



Request for Proposal for Development and Implementation of a Marketing Plan

Purpose of Proposal

This is a request for proposal from individuals and organizations to assist the Colorado Foundation for Water Education (CFWE) in developing and implementing a marketing and communications plan in 2011. The overall objective is to increase awareness of the Foundation amongst its target constituency as evidenced by increases in membership revenue, program revenue and participation, media mentions, requests for speaking engagements and total charitable contributions, among other metrics. Prospective firms or consultants will be working with the Executive Director and staff and will be expected to:

1. Increase the awareness and positive image of CFWE statewide;
2. Streamline CFWE's messaging to better court constituencies identified in the 2009 strategic plan;
3. Determine the most viable potential constituencies not yet tapped;
4. Develop the appropriate communications strategy for CFWE over the next 3 years;
5. Assist in development of direct marketing and advertising materials;
6. Identify evaluative metrics and provide training for CFWE staff to calculate ROI of various marketing efforts.

Who We Are

The Colorado Foundation for Water Education was established in 2002 with the mission of promoting better understanding of Colorado's water resources through balanced education and information. CFWE is the only statewide non-profit currently providing this service.

CFWE supports its mission through a variety of programs and services. It has two major publications that provide information to the water-interested public. CFWE is best known for these products. CFWE's thrice yearly magazine, *Headwaters*, gives individuals up-to-date information on current events in Colorado water. *Headwaters* has a circulation of 6,500 individuals statewide. It is also distributed as a benefit of membership. CFWE advertises its programs in *Headwaters* and uses advertisements from outside entities in *Headwaters* as a revenue stream.

The *Citizen's Guide* series offers quick-reference primers on many of the most pressing topics in Colorado water such as Water Law, Interstate Compacts, Water Quality and Water Conservation. CFWE sells the *Citizen's Guides* in its online store. While sales of publications account for less than 5% of CFWE's annual revenue, over 25,000 copies have been sold to date. CFWE also distributes complimentary guides to volunteer organizations with the assistance of grant funding.

CFWE also provides education through various tours and learning events. It conducts a two to three-day annual river basin tour in one of Colorado's large river basins in addition to conducting several one-day mini-tours throughout the year. Additionally, CFWE is a partner of the annual Sustaining Colorado

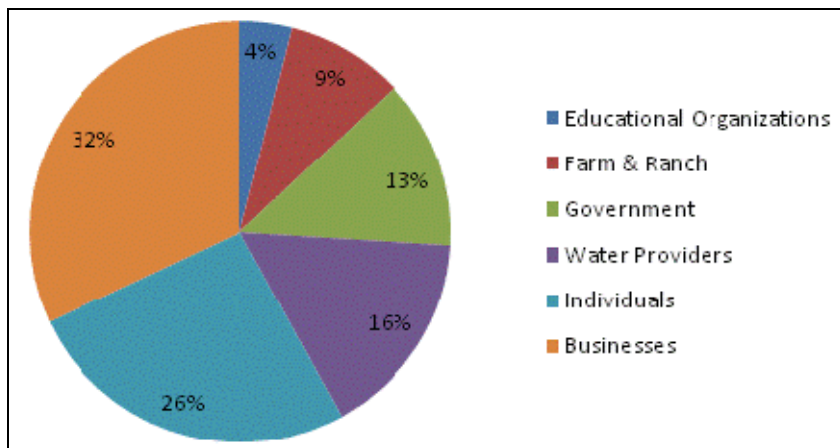
Watersheds Conference. These events allow CFWE to educate approximately 400 different individuals every year.

Through its Water Leaders Program, CFWE provides management training to mid-career professionals in the water field. This is a year-long program focused on professional development and creates loyal supporters of the Foundation in its alumni. There are currently 51 alumni from the program and another class is slated to begin in mid-2011.

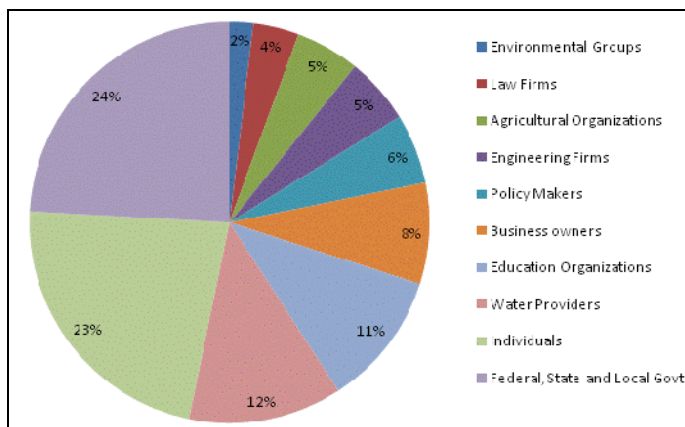
CFWE does extensive work with the Colorado Water Conservation Board and the Inter-Basin Compact Committee. It facilitates the education workgroup of the IBCC and provides various services to the CWCB throughout the year. Through this work, CFWE interacts with over 500 decision makers across Colorado.

Our Current Audience

CFWE has approximately 350 members, many of whom are institutional members. Membership currently accounts for about 17% of CFWE's annual revenue (roughly \$65,000). The chart below breaks down CFWE's membership into categories.



