



Request For Proposals: Digital Marketing Assistance for New Hampshire Small Businesses

November 1, 2020

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Vital Communities' Local First initiative is seeking proposals from experienced digital marketing firms/professionals to assist Local First members in the Route 11 corridor of New Hampshire. Small businesses suffering from the impacts of the pandemic require assistance with website, digital marketing, e-commerce, and/or social media services which will be accomplished through this program with one-on-one consulting and a virtual workshop.

ABOUT VITAL COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL FIRST

Vital Communities is a 501 (c)(3) organization that serves the 69-community Upper Valley region of the Connecticut River Valley with programs that cultivate the region's civic, environmental, and economic vitality, including a strong concentration in local farming and economy. The programs bring together individuals and groups from government, business, nonprofits, and citizen activism to discuss challenges and create and act on plans for solving them.

Local First is a Vital Communities initiative that engages businesses, organizations, and citizens to strengthen the local economy with buy-local promotions, consumer education, business networking opportunities, and business technical support.

GOAL OF PROGRAM

Many small businesses have had to shift business practices, sales channels, customer base, and marketing efforts in response to COVID-19. Our goal is to support small businesses with assistance to create, improve, or enhance their digital presence and build marketing skills so they can adapt to the changing economic landscape and increase business stability. This program is funded by a USDA Rural Development Rural Business Development Grant.

SCOPE OF WORK

Each small business is unique and requires marketing technical assistance that meets them where they are and provides help with their specific needs and challenges. The following represents the types of assistance businesses may require through this technical assistance program:

- Marketing plan development
- Website platforms, SEO, content strategy, etc.
- E-commerce platform creation, integration, best practices
- Social media training: best practices, content strategy, and digital marketing/advertising
- E-Communications

This program will increase the digital marketing skills and capacity of six businesses through targeted technical assistance. Business owners and/or staff will gain marketing skills and capacity and report increased engagement and/or sales within three months according to their self-determined goals leading to business stability (jobs saved) or growth (jobs created).

This program will launch with a digital marketing workshop featuring the chosen firm/marketing specialist, open to any Route 11 corridor businesses. Workshop attendees can apply for 10 hours of cost-share one-on-one consulting time with the chosen marketing firm. Business will pay for 2 hours and Vital Communities will pay for 8 hours). Businesses may choose to procure additional services directly from the firm at its sole cost and discretion. Firms that respond to this RFP should demonstrate their ability to offer the marketing services listed above and their experience working with a variety of businesses and marketing competency levels.

Technical assistance must be completed by May 1, 2021.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must include the following items by the proposal due date. Please keep proposals as short as possible to allow for a quick evaluation process.

- One page cover letter stating the proposer's understanding of the work to be performed and why they believe they are well suited
- Qualifications and related experience of staff assigned to project
- Demonstrated experience and expertise in SEO, website platforms, developing marketing plans, working one-on-one with a variety of small businesses, understanding of available e-commerce platforms and e-commerce website integration, digital marketing and social media, including Instagram, Facebook, and Google Ads
- A representative listing of current clients that we may use as references

PROGRAM BUDGET

The available funds for this contract is \$4200. The scope of work that these funds cover: a single virtual digital marketing workshop open to an unlimited number of participants, 8 hours of one-on-one digital marketing technical assistance for 6 businesses.

EVALUATION

When evaluating the proposals, we will use the following factors (in no particular order):

- Qualifications and experience of proposer working with small businesses
- Demonstrated current capability and capacity to perform this assistance
- References for the individuals who will be assigned to this project
- Locally owned New Hampshire business

During the short evaluation process, Vital Communities may request additional information or clarifications from proposers. The most qualified proposer(s) may be interviewed by video conference. There is no expressed or implied obligation for Vital Communities to reimburse responding firms and individuals for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals in response to this request. Vital Communities, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to select one, several, or none, of the firms that respond to this RFP.

SUBMISSION

Proposals are due by 5:00 pm on Monday, November 16, 2020. Proposals should be submitted via email to nancy@vitalcommunities.org with the subject line "Local First RFP."

Questions about this RFP should be directed to Nancy LaRowe, Local First/Food & Farm Coordinator, nancy@vitalcommunities.org.