



Design/Creative Services Request for Proposals

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Submit questions to:

Eris Sims
Executive Director
eris.sims@linksinc.org

Jennifer Hudnell
Communications and Community Partnerships Manager
jennifer.hudnell@linksinc.org



SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

Purpose of Request for Proposals

The Links, Incorporated and The Links Foundation, Incorporated (“The Links”) request proposals from qualified design agencies to provide creative services as specified in this Request for Proposals (“RFP”). *Note that The Links may select multiple agencies under this RFP.

About The Links, Incorporated and The Links Foundation, Incorporated

The Links, Incorporated is an international, not-for-profit corporation, established in 1946. The membership consists of 12,000 professional women of color in 280 chapters located in 41 states, the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. It is one of the nation’s oldest and largest volunteer service organizations of extraordinary women who are committed to enriching, sustaining, and ensuring the culture and economic survival of African Americans and other persons of African ancestry.

The members of The Links, Incorporated are influential decision makers and opinion leaders. The Links, Incorporated has attracted many distinguished women who are individual achievers and have made a difference in their communities and the world. They are business and civic leaders, role models, mentors, activists and volunteers who work towards a common vision by engaging like-minded organizations and individuals for partnership. Links members contribute more than 500,000 documented hours of community service annually – strengthening their communities and enhancing the nation. The organization is the recipient of awards from the UN Association of New York and the Leon H. Sullivan Foundation for its premier programs.

The outstanding programming of The Links, Incorporated has five facets which include Services to Youth; The Arts; National Trends and Services; International Trends and Services; and Health and Human Services. The programs are implemented through strategies such as public information and education, economic development, and public policy campaigns.

The Links Foundation, Incorporated is the philanthropic arm of The Links, Incorporated. The Foundation was established in 1979 to enhance and expand the philanthropic endeavors of The Links, Incorporated. The Foundation provides grants to innovative programs that address problems to be solved, or opportunities to be seized, that are of regional, national or international significance

The Links Foundation, Incorporated has contributed more than \$25 million to charitable causes since its founding. In 2014, The Links Foundation, Incorporated named its fourth \$1 million grantee – the Smithsonian National Museum of African America History and Culture. Other million-dollar grantees include the United Negro College Fund and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. and the National Civil Rights Museum.

For more information, please visit: www.linksinc.org



SCOPE OF WORK OVERVIEW OF SERVICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of this request is to seek and retain a creative services agency to be responsible for the conception and design of The Links creative projects. The Links seeks a company to develop and retain a sense of creative cohesiveness and brand standard across its projects in a variety of media.

The primary duties of the selected agency are to provide creative services including, but not limited to, branding, marketing materials design, internal/external communication pieces, and facilitation of production of these pieces as well as interactive (web) services. The objectives of this agreement are to provide The Links with continued creative services and solutions for both offline and online initiatives to enable The Links to develop a strong brand identity through various branding initiatives:

The Scope of Work aims to be an educational tool through which prospective creative agencies can estimate time and resources it would need if chosen as the agency of record. The Links would like to address projects on an individual basis and work on a pre-negotiated hourly rate.

Availability and efficiency are paramount. The Links at times works on a short turnaround. One reason The Links is seeking a creative agency is to ensure projects are executed quickly while retaining high quality. Open communication and flexibility are expected.

The Links expects the goals of this agency to be:

- To develop high-level creative concepts that represent the brand attitude.
- To serve as a design expert and resource.
- To work with The Links to understand its various audiences and the best methods by which to address those audiences.
- To creatively integrate The Links existing branding platforms into projects.
- To continue to build The Links reputation for presenting high-quality creative collateral in a variety of settings.

Specific Services and Responsibilities

Design agency's services to be delivered under the contract awarded under this RFP shall include:

- Work with The Links communications manager, chair of communications and executive director to coordinate the design and production of printed and electronic resources including, but not limited to:
 - Print collateral – brochures, postcards, event programs, invitations
 - Corporate identity – business cards, letterhead, envelopes, note cards
 - Print ads
 - Email blasts, eNewsletters and electronic invitations- design, layout and dissemination
 - Social media graphics



- Direct mail (design and production) and mail house coordination
- Create partner sponsorship packages (print and electronic)
- Website maintenance, design, development and updates (content and graphics)
- Provide original PDFs and proofs for all projects;
- Purchase stock photography and maintain library of purchased art
- Maintain electronic records of all pieces produced
- Respond to all design project requests within 24 hours, with a reasonable timeline for when projects will be completed
- Provide creative assistance on attaining strategic goals
- Obtain printing/production estimates and coordinate production process

Proposed Term

The successful proposer will enter into a Master Services Agreement with The Links. The duration of the initial contract between The Links and the successful proposer is expected to begin upon the date of contract approval (approximately January 1, 2015) and terminate on December 31, 2015. The Links reserves the right to renew its agreement prior to the end of each contract term. There will be a 6-month oral review in June 2015 and subsequent reviews annually in each year the contract is renewed.



