



COUNCIL OF STATE ADMINISTRATORS OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

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Request for Proposals Marketing and Public Education Initiative Consultant and Focus Group Facilitator

General Information:

The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) is composed of the chief administrators of the public vocational rehabilitation agencies serving individuals with physical and mental disabilities in the States, District of Columbia, and the territories. These agencies constitute the state partners in the State-Federal program of rehabilitation services provided under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The Council's members supervise the rehabilitation of some 1.2 million persons with disabilities.

Founded in 1940 to provide input into the State-Federal Rehabilitation Program, the Council is the only national organization whose sole purpose and function is to advocate for the Public Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The organization meets in full session a minimum of twice yearly, to communicate on issues of concern within the field of rehabilitation. Much of the work of the Council is carried on through Standing Committees. In addition, Task Forces concerned with matters of a more transitory nature are convened on an ad hoc basis.

OUR MISSION

To maintain and enhance a strong, effective and efficient national program of public vocational rehabilitation services which empowers individuals with disabilities to achieve employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into our communities.

PURPOSE

- To provide a forum for member agencies to study, deliberate, and act upon matters affecting the national public program of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services (the Program).
- To provide a resource for the formulation and expression of the collective points of view of member agencies on pertinent issues.
- To serve as an advisory body to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and other federal agencies in the development of policies and administration of programs affecting the lives of persons with disabilities and impacting the national public program of vocational rehabilitation services.
- To serve as an advisory body to other associations on matters pertaining to the Program and the Council's mission.
- To provide a means of communication and joint action with other organizations in the health, education, welfare, and manpower training fields relating to the Council's mission.
- To support and participate in research and demonstration projects for the improvement of vocational and other rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities.
- To inform the public with respect to disability issues and the benefits to our communities, to persons with disabilities and their families from the provision of VR services.
- To advocate for the enhancement of the national public program of VR services.

CSAVR is a Washington DC based non-profit entity and staffed by five professionals. Staff work virtually and are domiciled across the country.

Expected product to be delivered by the consultant:

This is a limited scope engagement. CSAVR expects the consultant to submit a plan to CSAVR leadership that leads our organization to fairly assess the need, potential and desire for the organization to engage in a public education and marketing initiative.

The successful bidder must be a skilled group facilitator with demonstrated experience in gathering stakeholder input, clarifying intent and scope of project objectives, and summarizing and reporting out recommendations in clear and definable steps.

Statement of need:

There is a need to better communicate the value of the vocational rehabilitation **program**. The perception of many national leaders and advocacy groups has been that the public vocational rehabilitation program has performed poorly. This perception has driven legislative decisions that has put additional responsibilities on the program, allthwhile resources for the total program have dwindled through targeting priority of services to specific populations, the inability of States to match all federal dollars, and agency staffing patterns being reduced and altered which restrict the number of qualified staff serving consumers.

Through a national public education and marketing initiative, we wish to give evidence that the public vocational rehabilitation program is positively changing in response to us listening to the national perception concerns and legislative language directives.

In order to better communicate the value of the vocational rehabilitation program, we believe first must clarify the scope and purpose of a marketing and public education initiative. A few questions that must be answered are:

- What indicators give evidence of the need for a national public education and marketing initiative?
- What should be the objective/s of a national public education and marketing initiative?
- How do we prioritize the objectives identified?
- What should CSAVRs role be in developing and managing a national initiative?
- What gap are we trying to fill?
- Who is to benefit from our campaign?
- Who are the targeted audiences?
- How do we prioritize our message/s for the targeted audiences identified?
- What will we expect from our member agencies?
- What resources are we willing to commit?

The consultant's final plan and recommendations are intended to assist to determine what, if any, next steps we should consider.

Examples, but not firm outcomes, of a national public education and marketing initiative *may be*:

- Greater general public awareness of the benefits of and services delivered by state vocational rehabilitation agencies.
- Greater awareness on the part of decision makers (local, state and national elected officials) on the successes of the services delivered by the state vocational rehabilitation agencies.
- Greater awareness by business and industry of the talent pool of potential employees served.
- Increased resources for the state vocational rehabilitation agencies.

The consultant may take the above examples into consideration in preparing for and gathering stakeholder input, but most importantly is that this process does not presume a predetermined outcome.

Project management:

CSAVR will serve as the contractor and fiscal agent. The CSAVR CEO and CSAVR President will share ultimate decision-making authority with the guidance of all CSAVR staff and voting members of the CSAVR Executive Committee.

Period of engagement:

The successful bidder will be prepared to initiate work as soon as two weeks after a signed contract has been awarded. The successful bidder should also be prepared to have all products and recommendations completed by the end of the April 2016.

Stakeholder involvement:

Key stakeholders for this project are the CSAVR Executive Committee and staff. Proposals may suggest other stakeholders and manner of engagement.

At a minimum, the successful bidder will facilitate one in-person 4-hour focus group of the Executive Committee and staff (at the winter Executive Committee meeting in New Orleans on January 11 or 12,

2016) and as needed conference calls with CSAVR leadership and other identified stakeholders.

Submission requirements:

- **Project Proposal** - Consultant's recommendation for specific activities, stakeholder engagement and general timelines. Outline planned project benchmarks and deliverables. Describe plan for developing and presenting the final product.
- **Project Budget** – Include projected activities and number of hours, fees, and needed resources. Agreed upon airfare and lodging will be covered by CSAVR. Federal per diem will be paid for meals during periods of travel. CSAVR will host all teleconferencing needed.
- **Consultant Qualifications** - Provide a comprehensive bio/vitae that includes professional experience and recognitions, previous non-profit consulting and facilitation, and references from previous contractors or employers. Samples of work and/or any additional information may be electronically submitted as attachments to the proposal.

Hold Harmless: The CSAVR and the awardee mutually agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless each other from any and all claims and losses accruing or resulting from this activity and supported travel.

Due date: Monday, November 30 at 5p (eastern). Electronic submissions only to:

Stephen A. Wooderson, CEO, CSAVR
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