



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP No. 720-2206

**Master Service Agreement
for
Communications, Public Relations and Media Relations Services**

Proposal Submittal Deadline: Monday, February 28, 2022, at 2:30 p.m. local time

The University of Texas System
Office of External Relations, Communications and Advancement Services

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Description of The University of Texas System

The University of Texas System has served Texas for more than 135 years, improving the lives of Texans—and people all over the world—through education, health care and research at [13 academic and health institutions](#) across the state. With an enrollment of more than 240,000 students, the UT System is one of the nation’s largest public university systems of higher education.

UT institutions are powerful drivers of economic and social mobility in Texas, producing more than 60,000 degrees annually, including more than one-third of the state’s bachelor’s degrees and more than half of the state’s medical degrees. In 2019, almost half of all undergraduate degrees were awarded to students who qualified for a Pell grant based on financial need while enrolled at a UT institution. Sixty percent of undergraduates who received need-based financial aid double their parents’ income within five years of earning a UT degree.

More than three-fourths of undergraduate students secure jobs in Texas within a year after graduation, providing a skilled workforce and fueling the state’s economy. In fact, UT students who entered the Texas workforce between 2002 and 2017 had cumulative earnings through 2018 of \$268 billion. And, according to Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce, a UT degree’s return on investment is among the best in the nation.

The UT System also is one of the largest employers in the state with 21,000 faculty – including Nobel laureates and members of National Academies – and more than 85,000 health care professionals, researchers and staff.

Creating a healthier Texas is a fundamental mission of UT institutions, which award more than 15,000 health-related degrees annually. The UT System is poised to open its seventh medical school in Tyler within the next several years. UT-owned and affiliated hospitals and clinics – supported by thousands of doctors, physician assistants, nurses and other health care providers – accounted for more than 9.2 million outpatient visits and over 1.8 million hospital days in 2019.

In addition to world-class patient care, UT researchers are on the front lines of advancing treatments and therapies for deadly and debilitating diseases. Life-changing and life-saving research and invention of new technologies regularly place UT institutions among the top 10 world’s most innovative universities, according to Reuters and the National Academy of Inventors. Total research spending across the 13 UT institutions exceeds \$3 billion annually, the most in Texas, and the second most nationally among public higher education systems.

1.2 Background and Special Circumstances

The University of Texas System (**University**) is seeking to establish a Master Service Agreement (**MSA**) with multiple qualified communications, public relations, and/or media relations consultants to provide services to University and the thirteen (13) UT institutions on an as-needed basis. Consultant services may include, but are not limited to, assessments, recommendations, strategic planning, implementation, professional development, media buys, writing, design and other creative development, as well as analytics and tracking services to support communications, public relations, and media relations efforts.

1.3 Objective of Request for Proposals

University is soliciting proposals from qualified vendors to perform work (**Services**) more specifically described in **Section 5.4** (Scope of Work) of this Request for Proposals (**RFP**).

1.4 Group Purchase Authority

Texas law authorizes institutions of higher education (defined by [§61.003, Education Code](#)) to use the group purchasing procurement method (ref. §§[51.9335](#), [73.115](#), and [74.008](#), *Education Code*). Additional Texas institutions of higher education may therefore elect to enter into a contract with the successful Proposer under this RFP. In particular, Proposer should note that University is part of The University of Texas System (**UT System**), which is comprised of thirteen institutions described at <http://www.utsystem.edu/institutions>. UT institutions routinely evaluate whether a contract resulting from a procurement conducted by one of the institutions might be suitable for use by another, and if so, this RFP could give rise to additional purchase volumes. As a result, in submitting its proposal, Proposer should consider proposing a pricing model and other commercial terms that take into account the higher volumes and other expanded opportunities that could result from the eventual inclusion of other institutions in the purchase contemplated by this RFP. Any purchases made by other institutions based on this RFP will be the sole responsibility of those institutions.

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SECTION 2

NOTICE TO PROPOSER

2.1 Submittal Deadline

University will accept proposals submitted in response to this RFP until 2:30 p.m. local time on Monday, February 28, 2022 (**Submittal Deadline**).

2.2 University Contact Person

Proposers will submit all questions or concerns regarding this RFP via the Bonfire portal.

University specifically instructs all interested parties to restrict all contact and questions regarding this RFP to written communications delivered (i) through the Bonfire portal, or (ii) if questions relate to Historically Underutilized Businesses, to HUB Coordinator (ref. **Section 2.5** of this RFP).

University must receive all questions or concerns no later than 5:00 p.m. local time on Wednesday, February 9, 2022. University will have a reasonable amount of time to respond to questions or concerns. It is University's intent to respond to all appropriate questions and concerns; however, University reserves the right to decline to respond to any question or concern.

2.3 Criteria for Selection

The successful Proposer, if any, selected by University through this RFP will be the Proposer that submits a proposal on or before the Submittal Deadline that is the most advantageous to University. **Contractor** means the successful Proposer under this RFP.

Proposer is encouraged to propose terms and conditions offering the maximum benefit to University in terms of (1) service, (2) total overall cost, and (3) project management expertise.

Proposers may indicate they wish to be considered for one, multiple, or all services described in **Section 5.4**. University anticipates selecting multiple Contractors for each category of service.

The evaluation of proposals and the selection of Contractor will be based on the information provided in the proposal. University may consider additional information if University determines the information is relevant.

Criteria to be considered by University in evaluating proposals and selecting Contractor, will be these factors:

2.3.1 Threshold Criteria Not Scored

- A. Ability of University to comply with laws regarding Historically Underutilized Businesses; and
- B. Ability of University to comply with laws regarding purchases from persons with disabilities.

2.3.2 Scored Criteria

Each category of service will be scored against the following criteria:

- A. Proposer Experience (40%);
- B. Project Approach (30%); and
- C. Cost (30%).

