



# New York City Campaign Finance Board

## Request for Proposals for Research & Brand Strategy 2021 (PIN # 004202100001)

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is intended to result in a two-month contract with a vendor to conduct research with internal and external stakeholders and develop the brand architecture and strategy to guide a redesign of the New York City Campaign Finance Board (CFB)'s graphic identity and web properties. The vendor will assess the strengths and weaknesses of the agency's current brands; their place in the competitive landscape; and the needs of various stakeholders, including both external audiences (including voters, candidates, elected officials, and other city agencies) and CFB staff.

The research findings, brand and positioning strategy, and creative brief produced as a result of this work will be used to guide the creation of a new graphic identity and enhanced website and/or digital products (to be contracted separately) for the CFB and NYC Votes, its public-facing voter education and engagement brand, which reaches 5 million New Yorkers each year through its Voter Guide, press coverage, events, grassroots outreach, and advertising campaigns. The identity will launch in 2021, helping to encourage participation in the largest municipal election in New York City in at least two decades, with as many as 500 candidates expected to run for local and citywide offices.

Subject to the availability of funds, the responses to this RFP, and completion of the City of New York's procurement process, the CFB will select one or more vendor(s) to provide the services.

<b>Release Date:</b>	July 13, 2020
<b>Submission Deadline:</b>	August 7, 2020 by 5 pm EDT
<b>Submit Proposals to:</b>	<a href="mailto:contracts@nyccfb.info">contracts@nyccfb.info</a>
<b>Vendor Interviews:</b>	August 12-19, 2020 by appointment
<b>Anticipated Start Date:</b>	January 2, 2021

### ABOUT THE AGENCY

The [CFB](#) was created in 1988 as an independent, nonpartisan city agency. The CFB's mission is to:

- Increase voter engagement and participation
- Reduce the barriers to running for city office
- Diminish the corrupting influence of money in city elections
- Enhance the role of small contributors in funding campaigns
- and inform the public about candidates and elections.

As part of that mission, it administers one of the strongest, most effective campaign finance systems in the country. NYC's [matching funds program](#) amplifies the voice of average New Yorkers in city

elections by matching their small contributions with public funds. More information about the CFB can be found on its website, [www.nyccfb.info](http://www.nyccfb.info).

Since 2011, the CFB has also conducted direct-to-consumer voter education and engagement campaigns, under a mandate in the city’s charter. Since 2013, these public-facing campaigns (including citywide advertising, websites, email and text message election alerts, social media channels, and in-person grassroots organizing efforts) have been promoted under the brand “NYC Votes”. One of the agency’s most visible educational tools is the Voter Guide, a print and digital product that provides information on how to vote, voters’ rights, ballot proposals, and profiles of candidates running for local office. The printed Guide is mailed to every registered voter in New York City (over 4 million recipients), and the digital Guide reaches 250,000+ visitors in election years, offering enhanced features such as videos of the candidates; both are translated into five languages. The main voter-facing landing page typically promoted in public awareness campaigns is [www.voting.nyc](http://www.voting.nyc); additional information about NYC Votes can be found at <http://www.nyccfb.info/nyc-votes/>. The Public Affairs division is responsible for this work.

In advance of the 2021 municipal elections, the Public Affairs division engaged in an internal assessment of its strategic goals for voter engagement and public awareness of the CFB and assessed challenges in meeting those goals. The new brand strategy will successfully promote these goals and address these challenges, which can be found in the attached **Exhibit: Goals & Challenges**.

## PROJECT SCOPE

The vendor will conduct a strategic assessment of the agency’s current brands:

- New York City Campaign Finance Board (used primarily with candidates, elected officials, press, and other stakeholders in discussing campaign finance and matching funds policy);
- NYC Votes (used primarily for public-facing voter education and engagement campaigns);
- related campaign identities and taglines, including:
  - the Voter Guide
  - “Vote for the city you want”
  - We Power NYC
  - 20k in 2020

They should also consider and assess the competitive landscape, including extant municipal brands and identities (such as the “NYC” logo designed by Wolff Olins). (See *Exhibit: Challenges* for more.)

