

- 1. Is there an incumbent public relations firm that is or has been working with the Hudson River Park Trust, and if so, will that firm be participating in this solicitation? Why are you issuing this RFP at this time; is this part of a periodic required contract review process?**
  - a. The Trust's Procurement Policy requires periodic competitive procurement for goods and services. The Trust has made this Request for Proposals widely available on the New York State Contract Reporter and on the Trust's website and has no way to determine what firms will respond to the RFP.
  
- 2. Who will be the main point of contact at the Trust to manage the relationship with the selected firm?**
  - a. Kira Levy, Assistant Vice President, Marketing & Partnerships will be the administrative point of contact.
  
- 3. Who are HRPT's key spokespeople / thought leaders for media engagements?**
  - a. Key leadership for the Trust includes Hudson River Park Trust are Noreen Doyle, President and CEO and Robert Atterbury, Executive Vice President of Park Relationships and Programs. The Trust relies on a range of staff as spokespeople, including leaders from its River Project, Public Programs and Design and Construction departments who have area-specific expertise.
  
- 4. What is the anticipated frequency of events and meetings?**
  - a. Brief weekly calls, as required, to discuss ongoing business, with longer meetings and conversations on specific efforts or emerging issues. In-person events, including press events, have historically ranged between 5-10 a year, excluding press hits or in-person interviews.
  
- 5. Within the Scope of Services, will any on-site staff be required for events beyond what is necessary for press events?**
  - a. In addition to scheduled press events, such as ribbon cuttings or openings, from time to time, there may be significant events or public meetings that would benefit from having a representative from the selected Firm attend to assist with on-site press efforts.
  
- 6. Will the Trust convene a "selection committee" of any kind to evaluate respondent proposals? Will any members outside of the Trust's permanent employees (e.g. Board members, Hudson River Park Friends, NYS gov't officials) be involved in the selection process?**
  - a. The selection committee will be made up of Hudson River Park Trust staff.

- 7. Should we partner together, would we have access to any historical data or insights related to the Trust's evolution, particularly surrounding the Park, philanthropy, real estate trends, etc.?**
  - a. Some information regarding the Park's history is publicly available on our website (<https://hudsonriverpark.org/the-park/waterfront-transformation/>). The Trust would work collaboratively with the selected Firm to share background and history on various issues and initiatives.
  
- 8. Can you share any parameters regarding the available budget for this contract? If not, is past expenditure on efforts related to strategic public relations and communications services available as part of the Trust's publicly available financial statements and approved budget? Are there any sunk costs or other fees that should be excluded from the Fee and Cost Schedule? Would a range for a proposed monthly retainer be considered, which can then be finalized upon final scope of work discussions with the Trust?**
  - a. Respondents should propose a competitive, cost-effective fee arrangement, based on similar-sized government/non-profit organizations in New York City for comparable services. Respondent's proposed fee schedule should include any retainer requests and all fees for services based on the Scope of Services provided in the RFP.
  
- 9. Are potential incremental budget increases possible (outside the monthly retainer) for large (and small) scale activations on the Park's grounds?**
  - a. The Park undertakes substantial public programming and events. This scope is services is limited to media services only.
  
- 10. Is HRPT intending to award the contract to a single firm, or is there a possibility of dividing the scope of work among multiple firms based on expertise or capacity?**
  - a. The Trust anticipates awarding the contract to one respondent; however, the Trust reserves all rights as set forth in the RFP with respect to contract awards. Responses to the RFP may include the use of a subcontractor to perform a portion of the services. The proposal should specify what services would be performed by the prime contractor and what services will be performed by the subcontractor and provide relevant information on the subcontractor's requisite experience and other credentials. The price proposal must also reflect the fee arrangement for prime contractors and subcontractors.
  
- 11. Will the forms in Exhibit 3 (pages 16-22) be required with submission of our proposal, or will they be required during the development of a contract?**
  - a. Please refer to Paragraph 5, Format, for submission requirements. The forms in Exhibit 3 are not required with submission but will be required of the selected Firm during the contracting process.