2.4 Key Events Schedule

Issuance of RFP	January 28, 2022
Pre-Proposal Conference (ref. Section 2.6 of this RFP)	February 7, 2022
Deadline for Questions / Concerns (ref. Section 2.2 of this RFP)	February 9, 2022
Submittal Deadline (ref. Section 2.1 of this RFP)	2:30 p.m. local time on Monday, February 28, 2022

2.5 Historically Underutilized Businesses

- 2.5.1 All agencies of the State of Texas are required to make a good faith effort to assist historically underutilized businesses (each a **HUB**) in receiving contract awards. The goal of the HUB program is to promote full and equal business opportunity for all businesses in contracting with state agencies. Pursuant to the HUB program, if under the terms of any agreement or contractual arrangement resulting from this RFP, Contractor subcontracts any of the Services, then Contractor must make a good faith effort to utilize HUBs certified by the Procurement and Support Services Division of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. Proposals that fail to comply with the requirements contained in this **Section 2.5** will constitute a material failure to comply with advertised specifications and will be rejected by University as non-responsive. Additionally, compliance with good faith effort guidelines is a condition precedent to awarding any agreement or contractual arrangement resulting from this RFP. Proposer acknowledges that, if selected by University, its obligation to make a good faith effort to utilize HUBs when subcontracting any of the Services will continue throughout the term of all agreements and contractual arrangements resulting from this RFP. Furthermore, any subcontracting of the Services by Proposer is subject to review by University to ensure compliance with the HUB program.
- 2.5.2 University has reviewed this RFP in accordance with [Title 34, Texas Administrative Code, Section 20.285](#), and has determined that subcontracting opportunities (HUB and/or Non-HUB) are probable under this RFP. The HUB participation goal for this RFP is **26%**.
- 2.5.3 A HUB Subcontracting Plan (**HSP**) is required as part of, *but submitted separately from*, Proposer's proposal. The HSP will be developed and administered in accordance with University's Policy on Utilization of Historically Underutilized Businesses and incorporated for all purposes.

*Each Proposer, **whether HUB certified or not, and whether self-performing or planning to subcontract**, must complete and return the HSP in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP. Proposers that fail to do so will be considered non-responsive to this RFP in accordance with [§2161.252, Government Code](#).*

Questions regarding the HSP may be directed to:

Contact: Kyle Hayes
HUB Coordinator
Phone: 512-322-3745
Email: khayes@utsystem.edu

Proposer will not be permitted to change its HSP after the deadline submittal date unless: (1) Contractor completes a new HSP, setting forth all modifications requested by Contractor, (2) Contractor provides the modified HSP to University, (3) University HUB Program Office approves the modified HSP in writing, and (4) all agreements resulting from this RFP are amended in writing to conform to the modified HSP.

Instructions on Completing an HSP

Proposer must visit <https://www.utsystem.edu/offices/historically-underutilized-business/hub-forms/hub-plan-templates-commodities-services-procurement> to download the most appropriate HUB Subcontracting Plan (HSP) / Exhibit H form for use with this RFP. Proposer will find, on the HUB Forms webpage, a link to “[Guide to Selecting the Appropriate HSP Option](#)”. **Click on this link and read the Guide first before selecting an HSP Option.** Proposer shall select from the four (4) Options available, the Option that is most applicable to Proposer’s subcontracting intentions. These forms are in **fillable** PDF format and must be downloaded and opened with *Adobe Acrobat / Reader* to utilize the fillable function. **Each Option is accompanied by an HSP Completion Guide.** If Proposer has any questions regarding which Option to use, Proposer shall contact the HUB Coordinator listed in Section 2.5.3.

Proposer must complete the HSP, then print, sign and scan *all pages* of the HSP Option selected, with additional support documentation*, **and submit via Bonfire portal.** NOTE: during this time, electronic signatures are acceptable.

Any proposal submitted in response to this RFP that does not have a corresponding HSP meeting the above requirements may be rejected by University and returned to Proposer as non-responsive due to material failure to comply with advertised specifications.

Each Proposer’s HSP will be evaluated for completeness and compliance prior to opening the proposal to confirm Proposer compliance with HSP rules and standards. Proposer’s failure to submit one (1) completed and signed HUB Subcontracting Plan **to the Bonfire portal** may result in University’s rejection of the proposal as non-responsive due to material failure to comply with advertised specifications.

***If Proposer’s submitted HSP refers to specific page(s) / Sections(s) of Proposer’s proposal that explain how Proposer will perform entire contract with its own equipment, supplies, materials and/or employees, Proposer must submit copies of those pages with the HSP sent to the Bonfire Portal. In addition, all solicitation emails to potential subcontractors must be included as backup documentation to the Proposer’s HSP to demonstrate Good Faith Effort.** Failure to do so will slow the evaluation process and may result in DISQUALIFICATION.

- 2.5.4 University may offer Proposer an opportunity to seek informal review of its draft HSP by University’s HUB Office before the Submittal Deadline. If University extends this offer, **details will be provided at the Pre-Proposal Conference** (ref. **Section 2.6** of this RFP) or by other means. Informal review is designed to help address questions Proposer may have about how to complete its HSP properly. Concurrence or comment on Proposer’s draft HSP by University will *not* constitute formal approval of the HSP and will *not* eliminate the need for Proposer to submit its final HSP to University as instructed by **Section 2.5**.

2.6 Pre-Proposal Conference

University will hold a virtual pre-proposal conference at **11:30 a.m. local time on Monday, February 7, 2022**. The pre-proposal conference will allow all Proposers an opportunity to ask University's representatives relevant questions and clarify provisions of this RFP.

Potential respondents must RSVP in Bonfire to receive the pre-proposal conference details via a Q&A message within the Bonfire portal.