The selected vendor will engage in qualitative and quantitative research with the target audiences that these identities and campaigns are intended to reach to assess current perceptions and effectiveness and make recommendations for how to improve brand trust, strength, and alignment amongst the agency’s various identities and audiences. This will include researching and mapping key CFB brands’ place in the competitive landscape – their relationships both to other city agencies and identities, as well as in the larger voting engagement and advocacy landscape. The goal is to uncover points of confusion and potential opportunities for differentiation, in order to guide the strategy.

The research should establish benchmarks for New Yorkers’ current awareness, trust, and associations with the CFB, NYC Votes, and Voter Guide brands, enabling comparison and tracking through a post-campaign survey. (The post-campaign survey is not part of the scope of this project, but the vendor should provide full documentation of the questions asked and methodologies used to establish the benchmarks in this initial phase, in order to facilitate accurate comparisons and tracking later.)

Capturing the expertise and meeting the needs of internal stakeholders will be essential to the success of the new strategy and identity. Therefore, the vendor will also conduct interviews and lead participatory workshops with CFB stakeholders, including staff and board members, throughout the process. The vendor will work collaboratively with CFB staff to incorporate the audience insights uncovered in the research into a brand architecture and positioning strategy for the CFB's new identity (or identities), including all sub-brands articulated above, that is differentiated, ownable, and earns buy-in from all key stakeholders.

The final **deliverables** are:

- A **final report** (PDF or slide deck) including:
  - summary of **insights** from audience and stakeholder research;
  - perceptual maps and/or other representations of the **competitive landscape**, demonstrating the agency's current and desired future brand positioning;
  - **results** (including **benchmarks**) for measuring current (pre-campaign) awareness, trust, and associations with CFB brands, including the Campaign Finance Board, NYC Votes, and the Voter Guide;
  - an appendix including the full **methodology** used to generate these results and benchmarks, to enable replication and post-campaign tracking, including a copy of the research instruments used (e.g. survey questions and answer options) and any weighting or other analytical or statistical techniques applied to generate benchmarks;
  - **raw data** from the research, including (as appropriate, given the selected methodology) videos, transcripts, quantitative survey data, and any other datasets or models generated in the process of conducting research, which informed the insights presented.
- **Positioning strategy** for the agency's brands (and sub-brands), including the brand(s)' primary audiences, brand values, personality, key messages, and value proposition;
- **Brand architecture analysis and recommendation** clarifying the relationships between these identities, including a proposed schematic of which campaigns and web properties should reflect which identities and audiences, and how they should be differentiated from peers and competitors;
- **Creative brief for identity redesign**, incorporating all of the above, which will be used to guide the creation of a new graphic identity and enhanced website (to be managed under separate contracts) to be delivered by the first week of February;
- 2-3 **workshops** with CFB staff and stakeholders to share findings, build consensus, review the final creative brief, and ensure smooth implementation of the brief, including:
  - facilitation and design of workshops, including agendas, exercises, and supporting materials;
  - providing a location and/or remote meeting platforms (potential to hold meetings at CFB offices or use CFB Zoom or Teams accounts, depending on physical and technical needs);
  - a session with the selected identity design and/or web design firms to brief them on key aspects of the research, architecture, and positioning strategy, and answer questions that may emerge in implementing the strategy [to be held in the month of February].

## Contract

The contents of this Request for Proposals ("RFP"), its attachments, and the selected proposal will be incorporated into and made part of the final contract. The anticipated contract start date is January 2, 2021 and ends March 1, 2021. The contract resulting from this RFP will not exceed a maximum of

\$200,000. However, the CFB makes no representations as to the number of hours of work that will be assigned under the contract.

