REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
LOBBYING SERVICES

July 23, 2021
SUMMARY

The Vermont Arts Council (VAC) is the designated state arts agency for Vermont and operates as an independent non-profit organization. Since 1965, VAC has been the primary funder for the arts in Vermont.

VAC also serves as the backbone organization for the Vermont Creative Network (VCN). Established by the Vermont Legislature in May 2016 as an initiative of the Arts Council, the VCN is a broad collective of organizations, businesses, and individuals working to advance Vermont’s creative sector.

For the past three years, the primary work of the VCN has been design and completion of an ambitious strategic action plan for Vermont’s creative sector. A growing body of research nationwide demonstrates the power of the creative economy as a catalyst for growth and change, particularly in rural places. Building on that national research as well as local creative economy data, the CreateVT Action Plan, launched on May 3, 2021, provides a road map for critical investment in Vermont artists, creative entrepreneurs, and businesses. We are now ready to move forward to craft and implement a specific legislative agenda that reflects the priorities and strategic objectives outlined in the Action Plan.

The VCN seeks proposals from firms to provide lobbying services to advance the strategic priorities of the CreateVT Action Plan. The firm selected will assist VCN in the following:

1. Identify specific legislative opportunities to advance the strategic priorities outlined in the CreateVT Action Plan;
2. Strengthen existing relationships and build new relationships with state legislators;
3. Advance VCN’s legislative priorities during the FY22 legislative session; and
4. Assist the VAC communications team in developing material to communicate with state legislators.

A complete list of the scope of services is outlined below. VCN expects the work to commence on or about August 30, 2021 and continue through May 30, 2022.
The selected firm will be responsible for working with VAC staff and the VCN Advocacy Working Group to design and implement a legislative strategy for the upcoming 2021-2022 session. This includes:

1. Work with VAC staff and VCN Advocacy Team to identify and develop specific legislative opportunities that advance the strategic priorities outlined in the CreateVT Action Plan
2. Strengthen existing relationships and build new relationships with state legislators
   a. Help VAC develop relationships with key state legislators, as well as officials in the governor’s office.
   b. Coordinate and attend meetings with state legislators as needed.
3. Advance VCN’s legislative priorities during the FY22 legislative session
   a. Monitor state ARPA funding deliberations in order to identify bills that reflect the CreateVT Action Plan goals as well as other opportunities to advance the goals of the creative sector.
   b. Analyze legislation that may impact creative sector businesses, individuals, and nonprofit organization, and make recommendations for VAC’s position and/or actions.
   c. Actively lobby and testify on bills agreed upon by VAC.
4. Assist VAC in developing messaging to support the policy objectives and legislative goals.

Our budget for this project is $25,000.
The CreateVT Action Plan sets forth an ambitious vision of a future Vermont where creativity is understood to be essential to the cultural and economic vitality of our state, and where the arts and culture are viewed as fundamental infrastructure. We understand this is a long-term undertaking, and the broad goals below will not be achieved in a single legislative session.

VCN seeks to advance legislation and state policies that:
- Promote economic support for cultural and creative enterprises to enable them to thrive;
- Ensure equitable access to resources for creative individuals and enterprises from historically marginalized communities; and
- Provide support for the ongoing operations of the Vermont Creative Network (whether through an increased appropriation to VAC or a dedicated allocation to VCN).

Specific legislative actions and policy initiatives might include, for example:
- enhanced tax credits for museums, theaters, historic sites and community arts centers to rebuild aging cultural infrastructure
- direct grants for individual artists, public art, and cultural events and performances
- tax incentives and/or direct financial support for affordable studio space, makerspaces, and performance venues for creative enterprises
- statewide investment in public art installations
- statewide investment in residencies for artists and humanities scholars in local schools or libraries
- education funds that support creative skills training in K-12 schools and expand creative sector career pathways for young people
- increased investment in local creative economic development initiatives (such as Better Places)
- integration of creative enterprises in statewide tourism, marketing, and promotion
PROPOSAL

REQUIREMENTS

A. Provide a brief overview of your company and the individual(s) who would represent our organization.
B. Provide examples of similar organizations you have represented.
C. Describe a) your relationships with state government; b) your experience with arts and/or creative economy-related issues and c) your experience developing and implementing “big picture” political strategy for your clients.
D. Provide a brief overview of how you would approach the work outlined above.
E. Identify any potential conflicts of interest with other clients.
F. Provide a proposed fee structure, including a total not-to-exceed cost for the work described.
G. Provide three references.

DEADLINE

Submit your proposal by email to info@vermontartscouncil.org no later than 12 p.m., Friday, Aug. 6, 2021.

RELATED LINKS


QUESTIONS?

Questions about this RFP may be directed to Karen Mittelman, executive director of the Vermont Arts Council: kmittelman@vermontartscouncil.org.