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SECTION 3

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL

3.1 Submission

Proposals must be received by University on or before the Submittal Deadline (ref. **Section 2.1**) via the University Bonfire portal.

3.2 Proposal Validity Period

Each proposal must state that it will remain valid for University's acceptance for a minimum of one hundred and twenty (120) days after the Submittal Deadline, to allow time for evaluation, selection, and any unforeseen delays.

3.3 Terms and Conditions

3.3.1 Proposer must comply with the requirements and specifications contained in this RFP, including the Agreement (ref. **APPENDIX TWO**), the Notice to Proposer (ref. **Section 2** of this RFP), Proposal Requirements (ref. **APPENDIX ONE**) and the Specifications and Additional Questions (ref. **Section 5** of this RFP). If there is a conflict among the provisions in this RFP, the provision requiring Proposer to supply the better quality or greater quantity of services will prevail, or if such conflict does not involve quality or quantity, then interpretation will be in the following order of precedence:

3.3.1.1. Specifications and Additional Questions (ref. **Section 5** of this RFP);

3.3.1.2. Agreement (ref. **Section 4** and **APPENDIX TWO**);

3.3.1.3. Proposal Requirements (ref. **APPENDIX ONE**);

3.3.1.4. Notice to Proposers (ref. **Section 2** of this RFP).

3.4 Submittal Checklist

Proposer is instructed to complete, sign, and return the following documents as a part of its proposal. If Proposer fails to return each of the following items with its proposal, then University may reject the proposal:

3.4.1 Signed and Completed Execution of Offer (ref. **Section 2** of **APPENDIX ONE**)

3.4.2 Signed and Completed Pricing and Delivery Schedule (ref. **Section 6**)

3.4.3 Responses to Proposer's General Questionnaire (ref. **Section 3** of **APPENDIX ONE**)

3.4.4 Signed and Completed Addenda Checklist (ref. **Section 4** of **APPENDIX ONE**)

3.4.5 Responses to questions and requests for information in the Specifications and Additional Questions Section (ref. **Section 5.5**) for each category Proposer is offering.

3.4.6 Signed and completed originals of the HUB Subcontracting Plan or other applicable documents (ref. **Section 2.5**, **APPENDIX TWO**, and **APPENDIX THREE**).

SECTION 4

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The terms and conditions contained in the attached Agreement (ref. **APPENDIX TWO**) or, in the sole discretion of University, terms and conditions substantially similar to those contained in the Agreement, will constitute and govern any contract or agreement that results from this RFP.

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SECTION 5

SPECIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

5.1 General

Minimum requirements and specifications for the Services, as well as certain requests for information to be provided by Proposer as part of its proposal, are set forth below. As indicated in **Section 2.3** of this RFP, **Contractor** means the successful Proposer.

Contract Term: University intends to enter into an agreement with the Contractor to perform the Services for an initial three (3) year base term, with the option to renew for two (2) additional one (1) year renewal periods, upon mutual written agreement of both parties.

Approval by the Board of Regents: No Agreement resulting from this RFP will be effective for amounts exceeding one million dollars (\$1,000,000) until approved by the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System.

Multiple Awards: University reserves the right to make multiple awards against this RFP.

Selection of Service: Proposer must select the Service category/categories it is submitting a proposal for. Proposer must provide a response for each category selected. Failure to provide a response for a selected category will disqualify Proposer for award of that specific category.

5.2 Intentionally Omitted

5.3 Additional Submittals Specific to this RFP

Proposer must submit the following information as part of Proposer's proposal:

5.3.1 Intentionally Omitted

5.3.2 By signing the Execution of Offer (ref. **Section 2** of **APPENDIX ONE**), Proposer agrees to comply with Certificate of Interested Parties laws (ref. [§2252.908, Government Code](#)) and [1 TAC §§46.1 through 46.5](#)) as implemented by the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC), including, among other things, providing TEC and University with information required on the form promulgated by TEC and set forth in **APPENDIX FOUR**. *Proposer may learn more about these disclosure requirements, including applicable exceptions and use of the TEC electronic filing system, by reviewing [§2252.908, Government Code](#), and information on the TEC website at https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/resources/FAQs/FAQ_Form1295.php. **The Certificate of Interested Parties must only be submitted by Contractor upon delivery to University of a signed Agreement.***

5.3.3 Intentionally Omitted

5.3.4 In its proposal, Proposer must indicate whether it will consent to include in the Agreement the "Access by Individuals with Disabilities" language that is set forth in **APPENDIX THREE, Access by Individuals with Disabilities**. If Proposer objects to the inclusion of the "Access by Individuals with Disabilities" language in the Agreement, Proposer must, as part of its proposal, specifically identify and describe in detail all of the reasons for Proposer's objection. NOTE THAT A GENERAL OBJECTION IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE RESPONSE TO THIS QUESTION. NOTE THAT PROPOSER MAY BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT COMPLETED VPAT (VOLUNTARY PRODUCT ACCESSIBILITY TEMPLATE) UPON AWARD. VPAT document to complete is located at the following website: <https://www.itic.org/dotAsset/47d8492f-a78a-46b8-b41a-fd656d773c5a.doc>.

5.4 Scope of Work

This scope of work is intended to outline the general services required to perform Services in each category. Contractor will provide the following Services at the request of University or a UT institution (the **Requesting Institution**) on an as-needed basis for each category of Service awarded as part of an MSA:

5.4.1 Communications/Public Relations

A. Category: Communications Planning and Assessments

Contractor will:

1. Provide assessments, benchmarking, goalsetting, recommendations, and reports as part of developing communications strategic and/or action plans.
2. Evaluate and make recommendations concerning existing and desired communications performance, budgets, staffing levels, policies, and practices.
3. Compile, write, edit, format and/or draft strategic, events, or project communications plans that can be presented to leadership and stakeholders for approval to include:
 - a. A minimum of two (2) revised versions as needed; and
 - b. Digital (editable and pdf) versions of final plan or report for printing/distribution by Requesting Institution.
4. Provide detailed and comprehensive assessments and recommendations, with cited benchmarking and research, actionable recommendations and evaluation criteria provided.