## **RESPONDING TO THIS RFP**

### **Proposal Contents**

Your proposal must be submitted by **August 7, 2020 by 5 pm (EDT)** to [contracts@nyccfb.info](mailto:contracts@nyccfb.info) and must contain the following:

#### Vendor Information

Key information about your firm, including contacts, website, and a brief overview of your organization's history and activities.

#### Project Approach

Describe your proposed methodology and why you believe this methodology is the best way to accomplish the goals of this project. This should include types of research instruments you propose to use; the project milestones you would set; examples of the specific deliverables you would provide (such as perceptual maps or competitive analyses); and how you would engage internal stakeholders as well as other vendors who will implement the strategy, to ensure buy-in, adoption, and continuity. Discuss your plans for conducting qualitative and quantitative research, workshops, and other work digitally and remotely, and how you would ensure equitable participation of all stakeholders during coronavirus, when there may be a need to hold hybrid meetings and workshops that include both in-person and remote participants.

#### Schedule and Timeline

Describe key milestones, and when you would meet them, leading up to delivery of the final strategy and creative brief by early February 2021 as well as workshops with internal stakeholders and the firm(s) selected to do the design, to share the brief.

#### Key Resources, Staffing & Team Members

Describe the total resources (number of personnel who may be assigned to this project, technical programs or expertise, research facilities, etc.) that the organization will commit to this project. Include the names and titles of the key personnel to be assigned to this project, including the project manager, partner, or lead, and a description of each individual's relevant experience and expertise. Please include bios or resumes for key personnel. The proposed project team will be binding; no personnel can be changed without the express written consent of the CFB's executive director or her designee.

#### Relevant Experience & Case Studies

Describe your organization's experience and expertise in consumer research, workshop facilitation, and brand strategy, particularly experience working with complex brand architectures that serve multiple audiences and support a variety of sub-brands. Describe your organization's experience with and commitment to the goals of the project. Pick a relevant project you worked on recently and walk us through the process, from challenge to methodology to solution. If you have experience working in the social or public sectors, please note your experience in these areas and any differences you have observed. Please also discuss your experience conducting digital and remote research and working sessions.

### Financial Statements

Provide a copy of the firm's latest audit report or certified financial statement, or a statement as to why no report or statement is available.

### References

Provide the names of three significant clients to whom the firm has supplied comparable services in the past three years. For each such reference, state the name, title, e-mail address, and telephone number of the individual to be contacted.

### Fee Proposal

Provide the organization's fee proposal. This should include an overall fee to reflect the total scope of the work you propose and include a cost breakdown for each component or phase of the project, such as the cost of fielding a survey, conducting focus groups, or holding a stakeholder workshop. This cost breakdown should include any expenses, overhead, or subcontracting fees for analysis and strategy development, such as facilitators for qualitative research, software and services to host and administer a survey, and incentives paid to research participants. Note: the vendor selected for this project will only be reimbursed for components of this project that are actually completed. The total payments under the resulting agreement are not to exceed a maximum of \$200,000.

**No allowances for expenses incurred by the contractor will be made other than those included in the Fee Proposal.** No expenses will be reimbursed unless the CFB provides prior written approval.

The Fee Proposal must be approved by an authorized agent of the respondent and sent as a separate PDF document marked "Fee Proposal".

### Related Projects and RFPs

The scope described in this solicitation is for a Research and Brand Strategy project that will interact closely with an Identity Design and Brand Campaign project (February 3, 2021 – May 10, 2021). These proposals will have overlapping periods for submission and evaluation. You are welcome to bid on both projects, but you must submit a separate proposal for each project that you wish to pursue. All proposals will be evaluated separately, using the criteria specified in each request for proposals. If you anticipate realizing any synergies that result in reduced costs and fees as a result of undertaking both projects, please provide estimates (see Fees) that reflect the cost as a standalone project, as well as any applicable reduction in cost if undertaken in combination with the other project.

