

Request for Proposal

**Chicago Wilderness
Branding Strategy & Communications/Engagement Plan
for Green Vision Campaign Launch**

Chicago Wilderness Alliance

Sponsored by the Friends of the Forest Preserves

411 S. Wells Street, Suite 300

Chicago, IL 60607-3927

Submission Deadline: March 14, 2022

ChicagoWilderness.org

March 1, 2022 – REVISED DRAFT

RE: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – CHICAGO WILDERNESS BRANDING STRATEGY & COMMUNICATIONS/ENGAGEMENT PLAN FOR GREEN VISION CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

Introduction

The Chicago Wilderness Alliance (the “CW” or “Alliance”) is seeking proposals from a professional Public Relations/Communications/Marketing Firm to help launch the new Green Vision of Chicago Wilderness (attached).

The qualified candidate will provide services that include, but are not limited to consulting on

- Brand Strategy
- Diverse Audience Development
- Messaging/Content Plans
- Communications Plans
- Roadmap Strategy
- Integration of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Principles

About Chicago Wilderness Alliance

Chicago Wilderness is a regional alliance that leads strategy to preserve, improve and expand nature and quality of life. By connecting leaders in conservation, academia, health, business, science, and beyond we are tackling challenging issues to ensure a resilient region. Building on a 25-year legacy of collaboration, our broad alliance of partners with more than 250+ members advance work in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Michigan. The Chicago Wilderness Alliance envisions a region full of life; a region where people and nature thrive, directly benefiting each other.

- Diverse Voices
Chicago Wilderness Alliance is committed to embracing the full diversity of voices in the region: from city neighborhoods to farming communities, from volunteers to corporations, from faith-based organizations to academic institutions. Full richness of participation is essential for the success of an integrated green vision.
- Led by a Green Vision
We envision a region with vibrant nature that promotes health, economic vitality, and well-being for all. We engage with diverse communities to care for the environment. We focus on the opportunity to restore healthy lands and waters, create expansive green corridors, revitalize brownfields, and make nature's wonders accessible to all.
- Create a United Region
We work across geographic boundaries to nurture healthy habitats for people, plants, and wildlife. The Chicago Wilderness region stretches around Lake Michigan from southwestern Michigan to northwestern Indiana, northeastern Illinois, and into southeastern Wisconsin. We use rigorous science to reach shared aspirations and tackle

challenges to benefit our collective home.

Background

In 2019, the Chicago Wilderness Alliance began planning for a renewed Green Vision to drive our shared efforts for a sustainable future. This work included hosting both listening and strategy sessions for partner outreach. In 2021, the partners built tremendous momentum and enthusiasm as we set science-based goals and targets to be achieved by 2025. These goals are aligned with President Biden's 30 x 30 initiative and other global targets.

In addition, the Chicago Wilderness alliance contracted with August M. Ball of Cream City Conservation to conduct an extensive culture assessment survey to help understand the employee experience may differ across demographics in organizations affiliated with Chicago Wilderness and is engaging partners with free workshops to provide background on the history of inequities and injustice as well as tools to increase equity in the conservation workplace.

Finally, we brought in consultants from the renowned Institute for Conservation Leadership (ICL) to help Chicago Wilderness leaders, in whatever capacity, learn to better manage the incredible complex process of guiding a loosely affiliated network through a major initiative like the Green Vision process.

Objective

The Chicago Wilderness Alliance is seeking proposals from expert communication and marketing strategists to support the work of the Alliance.

Scope of Project, Timeline & Budget

The Chicago Wilderness Alliance is seeking responses to assist us in positioning the Chicago Wilderness brand and launching our new Green Vision by September/October 2022, which is the timeframe of hosting our Conservation Congress. In particular, we are looking for a consultant to:

- Heighten the awareness of Chicago Wilderness and assist in launching the bold new Green Vision.
- Develop a branding strategy and communications plan.
- Branding strategy and communications plan will build engagement, trust and awareness with a deeper penetration with Chicago Wilderness partners and an overall broader awareness of the Chicago Wilderness Alliance and value of the network.
- Effectiveness of branding and communications strategy measured by 1) More members participating in events/activities; 2) More individuals aware of CW and positive perception of CW; and 3) Increased membership and participation defined by geographic location and racial diversity and 4) Increased participation and engagement of partners across the four-state region.
- Engage a diverse set of voices, perspectives and data to achieve Green Vision Goals.
- Identify target audiences.
- Develop strategic communication messaging for identified target audiences.

