

ACLU SOCAL - REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Audience and Impact Audit for ACLU SoCal Communications & Media Advocacy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California seeks to hire an experienced communications or public relations firm with diverse credentials to conduct an audit of our current Communications and Media Advocacy impact and audience engagement.

Results from this research will include recommendations for best-practice approaches, opportunities for growth and expansion, and process refinement to advance our programmatic and marketing goals.

ACLU SOCAL BACKGROUND

The ACLU SoCal comprises two separate legal entities, the ACLU Foundation of Southern California (a 501c3) and American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California (a 501c4), which works to defend the civil liberties of all people as enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

For nearly 100 years, through litigation, policy advocacy, media advocacy, and organizing, the ACLU SoCal has fought to secure and protect the civil rights of all people — namely women, youth, people of color, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and nonbinary people, immigrants and refugees, members of minority religions, people with disabilities, people experiencing poverty or houselessness, and people who are incarcerated.

Although both the ACLU Foundation of Southern California and the ACLU of Southern California are part of the same overall organization, it is necessary to have two separate entities to enable the network to do the broad range of work necessary to protect civil liberties. Both entities support the ACLU's extensive litigation, policy advocacy, and communications programs. However, certain important activities carried out by the ACLU cannot be supported with tax-deductible gifts. This is primarily in the area of lobbying, because federal law limits the amount that a tax-exempt organization like the ACLU Foundation of Southern California can spend on lobbying.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California is a tax-exempt, non-profit advocacy organization to which membership dues are paid. Membership dues and other contributions to either the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California are not tax-deductible. The ACLU Foundation of Southern California is a tax-exempt, non-profit charity that provides legal assistance and conducts educational programs and activities. Donations to either the ACLU Foundation of Southern California are tax-deductible.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this audit will be to assess our current Communications and Media Advocacy program and structure, our recent and current advocacy and marketing strategies, and their impact on our audiences especially in a pandemic and post-pandemic environment where much of our organizational tactics – education and mobilization – is conducted in the digital sphere.

Key Objectives

- Assess our Communications and Media Advocacy program structure, resourcing, and workflow internally and with other stakeholders;
- Identify current ACLU SoCal audiences and how they align with our overall mission and advocacy and marketing objectives;
- Analyze recent campaign metrics across the ACLU SoCal's social media, e-mail marketing, earned media, and other media channels;
- Assess our influencer and partnership engagement in Southern California; and
- Determine what opportunities related to the above, if any, may be most effective in expanding our reach and measuring the direct impact of our communications efforts.

Expected Outcomes

- ACLU SoCal better understands its audience and what communications tactics and channels are most effective;
- ACLU SoCal better understands how to measure impact; and
- ACLU SoCal understands the potential opportunities for professionalization, capacity building, and innovation.

Expected Use

- Results will be used to inform our communications strategies for campaigns and marketing.
- Results will shape how we set goals, create process for identifying our audiences and messengers, and measure impact.
- Results will be used to support budget and strategic planning requests.

Deliverables

The accepted proposal will generate the following deliverables in line with the scope of work and overall purpose of the audit.

- Key dates/timeline for project from start-to-finish;
- Division and stages of labor with clear goals;
- Data collection and analysis including research results, data visualizations, summary of findings;
- and presentation of results in an internal report and meeting.

PRICING AND PAYMENT TERMS

Pricing and payment terms guidelines, which are:

- Pricing is on a fixed-fee, per project basis,
- Pricing is inclusive of all incidental expenses,
- No more than 50% will be payable at the outset, and
- No less than 25% will be retained pending completion and final approval of work product.

PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Find a list below of information that we expect to receive in your proposal.

Introduction

- Understanding of the purpose of the audit and how working together will achieve that purpose.
- Overview of your firm's expertise, background, and credentials.

Methodology

- Detailed description of your suggest approach, division and stages of labor, and why you believe your methodology will generate credible results.

Timeline

- Key dates for all deliverables and a general outline of time expected to draft, conduct assessments, deliver initial findings, and present a full report.

Deliverables

- List of what your firm will provide in the creation and receipt of research results as well as a brief description of the purpose each item serves.

Budget

- Range of costs that cover the scope of the work including incidental expenses.

Proposals should be submitted via email by Wednesday, March 2, 2022 to: Marcus Benigno, Chief Communications & Marketing Officer, ACLU SoCal, marcus@aclusocal.org.

For questions, see additional contact info at the bottom of this request.

EVALUATION FACTORS

Diversifying our vendor base is very important to the ACLU of Southern California. We will be evaluating offers based on the following factors as minimum requirements:

- Firms based in California or those with substantial experience in California;
- Credentials of firm and proven experience of working with like-minded clients in the non-profit sector;
- Cost-effective;
- Ability to understand the purpose of the project and design an audit process that aligns with key objectives; and
- Experience conducting similar audits or communications operations assessments.

SCHEDULE FOR PROPOSAL EVALUATION

RFP distributed to vendors	February 14
Vendor Q&A period	February 14 to March 1
Deadline for responses	March 2
Vendor demonstrations or presentations	March 3
Selection of vendor and contract negotiation	March 10

CONTACT

For more information on this RFP, please contact:

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