### **Attachments**

The following attachments are to be completed and signed and must be submitted with the proposal:

1. Attachment A, Proposal Cover Sheet
2. Attachment B, Iran Divestment Act Certification Form
3. Attachment C, Affirmation
4. Attachment D, Doing Business Data Form

The attachments and additional resources can be found on the "Information for Vendors" sheet.

Appendix A: General Provisions Governing City Contracts (provided for informational purposes), which also includes Schedule A: Types of Insurance Required.

You may submit any additional information that you believe may help us evaluate your firm and proposal.

### **Amendments to this RFP**

Any amendment to the RFP issued by the CFB shall be identified as such, and shall be distributed by email. Each amendment (if any) will reference the portion of the RFP it amends. Proposers must provide written acknowledgment of receipt of any amendment and respond to the CFB within a specified period if the amendment requests additional information, as a condition for consideration of proposals. **Proposals received from proposers that did not acknowledge receipt of amendments that have been sent (if any) may be immediately disqualified.** If it is necessary for the CFB to issue an amendment close to the submission deadline for proposals, the CFB at its sole discretion may extend the deadline, and state this in the amendment, or, if necessary, via facsimile or email, or via telephone followed by written confirmation.

### **Submission of Proposals**

The CFB must receive the following by **August 7, 2020 by 5 pm (EDT) as PDF documents**:

1. The proposal.
2. All requested attachments.
3. The Fee Proposal must be placed in a separate PDF document named “Fee Proposal.”
  - In the title of your email please include: “Proposal submitted in response to RFP PIN # 004202100001: Research and Brand Strategy, 2021”
  - **Proposals received after the submission deadline shall not be accepted**, except as provided under the Procurement Policy Board (PPB) Rules.

Questions about this RFP may be directed to Kitty Chan, Agency Chief Contracting Officer at [contracts@nyccfb.info](mailto:contracts@nyccfb.info).

### **EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS AND CONTRACTOR SELECTION**

All proposals accepted by the agency will be reviewed to determine whether they are responsive or non-responsive to the requisites of this RFP. Proposals which are determined by the agency to be non-responsive will be disqualified. The CFB’s evaluation committee will evaluate and rate all remaining proposals based on the evaluation criteria prescribed below. Although one or more selected proposers may be invited to the CFB for an interview prior to award of the contract, and discussions may be conducted with proposers submitting acceptable proposals, the CFB reserves the right to award contracts on the basis of initial proposals received, without discussions; therefore, the proposer’s initial proposal should contain its best price terms.

#### Evaluation Criteria

Vendors will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Experience creating actionable brand strategy deliverables, including positioning, competitive analyses, creative briefs, and brand architecture (30 points)
- Experience conducting research and distilling relevant insights on brand perception (20 points)

- Demonstrated level of organizational capability to deliver brand strategy consulting, based on previous clients, team bios, and references (20 points)
- Appropriateness of recommended approach to meet CFB needs and challenges, including experience facilitating collaborative workshops and consensus-building and planning and conducting remote and digital workshops (15 points)
- The contract will be awarded to the responsible proposer (or proposers) whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the City, taking into consideration cost and the other factors described herein. Contract award shall be subject to timely completion of contract negotiations between the CFB and the proposer. Fees (15 points)

Prior to entering into a written agreement approved by the New York City Corporation Counsel (Corporation Counsel) and registered with the New York City Comptroller's Office (Comptroller), the CFB reserves the right to terminate discussions with a tentatively selected proposer at any time and for any reason whatsoever in its sole discretion without incurring any liability.

### **Oral Interviews**

One or more selected proposers may be invited to the CFB for an interview prior to award of the contract. Interviews, if any, are anticipated to take place between approximately August 12-19, 2020.