The 6,500 individuals who comprise *Headwaters* readership are diverse as well. The chart below shows the categories of publication recipients.



Despite the diversity of membership and *Headwaters* recipients, there is still a strong tie to the professional water community running through everything CFWE does. There is an internal desire to break out of the mold of catering to 'wonks' and water professionals and achieve a broader public appeal statewide.

Our Current Approach

CFWE's marketing consists almost entirely of direct marketing generated in-house. CFWE maintains an 8,500-contact database and uses this for the majority of its direct marketing. The e-mail reach of the contact database is limited however, with only about 1,500 working addresses. This limits the scope of low-cost communication with constituents. Direct appeals are done by e-mail and direct mail. Staff's ability to calculate ROI on any specific marketing campaign is currently limited. Any earned media is sporadic and usually comes in the form of mentions by Board members or the Executive Director in media interviews, mention on water policy and news blogs, and in state publications. The Foundation has never paid for media placement in the form of advertisements.

Strategic Goals

CFWE is guided by a Strategic Plan, which guides the audiences, programs and fundraising goals of the organization. The following organizational goals were adopted by the Board of Trustees for the years 2009-2014:

Goal #1: Within four years, an increasing percentage of targeted decision makers will use the Foundation as a source of water resource information for their decision making processes.

Goal #2: Increase the water resource knowledge among individuals connected to selected gatekeeper organizations (staff, board, and members) within five years.

Goal #3: Increased engagement by decision makers and selected gatekeeper organizations with CFWE, as evidenced by a 10% annual increase in contributions, participation and use of our educational tools/programs.

Goal #4: Strengthen CFWE's capacity to provide all Coloradans access to unbiased water information and educational programs.

Goal #5: Develop the financial stability necessary for CFWE to maintain the reliability of its educational program by increasing revenues by 10% annually from their 2009 level; increasing the reserve fund to \$150,000; and increasing the diversity of funding sources.

The Board subsequently identified the following target audiences for 2011 programs, beyond CFWE's typical audience:

1. State legislators
2. Constituencies of Basin Roundtables and Inter-Basin Compact Commission members
3. General public through selected gatekeeper organizations, such as public radio, tourism offices and water organizations participating in Water 2012 events

4. Water organizations that require increased capacity for education efforts to pursue forward-thinking solutions

Results of the marketing analysis performed as part of this project may or may not reinforce these audiences as logical choices. CFWE is open to identifying and pursuing alternate audiences based upon findings.

What We Need

CFWE would like to develop a three-year communications and marketing plan. The goal of this plan is to broaden and deepen engagement statewide while providing mission-relevant information. By taking the direction provided by CFWE's strategic plan, the selected consultant or firm will perform a market analysis to determine the needs of current and potential audiences. A determination of the appropriate marketing mix over the next three years should emerge from this plan. The plan should also take into account any new projects and programs slated for the timeframe. This includes Water 2012, a statewide collaborative campaign among most of Colorado's major water entities to increase water awareness. CFWE has taken the lead on much of the Water 2012 groundwork and wants to make sure that Water 2012 earns CFWE respect and recognition while promoting awareness of water issues as a whole. CFWE would also like direction on better leveraging new media and social networking. Finally, after a plan is drafted, assistance with implementation and training of staff to both execute plan directives and implement ROI evaluations of various plan elements will be necessary.

Working with CFWE

Working closely with CFWE staff will be a part of both the development and implementation process. During the development process, CFWE will work closely with the agency to set goals and objectives, determine audiences and craft key messages and communication methodologies.

During the implementation phase, CFWE staff will require regular and consistent access to the implementation team to determine if progress and direction are appropriate.

Term of Service and Budget

This project consists of two distinct phases, development of a communications plan and its implementation. The initial contract will be signed by mid-March, 2011. The selected firm will be expected to deliver the final Marketing & Communications Plan by May 15, 2011. Implementation of the plan will then begin and be aided by the selected firm until 6/30/2011, at which point a determination of further service will be made. By this time, however staff should possess the ability to continue implementation of most of the plan elements. The budget for this project is up to \$12,000. Some of these funds are currently earmarked for the implementation phase.

Evaluation Requirements

A team comprised of the CFWE Executive Director, Board President and Fundraising and Program Development Committee Chairs will evaluate proposals based on:

- Firm or consultant's qualifications
- Qualification of individual team members, if more than one individual
- Experience with non-profits
- Experience in the natural resource/conservation field
- Demonstrated understanding of CFWE's goals and strategic objectives
- Ability to train CFWE staff to track and report ROI for various efforts
- Suitability of approach
- Competitiveness of proposal budget

Other Requirements

- **Billing:** Explanation of billing procedures, fee structures, potential mark-ups etc. Let us know our options and limitations in this area.
- **References:** List of three current or former clients from a related field/similarly sized non-profit for whom you have done similar work.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Please disclose any potential conflicts of interest.
- **Confidentiality:** Any specific aspects of CFWE's current marketing strategy, billing, pricing, funding, etc. shall be considered confidential.

Review Process

January 25, 2011—RFP Issued

February 16, 2011—Proposals due to CFWE

February 28-March 4, 2011—Follow-up interviews with selected candidates

March 7, 2011—Firm or individual selected

Please mail or e-mail proposal to:

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