B. Category: Crisis Communications

Contractor will:

1. Develop and implement proactive, comprehensive crisis communication plans that clearly identify roles and responsibilities, provide step-by-step guidelines, and address multiple types of crises and audiences, including non-English speakers.
2. Provide crisis communications training, including spokesperson training and tabletop situational exercises, to leaders and communicators identified by the Requesting Institution. Training should be videotaped for reference and feedback.
3. Provide communications leadership, support, and guidance during an ongoing emergency or crisis.
4. Provide ongoing monitoring of key issues.
5. Conduct reputational vetting of key companies and individuals identified by Requesting Institution with input from Contractor, as requested, to proactively identify and address issues.

C. Category: Issues Management

Contractor will:

1. Develop and implement comprehensive and proactive issues management plans that clearly identify roles and responsibilities and provide step-by-step guidelines.
2. Develop messaging and provide communications leadership, support, and guidance to handle ongoing or anticipated communications issues.
3. Provide spokesperson training and lead tabletop situational exercises with executives. Training should be videotaped for reference and feedback.
4. Provide ongoing monitoring of key issues.
5. Conduct reputational vetting of key companies and individuals identified by Requesting Institution with input from Contractor, as requested, to proactively identify and address issues.

D. Category: Writing Services

Contractor will:

1. Develop social media content, news/feature articles, opinions, speeches, messaging, newsletter content and other written communications for external and/or internal audiences at the direction of Requesting Institution.
2. Provide content in Microsoft Word to allow for review/edits by Requesting Institution leaders.
3. Provide up to three (3) rounds of revisions as requested by Requesting Institution.
4. Provide bilingual and culturally competent written content for non-English speaking audiences as specified by Requesting Institution.

E. Category: Enhance Reputation as Thought/Industry Leader

Contractor will:

1. Identify and develop key messaging for Requesting Institution's top leaders to build reputation as a thought and/or industry leader.
2. Identify key publications, events, conferences, organizations, and groups that leadership should be involved in and facilitate connections, invitations, or membership.
3. Recommend and, with Requesting Institution's approval, secure speaking engagements for leadership.
4. Recommend topics and publications for articles, columns, social media messaging, and op-eds that help establish leaders as thought/industry leaders.
5. Develop and pitch articles, op-eds, columns, etc. with Requesting Institution's input and approval.
6. Develop and implement sponsorship plans that offer leadership opportunities for speaking and/or engagement and/or enhance awareness and regard for Requesting Institution.
7. Monitor trends and make recommendations for topics to focus on in the future.

F. Category: Social Media

Contractor will:

1. Assess and benchmark Requesting Institution's current social media efforts and make detailed recommendations to achieve Requesting Institution's goals, enhance its online presence, and support its public relations/communications efforts.
2. Develop and/or implement comprehensive strategic plans to increase social media traffic/engagement.
3. Manage Requesting Institution's social media channels, including monitoring and assessing traffic and developing/executing messaging to proactively support communications, issues management, and/or crisis communications plans with input from Requesting Institution.
4. Develop, launch, and optimize paid search campaigns on Google, Bing, or other search engines that support key social media/communications goals.
5. Develop messaging and/or graphics appropriate for use on each of the Requesting Institution's social media sites.
6. Create and track metrics for engagement and traffic, including developing and deploying reporting tools such as with Google Ads and Analytics platforms to show the effectiveness of organic search, organic social media, paid search, and paid social media campaigns.

G. Category: Collateral Design/Development (Print and Digital)

Contractor will:

1. Design graphics, charts, logos, invitations, web pages and other materials according to Requesting Institution's directions and goals.
2. Provide layout services for newsletters, reports, and other publications.
3. Provide a maximum of three (3) unique designs/layouts for consideration by Requesting Institution.
4. Provide a maximum of three (3) rounds of edits to selected version that incorporate Requesting Institution's feedback and edits.
5. Provide all design/layout projects in the format specified by Requesting Institution to enable easy reviewing, editing, printing, and distribution.
6. Develop culturally competent variations in messaging and written content, including bilingual messaging and/or content for any audience communicating in a language other than English, particularly Spanish and Vietnamese.

H. Category: Video/Photography Services

Contractor will:

1. Develop ideas and create storyboards for videos that meet Requesting Institution goals for messaging, content, style, and length, including a minimum of three (3) unique ideas for video style and story.
2. Write scripts for selected idea/story and provide up to three (3) revised versions that incorporate Requesting Institution's feedback and edits.
3. Provide videography/photography as directed by Requesting Institution.

4. Produce videos in format that can be posted on YouTube, Requesting Institution's website, and/or other media as directed. Requesting Institution will provide institution-specific images, but Contractor will provide all other images, B-roll or video used, along with voice-over, music, graphics, etc. needed to complete video, ensuring all necessary permissions have been secured.

I. Category: Serve as Institution's Media Buy Agent

Contractor will:

1. Purchase advertising and/or marketing services on behalf of Requesting Institution and with Requesting Institution's concurrence/approval.
2. Monitor performance of purchased media and provide regular updates/reports to Requesting Institution.
3. Make recommendations and adjust buys with Requesting Institution approval as appropriate.