- 12. If the prime vendor is not NYS-certified MWBE and/or SDVOB but subcontracting to NYS-certified MWBE and/or SDVOB, please confirm that we must attach copies of their certifications with Exhibit 1.**
- a. Yes, for any known sub-contractor identified in your proposal that is certified, please attach certificate copies.
- 13. Does HRPT have any preferences or policies regarding the use of independent contractors (1099 employees) by the proposing firm? Would incorporating 1099 employees in our team composition be viewed unfavorably during the evaluation process?**
- a. The Trust will be evaluating available key staff as part of the Selection Criteria, further explained in Section C, Paragraph 7. While the Trust does not view independent contractors unfavorably, the demonstrated consistency and stability of staffing over time may be considered.
- 14. Will Hudson River Park Trust allow individual key personnel or subcontractor past performance count toward the minimum required five years of experience?**
- a. Yes, personnel and sub-contractor's past experience may be considered towards the minimum required.
- 15. Can you confirm which Contract Type should be used for this five-year term? Will the proposer be able to submit written requests for exemptions in the terms and conditions of the "Form of Contract" (starting on page 25 of the RFP)?**
- a. Please include any proposed changes or exemptions to the Form of Contract with your proposal submission. Specific questions and conditions may be discussed during the contract negotiation process. Certain provisions are required by law and cannot be changed.
- 16. Is there a preferred format for the "Proposal addressing all parts of the Scope of Services" referenced on page 4, sub bullet b, under "What to Include:"? Will submitting firm experience or client references contribute additional points to the scoring criteria in the evaluation process? How many case studies should be included in the proposal?**
- a. We ask each respondent to elaborate on their work with similarly situated organizations on comparable projects, and include examples of press releases, media placements, special recognition their clients have received through their work, etc. This is your agency's opportunity to give us an idea of what makes your agency stand out amongst others.
- 17. In Section 2.A.2 (page 6), the RFP makes it clear that "A respondent may provide in writing, at the time of its submission, a detailed description of the specific information contained in its submission which it has determined is a trade secret." Would HRPT prefer one statement listing every section we believe should**

**be determined a trade secret, or for the respondent to note throughout the RFP anytime there is confidential case information?**

- a. Respondent may include these details in one statement or throughout.

**18. Would a NJ-based firm with staff located in NY be considered for this work, or are you strictly seeking a NYC based company?**

- a. Firms are welcome to respond, regardless of geographic location. As discussed in the RFP and in other answers, some in-person and on-site work is required, including occasionally on short notice.

**19. Could HRPT outline potential scenarios requiring crisis communications support? Understanding past challenges or anticipated issues would help in formulating a responsive strategy.**

- a. Hudson River Park Trust operates and maintains a public space that welcomes more than 17 million visits per year and covers over 150 acres of midtown Manhattan. Any emergency response that can happen on city streets and attracts public interest can occur in the Park and may require crisis communications support. Similar to other parks in New York City, there is unpredictability in what issues the Trust may need to address in the future.

**20. What are some of the Trust's top business objectives in 2025 (and beyond) that the strategic public relations and communications program will be critical to advancing; for example, increased fundraising or philanthropic support from targeted audiences, support for various regulatory/legislative initiatives that would benefit the Park, support for specific capital projects within the Park, increased visitors or new partnerships to expand programming, etc. Do you intend for the communications effort to focus equally on raising the profile of (1) the Trust and its reputation and (2) Hudson River Park itself? If not, acknowledging that certain projects may elevate both entities at the same time, what percent of the effort would you allocate to each of those two objectives?**

- a. Sections A and B of the response include descriptions of the Trust's objectives. The Trust expects to work with the selected Firm on developing realistic strategies that best advance the various goals, and that reflect known and emerging opportunities to do so.

**21. Who is Hudson River Park Trust looking to raise visibility amongst – New Yorkers, tourists, business partners, private investors? Has the Trust recently conducted audience research (and are results available to be shared) to know are you currently known/perceived amongst your target audiences and how do you want to be known/perceived? If so, can that information be shared with the respondents? If not, would the Trust be interested in the firm conducting research as part of the contract? How would you rank your primary audiences in terms of importance for the communications effort? Is there a key audience that it has been hardest to reach in past efforts?**

- a. Hudson River Park has not recently conducted audience research, and does not expect that to be part of this contract. Depending on the objective, the Park has regional, borough and local audiences. For example, some event promotion may be targeted for hyperlocal communities along the Park, while the story of the Trust's habitat enhancement efforts may have a regional or even national prominence. The Trust expects to work with the selected firm to tailor its efforts to best reach targeted audiences, whether the general public, casual park users, park stakeholders, or civic and industry leaders.

**22. What are some of the main challenges the Trust has faced with PR and media exposure? What are the biggest external pressures/challenges the Trust faces?**

- a. The Park exists in the highly competitive New York City media market, with notable peers, and faces a wide range of institutions and citywide issues competing for attention. Engaging reporters on what can be complex Park stories, including issues that have significant background or nuanced science stories that require deep understanding, can pose challenges in the fast-paced media environment.

**23. Would you say the Trust currently has a successful response rate on emerging issues, and what does success look like? Are there any specific efforts the Trust is looking to do differently and are there any public relations/media goals you were unable to achieve in recent?**

- a. Sections A and B of the RFP include descriptions of the Trust's objectives and goals. Key goals include increasing general awareness and brand recognition of Hudson River Park and its initiatives, proactively seeking coverage for research and other environmental initiatives related to the Park's unique Estuarine Sanctuary and securing earned media for public programs and other initiatives.

**24. What organizations (either similar to the Trust or outside of the category — regionally or globally) communications strategies or positioning you admire?**

- a. Hudson River Park Trust is a partnership between the City and State of New York. Through this partnership, the Trust works closely with several City and State agencies to operate, maintain and develop the Park. While there are commonalities with other public parks in New York City with respect to user trends, event attendance, operations, etc. the Trust is uniquely positioned based

on its geographic location and access to the Hudson River, its commercial revenue that funds Park operations and with shared governance from the City and State.

