



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Chesapeake Bay Program - Communications Office

Deadline for proposals: August 25, 2017

Date: August 4, 2017

Project Description: Conduct an evaluation of current brand perceptions and brand messaging for the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) and use the results to inform the creation of a brand strategy and brand identity standards for CBP.

The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay invites communications and/or marketing firms or professionals to submit proposals to assist the [Chesapeake Bay Program \(CBP\)](#) Communications Office in a comprehensive evaluation of the CBP brand and the creation of a brand strategy and visual identity standards for the CBP partnership. The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay manages the CBP Communications Office and will lead the implementation of the brand strategy in order to consistently and effectively communicate the efforts of the CBP partnership.

Background: The CBP is an extensive regional partnership guiding the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Partners include multiple federal agencies, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (who serves as lead representative for the federal government); the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission; and advisory groups of citizens, scientists and local government officials. Despite being geographically scattered, partners work together through an extensive set of committees and work groups with broad stakeholder representation to collaborate, share information and make decisions. For more information on how CBP is structured, please visit www.chesapeakebay.net.

The work of the CBP is guided by the goals and outcomes of the [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#), signed in 2014, and effective communications is a key mechanism for achieving these goals. As part of its five-year Strategic Communications Plan, the CBP Communications Office is working to enhance and strengthen internal communications across the partnership, connect with previously under-engaged audiences such as local governments and underserved communities and expand the interested public's knowledge of CBP's work. One of the objectives of this strategic plan is to increase brand awareness of the CBP, including familiarity with and recognition of the name, logo and brand identity.

Established in 1983, the CBP has a deep, multi-faceted history in leading the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort. However, its brand is not well-known or understood, except among those who work closely with the partnership. CBP is often confused for other similarly-named Chesapeake Bay groups, of which there are many, including the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Chesapeake Bay Commission and the Chesapeake Bay Trust. The partnership is also misunderstood as solely an EPA initiative; while the EPA serves as the lead representative for the federal government, a multitude of non-EPA, non-federal partners are involved as well.

With its far-reaching network of staff and partners, a number of people could be supporting and strengthening the CBP brand through their work. However, most CBP partners and staff are employed by distinct organizations—each with their own branding—and often work only part-time on CBP efforts. Protocols for the use of the CBP name and logo are also not articulated, leading to inconsistent use of the CBP brand among disparate programs and initiatives. This lack of both a clear brand identity and defined brand guidelines weakens the CBP's ability to gain recognition for the collective work of its partners and the value of its partnership.

Objective: The Alliance is seeking a professional brand, marketing or public relations firm or team to perform a comprehensive evaluation of the CBP brand identity by (1) conducting stakeholder research to understand current brand perceptions, (2) auditing the Chesapeake Bay Program's existing brand to determine what implicit and explicit messages are being sent and how audiences perceive those messages, (3) creating a brand strategy and brand messaging that identifies key elements of the CBP brand, and (4) developing a standards manual that specifies methods staff and partners can use to uniformly and consistently raise awareness about the CBP and promote the value of the partnership. The Chesapeake Bay Program expects to retain its current name, tagline and logo.

Scope of Work: The awardee will be expected to perform the following duties:

1. Stakeholder research:

Conduct research of primary internal and external audiences to determine their perceptions of the CBP brand, including:

- Key audiences internal to the CBP partnership, such as:
 - Representatives of CBP Advisory Committees, Workgroups and Goal Implementation Teams
 - CBP Leadership and the CBP Management Board
 - Representatives from federal, state and local governments in the Chesapeake Bay watershed
- Key audiences outside the CBP partnership, such as:
 - Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
 - Educators and students
 - Interested public
 - Members of the media

2. Messaging audit:

Audit the CBP's current messaging efforts and overall brand—across print and web products—to determine what explicit and implicit messages are being sent and how audiences perceive and respond to those messages.

3. Brand strategy:

Develop a brand strategy report that specifies the elements of the CBP brand, which may include but are not limited to: brand values, personality, positioning, promise and messaging. Include suggestions on how to better market the Bay Program brand.

4. Brand standards manual:

Develop a brand identity standards manual or brand book that governs the use of the CBP brand, including name, logo, tagline and brand messages, and develop a plan for training staff on its use.

The CBP Communications Office will provide the contractor with the following existing documents to assist in their work:

- CBP's 2016-2021 Strategic Communications Plan
- A communications audit of print and web products, compiled in 2016

Deliverables: The contractor will be expected to provide:

- Report on key findings and results from audience research and messaging audit
- Brand strategy detailing the specific elements of the CBP's brand identity
- Visual identity standards manual or brand book governing the use of the CBP brand
- Plan and guidance for training for CBP staff and/or partners in the use of the brand standards manual (to be conducted by CBP Communications Office)

Interested firms should reply with a proposal by August 25, 2017, to: Rachel Felver, CBP Communications Director, at rfelver@chesapeakebay.net

Timeframe for work: Completion of research and audit and delivery of final brand strategy by end of 2017. Delivery of standards manual, trainings and training plan by early 2018.

Budget: Bids not to exceed \$25,000. Please provide hourly rate and estimated total cost.

Proposals should include: Statement of qualifications, your approach for the design and facilitation of the research and project, a project timeline and any unique suggestions for achieving success.

Questions: Submit no later than August 18 via email to Rachel Felver at rfelver@chesapeakebay.net