J. Category: Website Design

1. Develop Site Architecture and Design

Contractor will:

- a. Develop the site architecture to support the information needs of Requesting Institution users and audiences and present content in a manner that engages and informs different types of users.
- b. Create or optimize a website that reflects and amplifies Requesting Institution's brand strategy.
- c. Develop content that is engaging, informative and promotes loyal readership and viewership.
- d. Develop a functional search option for the site.
- e. Create multiple homepage and second-level page designs based on the selected brand concept that can be shared with key stakeholders to select a final design for development.
- f. Create templates, components, and widgets for a minimum of ninety percent (90%) of the most common underlying or shared user-interface elements of the website, including web design templates for key pages identified by Requesting Institution; email templates; and landing- page templates.
- g. Provide templates for every level of site architecture and for key functionalities/goals and perform a minimum of two (2) rounds of revisions for each.
- h. Perform an audit of existing content to determine what is usable, what requires editing, and what should be removed from the website altogether; and a gap analysis based on the new website information architecture.
- i. Create a roadmap for public-facing content and restricted-access content (i.e., behind a login). Requesting Institution will be responsible for implementing the restricted-access content recommendation made by Contractor.
- j. Develop a content strategy and content development guidelines for use by Requesting Institution. Requesting Institution will be responsible for all content development and copywriting.

- k. Develop key-interaction-point prototypes for usability testing. There may be multiple points throughout the development process that Requesting Institution may need to test new or refined prototypes with users. Requesting Institution will be responsible for performing all usability testing and providing Contractor with results.
- l. Make Content Management System (**CMS**) recommendation in accordance with the website strategy and discovery phase outcomes.
- m. Assess internal and external hosting options to make an informed hosting solution recommendation.

2. Website Design Deliverables

Contractor will:

- a. Provide Requesting Institution with a site map/information architecture document.
- b. Provide Requesting Institution with an overall site design.
- c. Provide user flows for primary user tasks including, but not limited to, event sign-up, request for information/lead capture, and degree program application.
- d. Provide Requesting Institution with templates, components, and widgets for a minimum of ninety percent (90%) of the most common underlying or shared user-interface elements of the website, including web design templates for key pages identified by Requesting Institution; email templates; and landing-page templates.
- e. Provide a report that details content audit and gap analysis results.
- f. Provide a web style guide and design documentation that can be incorporated into Requesting Institution's overall style guide.
- g. Provide a content strategy outline that outlines the approach to development, publication, and governance of content for the website; identifies key content areas; recommends a roadmap for public-facing content and restricted-access content; provides a design patterns guide and a content style guide that addresses the use of imagery/photography, icons, infographics, etc. in an interactive format that can be moved to Requesting Institution servers; provides a CMS recommendation, including analysis and rationale for the recommendation; and offers a hosting solution recommendation, including analysis and rationale for the recommendation.

3. Website Development, Testing, Tracking and Deployment

Contractor will:

- a. Provide a fully programmed, tested, and deployed website in the selected CMS and on the selected hosting solution.
- b. Provide user stories in accordance with website design deliverables.
- c. Perform testing during each sprint cycle, including performance and load testing. Requesting Institution will be responsible for user acceptance testing (**UAT**).

- d. Develop the test plan; test scenarios and scripts; test execution results; automated test scripts for smoke and regression testing; defect resolution; and UAT test support.
- e. Provide and host development, staging, and deployment production environments.
- f. Provide system architecture documentation and review with Requesting Institution team.
- g. Conduct trainings for key institution staff and provide a training guide for daily CMS users.
- h. Deploy the website in the development, staging, and production environments and provide related documentation, including an operations and maintenance manual and a CMS training guide, that supports the transfer of knowledge to Requesting Institution support teams.
- i. Assess website performance and develop/implement strategies for improvement to include:
 - Review of analytics and user feedback to determine any potential issues;
 - Conducting A/B multivariate testing;
 - Reviewing testing data and optimizing site accordingly; and
 - Providing ongoing monitoring and assessments and adjusting as needed to maintain effectiveness.
- j. Correct bugs, glitches, or issues that may arise once the website is publicly launched, including ensuring website performance meets or exceeds an ideal page load time of less than five (5) seconds within the U.S. and no more than fifteen (15) seconds outside of the U.S.
- k. Provide system deployment documentation that details the application system code deployed and the sequence of steps required to install the system in different environments.
- l. Ensure the website meets Requesting Institution's defined requirements for browser technology, accessibility, security, and privacy.

K. Category: Assess, Develop and/or Provide Communications/Public Relations Training/Professional Development

Contractor will:

1. Evaluate communications and/or public relations professional development needs and provide detailed recommendations for education or training staff may need to meet institution's goals.
2. Provide education, thought leadership training or coaching for groups or individuals regarding writing, editing, graphic design, public speaking, interview preparation, presentation preparation and other applicable skills as requested.

5.4.2 Media Relations

L. Category: Strategic Planning and Assessments

Contractor will:

1. Provide assessments, benchmarking, goalsetting, recommendations, and reports as part of developing strategic media relations plans.
2. Evaluate and make recommendations concerning existing and desired media relations performance, budgets, staffing levels, policies and practices.
3. Compile, write, edit, and format a draft strategic media relations plan that can be presented to leadership and stakeholders for approval, including a minimum of two (2) revised versions following edits, as needed, and provide digital (editable and pdf) versions of final plan or report for printing/distribution by Requesting Institution.
4. Conduct assessments and make recommendations that are detailed and comprehensive, with cited benchmarking and research; actionable recommendations; and evaluation criteria provided.

