

Request for Proposals for River City Police-Community Engagement

Purpose: The River City Police Department (RCPD) has initiated a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify a qualified vendor (consulting group) to create and execute a community engagement process. The process will facilitate dialogue among police personnel and city stakeholders (residents, business owners, faith leaders, etc.) and lead to the establishment of policing priorities for River City.

Who May Respond: RCPD seeks a consulting group who has demonstrated experience in successfully designing and implementing large scale planning processes. Applicants must have strong facilitation and conflict resolution skills and proven experience in navigating contentious, emotionally-charged issues where parties have historically divergent priorities.

About River City: Founded in 1907, River City has historically been a blue collar, working-class community where people see the product of their work everyday (at the end of the assembly line or back at the barn). Over the past two to three decades, the economic drivers of River City have shifted significantly. Where industry used to be everything, River City is now an information hub and tourist destination. Unemployment is low, but many families that used to work in industry are now underemployed and the cost of living has risen sharply with the growth of knowledge-work and tourism. The RCPD has increasingly been staffed by officers who commute some distance and have little history with the community. Where RCPD used to primarily deal with traffic and the occasional bar fight, the department now has very different demands related to quality of life issues (improper parking, code enforcement, unregistered vehicles) and financial/high-tech crimes (identity theft, Ponzi schemes, embezzlement).

Project Overview: The RCPD is, in some ways, policing two different communities. One has history in the River City of the past but has struggled to keep up with economic opportunities in a technologically and demographically evolving city. The other is focused on growth and redevelopment and is excited by the transformation that has brought new life to River City. The RCPD is increasingly asked to push back on increases in disorderly conduct and unsightly blight that is most often associated with lower income areas. At the same time, some residents see this push for *quality of life* policing having an unequal impact on those who have less money. Some have suggested current police approaches involve racial bias. There have been some outspoken critics of the RCPD and this has attracted outside advocacy that has increased tensions throughout the city.

River City and RCPD leadership are confident that much of this tension can be alleviated by improved communication. Several leaders recently circulated an article that advocated for police-community engagement to (a) identify community concerns and priorities, (b) build understanding about police activities, and (c) create mutual understanding and regard for resource allocation. The City Council voted to bring this process to River City and the City Manager and Police Chief spoke in favor of it at a recent interview with the local paper's

editorial board. The local School Superintendent and ACLU Chapter President from a nearby urban community also expressed support for this approach.

Scope of Work and Deliverables: We expect the project to include the following:

- Design and execution of a comprehensive police-community engagement process
- Listening sessions
- Priorities inventory
- Summary report
- Stakeholder engagement and facilitation of conflict resolution as needed
- Project management

Proposals should outline a collaborative process that informs and involves police leadership, residents, and business leaders. This process should seek to acknowledge and, to the extent possible, accommodate the economic, social, and justice interests of a wide range of stakeholders.

Proposals Must Include:

- General information about your consulting team qualifications and roles
- A plan for identifying and engaging critical stakeholders
- An outline of key planning and engagement phases and/or steps
- A description of the relevant facilitation and conflict resolution competencies your team will bring to this project
- Identification of potential risks and/or notable events project leaders should anticipate
- Evaluation indicators and strategies the RCPD should use to assess community engagement and the outcomes of your work
- [Budgets would normally be required as well, but will be optional in this case]

Please note that all proposals must be double-spaced and no more than 7 pages in length.