Request for Proposals

Executive Search Services
for the President and Chief Executive Officer

November 2023
Section 1 – Background Information

Vermont Public is independent, community-supported media, serving Vermont with trusted, relevant and essential information. We produce independent, local, award-winning news, music and programming that connect our audiences with issues, ideas and each other. We provide access to trusted content from NPR, PBS, and other national producers. And we offer educational programs and resources for educators and families.

Over 190,000 listeners a week tune to our radio service, while we serve over 240,000 monthly TV viewers. Our podcasts average over 800,000 downloads a month, with well over 200,000 monthly website users.

Our service is funded by over 40,000 individual donors, of which over 60 percent give monthly. Membership support, as well as support from Vermont Public’s corporate underwriters, provides the majority of Vermont Public’s annual revenue. In addition, Vermont Public receives approximately 10 percent of its revenue from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

In FY 2024, the Vermont Public operating budget is $20 million, with endowment and reserves valued at $56 million.

Vermont Public was created in 2021 when Vermont Public Radio and Vermont PBS merged into a unified public media organization. We are an independent, locally owned and operated community licensee with 118 employees and a volunteer Board of Directors that governs Vermont Public. The Board recently led a strategic planning process. With keen attention to sustainability, the plan focuses on digital innovation while growing a broader and more diverse audience and retaining existing ones.

Section 2 – Background Information on the President and CEO Position

The President is the inspirational voice and face of Vermont Public, internally and externally, and therefore must model Vermont Public’s values and mission in day-to-day activities and relationships.

The President directs the development of Vermont Public’s short and long range objectives, policies, budgets and operating plans, and is accountable for the accomplishments and financial stability of the organization as well as operations. The President reports to the Board of Directors.

The President must inspire and lead Vermont Public with integrity by:

● Inspiring others to greater service by effectively leading a high-trust, high-impact executive team.
• Developing, communicating, and motivating the organization and beyond with a bold, clear vision and direction.
• Fostering a culture of belonging and innovation that encourages and rewards teamwork, creativity, accountability, risk-taking, and continuous improvement.
• Building and maintaining important external relationships with key supporters, donors, state officials and others that establish the president as a trusted thought-leader within the state.
• Maintaining Vermont Public as a thriving, national public media model that others aspire to be.

**Section 3 – Bid Requirements**
For ease of finding required information, the Respondent is asked to follow precisely the order and section number format of the Request. Other materials not directly related to the stated requirements may be included in a labeled Appendix section.
3.1 **Contract Objectives**  
The objective of this Request for Proposals is to procure the services of an executive search firm to conduct a search for the position of President and CEO of Vermont Public, as follows:

1. Develop a recruitment strategy that will attract a diverse and well-qualified pool of candidates for the position. This strategy should include:
   a. supporting the organization in assembling a search committee
   b. stakeholder engagement to understand the qualities that are necessary in a leader
   c. development of candidate profile to meet organizational objectives and leadership needs
   d. development of timeline that is realistic and actionable
   e. assistance in development of a compensation package informed by best practices and industry benchmarks

2. Recruit candidates and solicit resumes through traditional and innovative approaches to ensure a robust, diverse, and cross-discipline candidate pool (not only candidates within the public media industry).

3. Evaluate candidates by phone, Zoom, or in-person interviews to determine if they meet the basic requirements of the position. Conduct preliminary reference checks of the best-qualified candidates to determine an appraisal of their qualifications and to identify obvious strengths and weaknesses as an executive. Present a diverse and robust list of Level 1 viable candidates for the position along with a summary of employment history, an appraisal of qualifications and an assessment of their strengths and weaknesses for this position.

4. Assist Vermont Public in further evaluation, leading to Level 2 top five best-qualified list of candidates to be considered by the Vermont Public Search Committee.

5. As needed, facilitate interviews of the top candidates with the Vermont Public Search Committee.

6. Conduct thorough reference and background checks on potential candidates for the position, including education, work history, financial/credit and criminal checks.

7. Support, as needed, in the development of an offer based on best practices and industry benchmarks

3.2 **Proposal Due Date and Presentations**  
The deadline for submission of Proposals in response to this RFP is close of business December 22, 2023. Follow-up virtual or on-site presentations with the Board Chair and
Vice Chair will be conducted before January 19, 2024. Selected firms will be contacted shortly after the submission deadline.