**25. Are there any media channels that Hudson River Park Trust would prefer to be more (or less) utilized than others? Is your focus on regional, national or international media? What are your “most wanted” media targets? Is your target audience primarily in the NYC area or national?**

- a. Hudson River Park serves as an international, national and regional destination and a local community park. As discussed above, audience targets, and therefore outlets and methods, vary by objective. The Trust is open to all coverage that advances its goals as discussed in the RFP.

**26. Have certain types of initiatives or storylines worked well with the media in the past? If so, what made them successful?**

- a. Hudson River Park has built a reputation as an innovative institution that has transformed a large swath of New York City from abandoned industrial spaces to publicly accessible open space and has a rising prominence for its habitat enhancement and scientific research efforts.

**27. Will anyone from the City or Governor’s Office be available to discuss Park initiatives / events, etc.? What level of coordination is expected with New York State and New York City officials and agencies? Are there existing relationships or protocols that require approval or sign-off by any government agencies that the selected firm should be aware of?**

- a. Hudson River Park Trust is a partnership between the City and State of New York. Through this partnership, the Trust works closely with several City and State agencies to operate, maintain and develop the Park. Representatives from the City or Governor’s offices may be engaged and consulted with from time to time, always in collaboration with the Trust, depending on the issue or concern.

**28. How active are members of the large Advisory Council in promoting the Park? Does the Trust have any relationships with local BIDs? How do you currently engage with your diverse stakeholders, and what challenges have you encountered in reaching them?**

- a. Hudson River Park’s Advisory Council is a statutory body that advises and makes recommendations to the Hudson River Park Trust’s Board of Directors on matters regarding the planning, design, construction and operation of the Park, and is part of the Trust’s extensive community engagement efforts. The Trust has a wide range of relationships along the length of the Park, including with Community Boards, BIDs, Block Associations, and schools, among other community touchpoints.

**29. How does HRPT envision the role of the selected firm in community outreach and engagement efforts? Are there particular community groups or stakeholders that should be prioritized?**

- a. The Trust has extensive community and stakeholder relationships. From time to time, the Trust may engage the selected Firm for messaging and support on emerging issues that receive, or are likely to receive, media attention.

**30. Are there any known announcements, openings or other special events that respondents should address in their proposals?**

- a. Respondents are welcome to include as much information and as many ideas in their proposals as they would like. No specific programs are required to be referenced, but respondents are welcome to reference any Park programs in their proposal. Information regarding past Park programming is available on the Trust's website.

**31. Are any major new development or expansion projects lined up for 2025/26 – to help round out the remaining commercial nodes?**

- a. The Trust continues to advance the completion of the Park. Future Park construction projects will depend on the availability of funding. Current Park planning initiatives include the Estuarium, W 29 St to W 46 St, and a future Habitat Enhancement project.

**32. Will the development of any creative/promotional materials or other forms of media aside from the traditional media (print, digital, and broadcast platforms) be included in this contract? Will the “brand awareness” element of the scope include any influencer, social media or content marketing work outside of media relations? Do you already have influencers and neighborhood “champions” as part of your strategy?**

- a. This RFP does not contemplate that the selected Firm would be required to develop creative or promotional materials and is instead focused on earned media in all its forms. Advertising and paid social strategy are managed in-house.

**33. Historically, how much has the Trust relied on business participation for campaigns i.e., from Chelsea Piers or Circle Line? Should we focus on ideas that require minimal lift from local establishments?**

- a. The Park engages with a wide range of stakeholders, including its tenants, which may participate in advancing certain messaging or objectives, particularly those which intersect with their own business interests or tell a larger story. As discussed above, the Trust is open to a wide range of formats and efforts that best advance its objectives.

**34. What's currently being done and/or is planned to promote environmental stewardship? Can HRPT elaborate on the specific environmental initiatives related to the Park's Estuarine Sanctuary that should be highlighted in the media strategy**

**and are there particular programs or research projects that the Trust aims to promote?**

- a. Hudson River Park's River Project conducts research and offers hands-on environmental education and scientific programming with the purpose of communicating the ecological importance of the Park's 400-acre Estuarine Sanctuary. The Trust has had significant success in using earned media to communicate the importance of the Estuary, stewardship and to share stories about the Trust's environmental initiatives. More information is available on the Trust's website (<https://hudsonriverpark.org/the-park/parks-river-project/>).

**35. What opportunities exist for improving HRPT's tentpole moments/programming? Outside of existing tentpole moments/programming and what is outlined in the RFP, what other cultural or neighborhood events during the year could benefit most from PR support?**

- a. The Trust expects to work with the selected Firm to identify media opportunities on an active and ongoing basis. Park construction, scientific research or environmental moments, milestones or anniversaries, and programming are all regularly part of the Trust's story telling efforts.

**36. Would it be possible to schedule a brief call to discuss these priorities in more detail?**

- a. Interviews may be held with some or all of the respondents after receipt of proposals. Interviews with the Trust will be scheduled after its initial review of proposals.