Respondents may be requested to make an oral presentation of their proposals for purposes that may include: (1) promoting understanding of the CFB's requirements and the proposer's capabilities; (2) obtaining the best price for the City of New York; and (3) arriving at a contract that will be most advantageous to the City. The Agency Contact or her designee will schedule the exact time and location of these presentations. Following the discussions, the CFB may ask responsive proposers to submit "best and final offers" at a specified time and date.

## **GENERAL PROPOSAL INFORMATION**

### **Conditions of Proposal Submissions**

This RFP does not commit the CFB to award a contract nor is the CFB responsible for any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP. Submission of a proposal shall be deemed to be permission by the respondent for the CFB to make such inquiries concerning the respondent as the CFB deems necessary.

Proposals that are not complete or are not in conformance with this RFP may be immediately eliminated from consideration. The CFB reserves the right to:

- Reject any proposal or parts of proposals received in response to this RFP;
- Award a contract for all services described in this RFP to one respondent, or to award contracts to more than one respondent;
- Use any ideas contained in submitted proposals;
- Consider modifications received at any time before the award is made, if such is in the best interests of the CFB;
- Correct, waive, or modify any irregularities in a proposal received after notifying the respondent;

- Conduct negotiations with any or all respondents, or award the contract without any negotiations;
- Terminate negotiations with tentatively selected respondents or take any other appropriate action.

This RFP does not represent any obligation or agreement whatsoever on the part of the CFB. Such obligation may only be incurred or entered into by written agreement approved by the Corporation Counsel and registered with the Comptroller. Selection of proposals will not create any rights on the respondent's part, including, without limitation, rights of enforcement, equity, or reimbursement, until after the approval by Corporation Counsel and registration with the Comptroller. This RFP and any agreement or other documents resulting therefrom are subject to all applicable laws, rules, and regulations promulgated by any federal, state, or municipal authority having jurisdiction over the subject matter thereof, as the same may be amended from time to time.

**Any oral agreements, quotes, or estimates are non-binding.**

### **Contract Award**

A contract will be awarded to the responsible proposer (or proposers) whose proposal represents the best value to the City by optimizing quality, cost and efficiency and therefore is determined to be the most advantageous to the City, taking into consideration the price and such other factors or criteria that are set forth in this RFP. Contract award shall be subject to the timely completion of contract negotiations between the agency and the selected proposer.

### **Contractual Requirements**

Contract award is subject to all applicable laws, rules, and regulations promulgated by any federal, state, or municipal authority having jurisdiction over the subject matter thereof, including all applicable provisions of federal, New York State and New York City laws and executive orders requiring affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. The selected contractor will be required to sign the City's standard contract provisions (see Appendix A, attached hereto, for provisions that are included in all City contracts). All subcontractors are also subject to the City's contracting requirements. By submitting a proposal, the proposer understands that these standard contract provisions will become part of the final contract.

### **Confidential, Proprietary Information or Trade Secrets**

Proposers should give specific attention to the identification of those portions of their proposals that they deem to be confidential, proprietary information or trade secrets and provide any justification of why such materials, upon request, should not be disclosed by the City. Such information must be easily separable from the non-confidential sections of the proposal.

### **Subcontracting**

Except in the case of subcontractors described in the vendor's proposal, a selected contractor shall not subcontract the whole or any part of the contract resulting from this RFP without the prior written approval of the Executive Director of the CFB or her designee.

### **Proposer Costs**

Proposers will not be reimbursed for any costs incurred to prepare proposals.



### **Modification or Withdrawal of Proposals**

Proposals may be modified or withdrawn only in writing and only prior to the deadline for submission of proposals. If the CFB chooses to request best and final offers, those respondents of whom best and final offers have been requested will be able to modify or withdraw their proposals, in writing, until the deadline set for the receipt of best and final offers. Submitted fees are irrevocable unless modified or withdrawn according to the policy set forth in this subsection.

### **Proposers' Appeal Rights**

Pursuant to New York City's Procurement Policy Board Rules, proposers have the right to appeal agency non-responsiveness determinations and agency non-responsibility determinations and to protest an agency's determination regarding the solicitation or award of a contract.