M. Category: Media Strategy and Planning

1. Develop and/or Implement Proactive Media Plans, Strategies, and Messaging

Contractor will:

- a. Research past media coverage to assess Requesting Institution's reputation.
- b. Meet with key leaders and stakeholders to gain an understanding of institutional vision.
- c. Identify key targets, including state, national, and international news, entertainment, culture, and industry media (print and online).
- d. Organize in-person meetings with top media for Requesting Institution personnel in key national media markets when appropriate and possible.
- e. Propose innovative opportunities in key national media markets to engage media in understanding Requesting Institution's goals, programs and institutional vision, and to cultivate stronger relationships with colleagues, donors, and influencers.
- f. Identify opportunities and help develop materials for key Requesting Institution personnel to publish (articles, guest blogs, essays, op-eds, etc.) in relevant media.
- g. Provide advice on press previews (attendees, scheduling/timing, content, etc.) for key events and/or programs.
- h. Develop culturally competent variations in messaging and written content, including bilingual messaging, for media/audiences communicating in a language other than English, especially Spanish and Vietnamese, as requested by Requesting Institution.
- i. Create relevant materials, including news hooks, talking points, press releases, social media messaging, and other documents needed (digital format appropriate for future revisions and print/email/social media distribution).

- j. Monitor and assess press coverage and social media posts and develop any responses needed to proactively address potential issues.

2. Press Placements

Contractor will:

- a. Lace stories with national and international publications, popular culture press, and mainstream media as directed and coordinated by Requesting Institution.
- b. Field inquiries from press and help schedule calls/interviews as directed and coordinated by Requesting Institution.
- c. Advise on creating and/or selecting press imagery, including photo embargoes and photo exclusives. Contractor will
- d. Provide B-roll imagery as appropriate and as requested by Requesting Institution. Requesting Institution will be responsible for creating or providing institution-specific imagery.
- e. Secure story corrections as needed and as approved and coordinated by Requesting Institution.

3. Metrics and Management

Contractor will:

- a. Provide a dedicated team to work with Requesting Institution. Team members may not be removed or replaced without prior knowledge and approval by Requesting Institution.
- b. Be available to provide short notice counsel for Requesting Institution personnel via email or phone.
- c. Provide weekly reporting for ongoing projects via email.
- d. Provide weekly earned media reports.

N. Category: Assess, Develop and/or Provide Media Relations Training/Professional Development

Contractor will:

1. Evaluate media relations professional development needs and provide detailed recommendations for education or training staff may need to meet Requesting Institution goals.
2. Provide education, thought leadership training, or coaching for groups or individuals regarding media relations, public speaking, interview preparation, presentation preparation, and other applicable skills as requested by Requesting Institution.
3. Conduct spokesperson training sessions, including videotaping mock interviews, and provide feedback and coaching.

5.5 Additional Questions Specific to this RFP

Proposer must submit responses to the questions below for each Service category for which they wish to be considered.

Proposer Experience (40%)

1. Provide references from three (3) of Proposer's clients from the past five (5) years for services that are similar in scope, size, and complexity to the Services described in the specific category of Service being proposed.

Provide the following information for each client:

- Customer name and address;
 - Contact name with email address and phone number;
 - Time period in which work was performed;
 - Short description of work performed.
2. Has Proposer worked with University or any UT institution(s) in the past five (5) years? If "yes," state institution name, department name, department contact, and provide a brief description of work performed.
 3. Provide a general overview of Proposer's firm, including a brief history, the year it was founded, location, and any relevant accolades or awards.
 4. Describe Proposer's experience over the past three (3) years with projects similar in scope, size, and complexity to Services being proposed.
 5. Provide a minimum of four (4) project samples completed for a university, healthcare institution, or comparable government or nonprofit organization that required a similar level of service and expertise as described for the category of Service being proposed. Include the identified project goals and results achieved.
 6. Provide resume summaries for key personnel that will be directly involved in the provision of Services under the Agreement, including:
 - Current position and/or title;
 - Educational credentials;
 - Applicable certifications;
 - Relevant work experience/technical expertise;
 - Brief description of experience providing similar Services; and
 - Any other relevant information that demonstrates qualifications.

Project Approach (30%)

7. Describe Proposer's overall project approach to providing the Services described for the category proposed.
8. Describe Proposer's methodology for gathering client/stakeholder input, action steps, implementation strategies, evaluation criteria and results. Provide a minimum of two (2) examples of how this approach was successfully developed and implemented for relevant projects and how results were measured.
9. Describe Proposer's methodology for gathering and leveraging information gained through market research, audits, and analysis when developing the creative approach of the proposed scope of work.
10. Describe Proposer's project management philosophy. What is Proposer's strategy for maintaining a project schedule and budget?
11. Provide an example of an unexpected problem encountered by Proposer on a previous project for the proposed Service category and Proposer's solution for overcoming the challenge.

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SECTION 6

PRICING AND DELIVERY SCHEDULE

Proposal of: _____
(Proposer Company Name)

To: The University of Texas System

RFP No.: 720-2206 – Communications, Public Relations and Media Relations Services

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Having carefully examined all the specifications and requirements of this RFP and any attachments thereto, the undersigned proposes to furnish the required pursuant to the above-referenced RFP upon the terms quoted (firm fixed price) below. University will not accept proposals which include assumptions or exceptions to the work identified in this RFP.

6.1 Pricing for Services Offered (30%)

It is the intent of University to award contracts that include a “Fee Schedule”; however, a Requesting Institution seeking Communications and Media Relations Services under the Agreement will negotiate and execute a separate contract “Project Addendum” for each Service with Contractor.

Proposer, by submission of its response to this RFP, acknowledges that the pricing terms established in the Agreement’s Fee Schedule will be used as a minimum discount guide, and that each Requesting Institution may negotiate with the Contractor for alternative pricing terms, including lower professional fees, lower administrative fees, better rate discounts, and alternative payment schedules and related requirements, at the time of negotiation of the scope of services and total costs for each recruitment Project Addendum.