- Position Chicago Wilderness as a regional alliance of convening knowledge experts to advance advocacy, communication and actions around healthy lands, water, people and planet.
- Promote the Chicago Wilderness HUB, a repository of curated spatial data, reports and static maps.
- Develop strategies to showcase model projects in the region that demonstrate progress towards Chicago Wilderness' Green Vision (print, television, radio, social media, etc.).

RFP Submission Requirements

Please reply to this request with a narrative document and budget proposal no longer than 5 pages. Supporting documents that demonstrate experience and organizational capacity including case studies, samples of similar work, final reports, and/or resumes & CVs are encouraged and will not count towards the 5-page limit. Include how you would address justice, equity, diversity and inclusion in your work/business, recommendations and work product.

Proposals will be held in confidence and not released in any manner until after contract is awarded. Phone and/or in-person interviews will be conducted with those consultants selected for further consideration from among the proposals received.

By submission of a proposal, you agree, if your proposal is accepted, to enter into an agreement with the Friends of the Forest Preserves on behalf of the Chicago Wilderness Alliance.

Proposals will be awarded to the most qualified, responsible and responsive consultant complying with the conditions and specifications presented herein. All rights are reserved by the Chicago Wilderness Alliance to determine whether the selection, in its judgment, meets the needs or purpose intended. Such decisions shall be final and not subject to recourse.

Your response should be submitted by email to Laura Reilly, CW Coordinator by the end of day, Monday, March 14, in the form of a .pdf document with a clear description of how you intend to provide the Required Services. Please provide a clear description of how this service would be provided, who would be providing it (including Resume/CVs as attachments), experience in providing similar services (especially in support of a network or alliance-structured organization such as CW), and clear description of anticipated financial structure using the information provided above and in the Background Information provided.

Qualifications are due on Wednesday, March 14, 2022

Timeline

RFQ Submission Date	Monday, March 14, 2022
In-Person/Phone Interviews	Monday, March 21, 2022 – Friday, March 25, 2022
Selection Date	Monday, March 28, 2022
Project Start-Date	On or before May 1, 2022
Project Timeline	April 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022

Proposals should be sent to:

Chicago Wilderness Alliance
Attn: Laura Reilly, CW Coordinator

411 S. Wells Street, Suite 300
Chicago, IL 60607-3927
Phone: (312)282-0481
Email: laura.reillycw@gmail.com

All costs in connection with the preparation and submission of a proposal shall be paid by the consultant. All materials provided to you with this RFP are for information purposes only. All risks associated with the information contained within any document given to you by the Chicago Wilderness Alliance are transferred to any candidate who chooses to use that information in forming the basis of any presentation or design. Candidates are invited to obtain or confirm all information directly if they so desire.

No advantages shall be taken by either party of manifest clerical errors or omissions in the specifications. All proposers are requested to notify Chicago Wilderness Alliance immediately of any errors or omissions that may be encountered. Submittals become the property of Chicago Wilderness Alliance which is not liable for any costs incurred by submitting organizations.

Evaluation & Selection Criteria

Submittals received by the Chicago Wilderness Alliance will be evaluated and ranked according to the established criteria.

- Alignment with member-led, collaborative-conservation, mission
- Capacity to provide required services.
- Qualifications and past project experience of all consultant's representatives with major responsibilities for the project.
- Proven ability to effectively research and gauge clients' needs.
- Proven ability of firm's representative(s) to communicate effectively with client.
- Cost.

The Chicago Wilderness Alliance reserves to itself the right to waive any irregularities or deficiencies in the proposal of any candidate, to reject the proposal of any candidate, and/or to negotiate with any candidate concerning any of their respective proposals or parts thereof. The Chicago Wilderness Alliance reserves the right to request additional written information from firms. The Alliance will negotiate agreement terms with the candidate chosen.

Thank you for your interest in the Chicago Wilderness Alliance. We look forward to receiving your response to this Request for Proposal (RFP). Please direct any contacts and questions regarding this project to the undersigned.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth S. Kessler, Chair
Chicago Wilderness Alliance

Laura Reilly, CW Coordinator
Chicago Wilderness Alliance