### **Applicable Laws**

This Request for Proposals and the resulting contract award(s), if any, unless otherwise stated, are subject to all applicable provisions of New York State Law, the New York City Administrative Code, New York City Charter and New York City Procurement Policy Board (PPB) Rules. A copy of the PPB Rules may be obtained by contacting the PPB at (212) 788-0010.

### **Poor Performance Provision**

Pursuant to Local Law 94 of 1985 (Section 6-116 of the New York City Administrative Code), a contractor whose performance is improper, dilatory, or otherwise not in strict compliance with the contract, may, after notice and hearing, be classified as a poor performer. Such a determination may result in the contractor being declared a not responsible bidder for up to three years.

### **Contract Negotiations**

The CFB may, at its option, negotiate with one or more respondents for the purposes of: (1) promoting understanding of the CFB's requirements and the respondents' capabilities; and/or (2) arriving at an agreement that will be most advantageous to the CFB. No respondent shall have any rights against the CFB arising from such negotiations. The CFB reserves the right to terminate negotiations, without any liability, for any reason whatsoever in its sole discretion and to begin negotiations with other respondents.

### **RFP Postponement/Cancellation**

The agency reserves the right to postpone or cancel this RFP, in whole or in part, and to reject all proposals.

### **Insurance Requirements**

The contractor shall maintain the following types of insurance if and as indicated in Schedule A (with the minimum limits and special conditions specified in Schedule A) throughout the term of any agreement, including any applicable guaranty period. All insurance shall meet the requirements set forth in Appendix A, Article 7.

### **Whistleblower Protection Expansion Act Rider**

This contract includes a provision concerning the protection of employees for whistleblowing activity, pursuant to New York City Local Law Nos. 30-2012 and 33-2012, effective October 18, 2012 and September 18, 2012, respectively. The provisions apply to contracts with a value in excess of \$100,000, outlined in Appendix A.

The selected contractor shall post a notice provided by the City (Attachment G) in a prominent and accessible place on any site where work pursuant to any agreement is performed that contains information about:

- a. how its employees can report to the New York City Department of Investigation allegations of fraud, false claims, criminality or corruption arising out of or in connection with any agreement; and
- b. the rights and remedies afforded to its employees under Admin. Code §§ 7-805 (the New York City False Claims Act) and 12-113 (the Whistleblower Protection Expansion Act) for lawful acts taken in connection with the reporting of allegations of fraud, false claims, criminality or corruption in connection with any agreement.

### **Paid Sick Leave Contract Rider**

The Earned Sick Time Act, also known as the Paid Sick Leave Law (“PSLL”) requires covered employees who annually perform more than 80 hours of work in New York City to be provided with paid sick time. Contractors of the City of New York or of other governmental entities may be required to provide sick time pursuant to the PSLL. Contracts shall be subject to New York City’s PSLL, which is outlined in Appendix A.

### **Comptroller’s Audit**

The New York City Comptroller is charged with the audit of contracts in New York City. Any vendor who believes that there has been unfairness, favoritism, or impropriety in the proposal process should contact: New York City Comptroller, Office of Contract Administration, 1 Centre Street, New York, NY 10007 or call (212) 669-3916.

For more information about PASSPort, please visit [nyc.gov/passport](http://nyc.gov/passport) General Information to Proposers or contact Kitty Chan, NYC CFB Agency Chief Contracting Officer (ACCO), at [contracts@nyccfb.info](mailto:contracts@nyccfb.info).

### **Prices Irrevocable**

Prices proposed by the proposer shall be irrevocable until contract award, unless the proposal is withdrawn. Proposals may only be withdrawn by submitting a written request to the agency prior to contract award but after the expiration of 90 days after the opening of proposals. This shall not limit the discretion of the agency to request proposers to revise proposed prices through the submission of best and final offers and/or the conduct of negotiations.