6.1.1 Describe Proposer’s methodology for calculating the estimated number of billable hours required per project.

6.1.2 Indicate minimum discount percentage applied to Fee Schedule (ref. **Section 6.2**):

Minimum Discount Percentage: _____%

University will reimburse, without mark-up, reasonable expenses (including meals, rental car or mileage, coach class airfare, and lodging) validly incurred by Contractor directly and solely in support of Services and *approved by University in advance*. Contractor will be subject to the then-current Travel Reimbursement Rates promulgated by the Comptroller of Public Accounts for the State of Texas at <https://fm.x.cpa.state.tx.us/fm/travel/travelrates.php> with regard to all travel expenses. Contractor will not be reimbursed by University for expenses that are prohibited or that exceed the allowable amounts provided in the then current Travel Reimbursement Rates. As a condition precedent to receiving reimbursement for expenses, Contractor must submit to University receipts, invoices, and other documentation requested by University.

Reimbursement for expenses and disbursements will not exceed a maximum expense cap (*to be mutually agreed by Contractor and Respondent and provided in the Agreement*), without the prior written approval of University.

6.2 Fee Schedule

Proposer must provide a Fee Schedule for all Services proposed (ref. **Section 5.4**). Fees will remain firm throughout the initial base term of the Agreement. Contractor may request a fee increase not to exceed 3% at time of renewal. University reserves the right to negotiate or reject any such fee increase requests.

6.3 Discounts

Describe all discounts that may be available to University, including, educational, federal, state and local discounts.

6.4 Delivery Schedule of Events and Time Periods

Indicate number of calendar days needed to commence the Services from the execution of the services agreement:

_____ Calendar Days

6.5 Payment Terms

University’s standard payment terms are “net 30 days” as mandated by the *Texas Prompt Payment Act* (ref. [Chapter 2251, Government Code](#)).

University will be entitled to withhold _____ percent (____%) of the total payment due under the Agreement until after University’s acceptance of the final work product.

Indicate below the prompt payment discount that Proposer offers:

Prompt Payment Discount: _____% _____ days / net 30 days.

[Section 51.012, Education Code](#), authorizes University to make payments through electronic funds transfer methods. Proposer agrees to accept payments from University through those methods, including the automated clearing house system (**ACH**). Proposer agrees to provide Proposer’s banking information to University in writing on Proposer letterhead signed by an authorized representative of Proposer. Prior to the first payment, University will confirm Proposer’s banking information. Changes to Proposer’s bank information must be communicated to University in writing at least thirty (30) days before the effective date of the change and must include an [IRS Form W-9](#) signed by an authorized representative of Proposer.

University, an agency of the State of Texas, is exempt from Texas Sales & Use Tax on goods and services in accordance with [§151.309, Tax Code](#), and [Title 34 TAC §3.322](#). Pursuant to [34 TAC §3.322\(c\)\(4\)](#), University is not required to provide a tax exemption certificate to establish its tax exempt status.

Respectfully submitted,

Proposer: _____

By: _____
(Authorized Signature for Proposer)

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

**APPENDIX ONE
PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

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SECTION 1

GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Purpose

University is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from Proposers having suitable qualifications and experience providing services in accordance with the terms, conditions and requirements set forth in this RFP. This RFP provides sufficient information for interested parties to prepare and submit proposals for consideration by University.

By submitting a proposal, Proposer certifies that it understands this RFP and has full knowledge of the scope, nature, quality, and quantity of the services to be performed, the detailed requirements of the services to be provided, and the conditions under which such services are to be performed. Proposer also certifies that it understands that all costs relating to preparing a response to this RFP will be the sole responsibility of the Proposer.

PROPOSER IS CAUTIONED TO READ THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS RFP CAREFULLY AND TO SUBMIT A COMPLETE RESPONSE TO ALL REQUIREMENTS AND QUESTIONS AS DIRECTED.

1.2 Inquiries and Interpretations

University may in its sole discretion respond in writing to written inquiries concerning this RFP and publish its response as an Addendum to all parties recorded by University as having received a copy of this RFP. Only University's responses that are made by formal written Addenda will be binding on University. Any verbal responses, written interpretations, or clarifications other than Addenda to this RFP will be without legal effect. All Addenda issued by University prior to the Submittal Deadline will be and are hereby incorporated as a part of this RFP for all purposes.

Proposers are required to acknowledge receipt of each Addendum as specified in this Section. The Proposer must acknowledge all Addenda by completing, signing, and returning the Addenda Checklist (ref. **Section 4** of **APPENDIX ONE**). The Addenda Checklist must be received by University prior to the Submittal Deadline and should accompany the Proposer's proposal.

1.3 Public Information

Proposer is hereby notified that University strictly adheres to all statutes, court decisions and the opinions of the Texas Attorney General with respect to disclosure of public information.

University may seek to protect from disclosure all information submitted in response to this RFP until such time as a final agreement is executed.

Upon execution of a final agreement, University will consider all information, documentation, and other materials requested to be submitted in response to this RFP, to be of a non-confidential and non-proprietary nature and, therefore, subject to public disclosure under the *Texas Public Information Act* (ref. Chapter 552, Government Code). Proposer will be advised of a request for public information that implicates their materials and will have the opportunity to raise any objections to disclosure to the Texas Attorney General. Certain information may be protected from release under §§552.101, 552.104, 552.110, 552.113, and 552.131, *Government Code*.

1.4 Type of Agreement

Contractor, if any, will be required to enter into a contract with University in a form substantially similar to the Agreement between University and Contractor (the **Agreement**) attached to this RFP as **APPENDIX TWO**, incorporated for all purposes and otherwise acceptable to University in all respects.