3.3 Submission
Please send an email of the proposal in .pdf format to:

Dennise Casey
Vice Chair, Vermont Public Board
dennise@dennisecasey.com

3.4 Vermont Public Contacts
Questions relating to this RFP should be directed to: Dennise Casey, Vice Chair of the Vermont Public Board, ‘dennise@dennisecasey.com’ or 802-233-9436

3.5 Responsiveness
Proposals should respond to all requirements of this RFP to the maximum extent possible. Respondents are required to clearly identify any limitations or exceptions to the requirements inherent in their Proposal. Alternative approaches will be given consideration if that approach clearly offers increased benefits to Vermont Public. Failure of a Respondent to identify alternative approaches to limitations or exceptions indicated may result in rejection of a Respondent’s Proposal.

3.6 Information about the Company
Please provide information that will enable us to evaluate your company’s financial stability, track record and support capabilities, including:
- Ownership of your company
- Number of years in business
- Total number of employees in your organization
- Commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion
- Demographic information as to your organization’s structure (i.e., number of employees per business unit, number of employees broken out geographically, etc.)
- Demographic information as to the organizations for which you have conducted searches for Chief Executive Officers (i.e., industry breakdowns, geographic locations of organizations, etc.)

3.7 Client References
Please provide a list of at least three (3) clients for whom your firm has recently provided executive search services. The list should provide a contact name, title, organization, telephone number, e-mail, length of time of your relationship, and a brief description of your work together.

3.8 Delivery and Implementation Schedule
Tasks to be performed by the Respondent as well as by Vermont Public should be specifically stated and included in the schedule. The proposed contract period for the completion of this project is six months from the date of contract execution, with a
specific deadline. The contractor will complete the following products relative to the effective date of the contract.

Proposed timeline (2024)
Organizing stage (stakeholder interviews, development of Prospectus and plan)
   February-March
Recruiting of a diverse candidate pool                                    March - April
Presentation of 8-10 viable candidates                                    April-May
- Identification/interviews of 3-4 best qualified candidates             End of May
Appointment by Vermont Public Board                                      June

Each Respondent must include a realistic search implementation schedule, following final selection, to address the proposed timeline shown above.

3.9  Fees, Payments and/or Retainers
Each Respondent should include a detailed price quote, including a summary of all costs and a detailed list of each item proposed and its associated cost. Where appropriate, each Respondent should also include a breakdown of this information on the Delivery and Implementation Schedule requested in Section 3.11 as well.

3.10 Evaluation Criteria
Vermont Public shall review each proposal to determine the ability of the Respondent to meet the Association’s general and specific plan needs, as shown in the response, and verified by references and/or functional demonstrations. While responses will vary, each proposal must at least include information regarding the following:

- Demonstrated experience in the development and implementation of recruitment strategies, and the use of evaluation tools and processes that have produced a diverse and well-qualified pool of candidates for executive level positions in similar successful organizations.
- Demonstrated technical experience to perform the general requirements of the work. Respondents must provide the resume of the individual(s) with responsibility for performing the work requested; and the names and addresses of three (3) references who can evaluate the individual’s ability to successfully perform the work in a timely manner.
- Cost of service to provide potential hires.

3.11 Expenses for Response
Potential Respondents are solely responsible for their own expenses, if any, in preparing a response to this Request for Proposal. This would include any costs incurred during functional demonstrations or subsequent negotiations.

3.12 Compliance
Prior to submission, all Respondents are required to ensure that the contents of the proposal are compliant with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, as well as FCC requirements.
3.13 **Confidentiality and Proprietary Information, Materials, and Property**

As all Respondents will be exposed to certain information, materials, and/or property related to Vermont Public and its activities that Vermont Public may consider to be confidential or proprietary, including but not limited to financial information, trade secrets, employee mailing lists, copyrights, trademarks, and trade names, all Respondents must acknowledge and agree in their proposals that:

A. Vermont Public is the sole owner of all right, title, and interest to all such information, materials, or property prepared, developed, used, or provided by Vermont Public to facilitate the proposal process.

B. Agents or employees of the Respondent shall not use or disclose, or to cause to be used or disclosed, at any time during or after the completion of the bidding process, any confidential or proprietary information, materials, or property of Vermont Public, except as may be specifically authorized by Vermont Public. Any and all unauthorized use shall cause Vermont Public immediate and irreparable harm for which Vermont Public shall be entitled to seek injunctive relief and/or damages.

November 28, 2023