticipates engaging the selected consultant or firm beginning in mid-April with the expectation of reviewing preliminary findings in July 2020 and completing this work before the end of October 2020 so actions can be taken during the APLU annual meeting in November 2020.

For contractual and logistical purposes, the consultant or firm will report to Douglas L. Steele, Vice President for Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources. For purposes related to performing the scope of work, the consultant will report to the Communications and Marketing Committee.

Requested Services

The consultant or firm engaged for this work will focus primarily on building the BAA's capacity to develop, monitor, and implement a new strategic communications, marketing and public affairs plan. Emphasis will be on providing BAA staff and system leaders with the tools and resources to advance awareness of the impact of Land-grant university efforts, which include Cooperative Extension services and agricultural experiment stations. A key indicator of success will be the BAA's adoption of the strategic plan and the increased capacities that follow the end of the consultant's engagement. Primary consultant activities will include:

- Performing a landscape assessment of the organizational environment in which BAA operates;
- Hosting at least one facilitated strategic planning session with BAA members regarding national leadership structure; function and strategic communications purpose and portfolio;
- Providing periodic consultative advice to the BAA's Communications Marketing Committee as requested, including potential review of strategic plan drafts and related documents;
- Developing strategies, planning tools and resources for use by the BAA CMC, including an overall framework, timeline, and roadmap; and
- Sharing lessons learned from the strategic planning process to assist future capacity building endeavors.

Additional background of previous work already completed will be available as a resource. The estimated cost of this work should not exceed \$100,000.

Skill Set

Experience – Minimum of five years of public affairs, public relations, strategic planning, marketing and/or communication experience with demonstrated success in the portfolio of accomplishments. Experience in executive coaching, higher education or agriculture/natural resources preferred.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities – Excellent research, data analytics, verbal and written communication skills required. Ability to efficiently manage multiple projects and work effectively in complex systems. Proficiency with word processing, analytic and database programs. Ability to work cooperatively with others.

Submission Guidelines

Applicants should submit a brief proposal of no more than three pages providing a summary of:

- Capacity and track record providing services similar to those requested;
- Personnel who will provide the requested services (include bio[s] of key person[s], not part of three-page limit);
- Applicant's approach to providing the requested services including a rationale that describes why the applicant is interested in working with the BAA;
- **Milestones anticipated for assessing success of managing this project;**
- Proposed budget to implement the scope of work and timeframe; and
- Three references familiar with the applicant's work in this area.

Applicant should also provide work samples illustrative of similar work or projects undertaken for other clients. These do not count towards the three-page limit.

Proposals are due by **5 pm Eastern on March 31st**. Please email all materials to Douglas L. Steele (dsteele@aplu.org), with a copy to Suzette Robinson (srobinson@aplu.org), with the subject title “APLU/BAA RFP.”

About APLU

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. The association's membership consists of 239 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations.

APLU's mission is to: expand access and improve student success to deliver the innovative workforce of tomorrow; advance and promote research and discovery to improve society, foster economic growth, and address global challenges; and build healthy, prosperous, equitable, and vibrant communities locally and globally.

The association's work is furthered by an active and effective advocacy arm that works with Congress and the administration to advance federal policies that strengthen public universities and benefit the students and communities they serve. For more information: www.aplu.org

Board on Agriculture Assembly

The Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) is a unit of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Commission on Food, Environment, and Renewable Resources (CFERR). The purpose of the BAA is the promotion of agriculture in all of its phases (food, environment, agriculture, natural resources, and international) in the state universities and land-grant colleges of the states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the territories of the Pacific, and the U. S. Virgin Islands. Please visit:

<https://www.aplu.org/members/commissions/food-environment-and-renewable-resources/board-on-agriculture-assembly/>

Further Information

Please contact Douglas L. Steele (dsteele@aplu.org) with questions about this RFP.

Appendix A: Scope of Work

Key Objectives

Create a strategic marketing communication and public affairs plan to promote awareness of the impact, importance, and brand value of the Land-grant University (LGU) System.

Support a strategic planning process for the BAA that builds upon past and current work. The work will entail undertaking an environmental assessment, facilitating a strategic planning session with staff, and providing the framework and tools for APLU to adopt a strategic plan. These efforts will be directed towards ultimately developing a clear vision and mission and multi-year strategy that advances and drives the organization forward to the benefit of the Land-grant University system. The strategy framework will provide coherence and priorities to advance APLU's vision while maintaining flexibility to respond to relevant new challenges and opportunities.

Activities	Deliverable(s)
<p>Engage the Board on Agricultural Assembly (BAA) to gather necessary information to inform a strategic marketing and communications plan designed to convey priorities and impacts of the LGUs to strategic audiences where it is important to increase visibility and support for the LGU System.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify strategies to effectively influence target audiences.• Identify strategies that ensure consistency in messaging and promotion of brand value.• Collaborate with LGU communications units, APLU's Office of Public Affairs, and Council on Government Relations to identify opportunities for consistent external messaging.• Identify opportunities and propose strategies for improved messaging that will engage agricultural allies, strengthen relationships and expand partnerships.	<p>Review past efforts in social media (website content and social media presence) and make recommendations on development of social media campaigns within the strategic plan.</p> <p>Identify key elements necessary for the effective development of a short and long-term communications and marketing advocacy strategy.</p> <p>Environmental landscape map</p>
Prepare, facilitate, and follow-up one strategic planning meeting.	Meeting agenda and materials
Develop BAA's strategic plan roadmap: timeline and milestones for implementation of a communications and marketing strategic plan development.	Strategic Plan Roadmap
Provide tools, templates and resources for BAA to use in developing and advancing its own strategic plan.	Tailored tools, templates & resources
Provide additional review and support services for strategic plan development as requested, including additional support services for strategic planning group as needed.	TBD