Requirements for Proposal Response

The application package consists of one (1) original proposal and a minimum of four (4) examples of varied creatives from different platforms. The proposal must be delivered via a web-based platform, emailed, CD or jump drive to The Links office at the address below. In addition, any print collateral examples should be submitted with proposal. Proposals may not be faxed.

The deadline for accepting applications is **5:00 p.m. ET, on Friday, September 26, 2014.**

All web-based or emailed versions of proposals need to be sent to Executive Director Eris Sims at eris.sims@linksinc.org AND Communications and Community Partnerships Manager Jennifer Hudnell at jennifer.hudnell@linksinc.org. Or, mail all information to the following address:

Eris T. Sims
Executive Director
The Links, Incorporated
1200 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20005
Attention: Creative Services RFP

All complete responses received on or before the deadline will be reviewed for selection.

Please contact eris@linksinc.org AND jennifer.hudnell@linksinc.org for additional information or clarification.

**Creatives mailed to The Links will not be returned.*

Proposal Package

A complete proposal package includes the information listed below. Responses received without all of the items will be considered incomplete, and may be withdrawn from consideration.

- 1) Name, address, phone number, fax number, email address, and brief description of firm (1-2 pages).
- 2) Résumés of key personnel to be assigned to this contract, highlighting skills, abilities, and knowledge relating to the delivery of the proposed services (1-3 pages).
- 3) A narrative as to firm's skills, abilities, and knowledge relating to the delivery of the proposed services, and knowledge of black volunteer community service organizations and/or women service organizations (1-2 pages).



4) Description of services to be provided by the agency which meets the services requested by the Scope of Work section of this RFP. If firm cannot provide the specific service requested, firm will indicate this in the response and have the option of proposing an alternate service (2-4 pages).

5) Cost of providing services listed in the Scope of Work. This should be comprehensive and should include design hours, printing estimates, production expenses, and any additional expenses related to providing the services listed in this RFP scope of work. (1-2 pages)

6) A minimum of four (4) examples of varied creatives from different platforms that the agency has conceptualized, designed and executed. Include and innovative example of a new brand-aligned design for one of the projects outlined in the scope of work. Portfolio examples and new brand-aligned design may include web pages, brochures, postcards, ads or other creatives designed for clients other than The Links. *Please note: these examples are non-returnable unless applicant provides for their return*.*

7) Three (3) or more firm references (1 page).

Evaluation Criteria

The Links will first evaluate responses based on compliance with all items set forth in the “Requirements for Proposal Response” section of this RFP. Responses that do not comply will be deemed not acceptable. Responses that meet the provisions will be evaluated on creativity, credibility, and the requirements listed on pages 6 and 7. The Links may select top candidates for on-site interviews to make the final selections, and then conduct separate negotiations to establish service areas, staffing levels and discuss details of the respondent’s proposal. At the conclusion of these negotiations, The Links will make final selections under this RFP. More than one respondent may be selected under this RFP.



Timeline (*subject to change*)

Publication of Request for Proposals:	Tuesday, September 9, 2014
Deadline for Proposal Submission**:	Friday, September 26, 2014 by 5:00pm ET
The Links review of proposals completed	Friday, October 17, 2014
Interviews with final candidates	Monday, October 20, 2014 Tuesday, October 21, 2014
Selected firm notified	Monday, November 3, 2014
Execute contract with selected firm:	Monday, December 1, 2014
Start Date of Services:	Monday January 5, 2015

*** Respondents will be notified by mail and/or email stating if they have been selected.*



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This request is issued subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. The Links expressly reserve the right to modify or withdraw this request at any time, whether before or after any responses have been submitted or received.
2. The Links reserves the right to reject and not consider any or all respondents that do not meet the requirements of this RFP, including but not limited to: incomplete responses and/or responses offering alternate or non-requested services.
3. The Links reserves the right to reject any or all firms, to waive any informality in the RFP process, or to terminate the RFP process at any time, if deemed to be in its best interest.
4. In the event the party selected does not enter into the required agreement to carry out the purposes described in this request, The Links may, in addition to any other rights or remedies available at law or in equity, commence negotiations with another respondent.
5. In no event shall any obligations of any kind be enforceable against The Links unless and until a written agreement is entered into.
6. Each respondent agrees to bear all costs and expenses of its response and there shall be no reimbursement for any costs and expenses relating to the preparation of responses submitted hereunder or for any costs or expenses incurred during negotiations.
7. By submitting a response to this RFP, each respondent waives all rights to protest or seek any remedies whatsoever regarding any aspect of this request, the selection of a respondent or respondents with whom to negotiate, the rejection of any or all offers to negotiate, or a decision to terminate negotiations.
8. The Links reserves the right not to award a contract(s) pursuant to this RFP.