1.5 Proposal Evaluation Process

University will select Contractor by using the competitive sealed proposal process described in this Section. Any proposals that are not submitted by the Submittal Deadline or that are not accompanied by required completed and signed HSP will be rejected by University as non-responsive due to material failure to comply with this RFP (ref. **Section 2.5.4** of this RFP). Upon completion of the initial review and evaluation of proposals, University may invite one or more selected Proposers to participate in oral presentations. University will use commercially reasonable efforts to avoid public disclosure of the contents of a proposal prior to selection of Contractor.

University may make the selection of Contractor on the basis of the proposals initially submitted, without discussion, clarification or modification. In the alternative, University may make the selection of Contractor on the basis of negotiation with any of the Proposers. In conducting negotiations, University will use commercially reasonable efforts to avoid disclosing the contents of competing proposals.

University may discuss and negotiate all elements of proposals submitted by Proposers within a specified competitive range. For purposes of negotiation, University may establish, after an initial review of the proposals, a competitive range of acceptable or potentially acceptable proposals composed of the highest rated proposal(s). In that event, University may defer further action on proposals not included within the competitive range pending the selection of Contractor; provided, however, University reserves the right to include additional proposals in the competitive range if deemed to be in the best interest of University.

After the Submittal Deadline but before final selection of Contractor, University may permit Proposer to revise its proposal in order to obtain the Proposer's best and final offer. In that event, representations made by Proposer in its revised proposal, including price and fee quotes, will be binding on Proposer. University will provide each Proposer within the competitive range with an equal opportunity for discussion and revision of its proposal. University is not obligated to select the Proposer offering the most attractive economic terms if that Proposer is not the most advantageous to University overall, as determined by University.

University reserves the right to (a) enter into an agreement for all or any portion of the requirements and specifications set forth in this RFP with one or more Proposers, (b) reject any and all proposals and re-solicit proposals, or (c) reject any and all proposals and temporarily or permanently abandon this selection process, if deemed to be in the best interests of University. Proposer is hereby notified that University will maintain in its files concerning this RFP a written or electronic record of the basis upon which a selection, if any, is made by University.

1.6 Proposer's Acceptance of RFP Terms

Proposer (1) accepts [a] Proposal Evaluation Process (ref. **Section 1.5 of APPENDIX ONE**), [b] Criteria for Selection (ref. **2.3** of this RFP), [c] Specifications and Additional Questions (ref. **Section 5** of this RFP), [d] terms and conditions of the Agreement (ref. **APPENDIX TWO**), and [e] all other requirements and specifications set forth in this RFP; and (2) acknowledges that some subjective judgments must be made by University during this RFP process.

1.7 Solicitation for Proposal and Proposal Preparation Costs

Proposer understands and agrees that (1) this RFP is a solicitation for proposals and University has made no representation written or oral that one or more agreements with University will be awarded under this RFP; (2) University issues this RFP predicated on University's anticipated requirements for the Services, and University has made no representation, written or oral, that any particular scope of services will actually be required by University; and (3) Proposer will bear, as its sole risk and responsibility, any cost that arises from Proposer's preparation of a proposal in response to this RFP.

1.8 Proposal Requirements and General Instructions

- 1.8.1 Proposer should carefully read the information contained herein and submit a complete proposal in response to all requirements and questions as directed.
- 1.8.2 Proposals and any other information submitted by Proposer in response to this RFP will become the property of University.
- 1.8.3 University will not provide compensation to Proposer for any expenses incurred by the Proposer for proposal preparation or for demonstrations or oral presentations that may be made by Proposer. Proposer submits its proposal at its own risk and expense.
- 1.8.4 Proposals that (i) are qualified with conditional clauses; (ii) alter, modify, or revise this RFP in any way; or (iii) contain irregularities of any kind, are subject to disqualification by University, at University's sole discretion.
- 1.8.5 Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of Proposer's ability to meet the requirements and specifications of this RFP. Emphasis should be on completeness, clarity of content, and responsiveness to the requirements and specifications of this RFP.
- 1.8.6 University makes no warranty or guarantee that an award will be made as a result of this RFP. University reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, waive any formalities, procedural requirements, or minor technical inconsistencies, and delete any requirement or specification from this RFP or the Agreement when deemed to be in University's best interest. University reserves the right to seek clarification from any Proposer concerning any item contained in its proposal prior to final selection. Such clarification may be provided by telephone conference or personal meeting with or writing to University, at University's sole discretion. Representations made by Proposer within its proposal will be binding on Proposer.
- 1.8.7 Any proposal that fails to comply with the requirements contained in this RFP may be rejected by University, in University's sole discretion.

1.9 Preparation and Submittal Instructions

1.9.1 Specifications and Additional Questions

Proposals must include responses to the questions in Specifications and Additional Questions (ref. **Section 5** of this RFP). In cases where a question does not apply or if unable to respond, Proposer should indicate N/A (Not Applicable) or N/R (No Response), as appropriate. Proposer should explain the reason when responding N/A or N/R.

1.9.2 Execution of Offer

Proposer must complete, sign and return the attached Execution of Offer (ref. **Section 2 of APPENDIX ONE**) as part of its proposal. The Execution of Offer must be signed by a representative of Proposer duly authorized to bind the Proposer to its proposal. Any proposal received without a completed and signed Execution of Offer may be rejected by University, in its sole discretion.

1.9.3 Pricing and Delivery Schedule

Proposer must complete and return the Pricing and Delivery Schedule (ref. **Section 6** of this RFP), as part of its proposal.

1.9.4 Proposer's General Questionnaire

Proposals must include responses to the questions in Proposer's General Questionnaire (ref. **Section 3 of APPENDIX ONE**). Proposer should reference the item number and repeat the question in its response. In cases where a question does not apply or if unable to respond, Proposer should refer to the item number, repeat the question, and indicate N/A (Not Applicable) or N/R (No Response), as appropriate. Proposer should explain the reason when responding N/A or N/R.

1.9.5 Addenda Checklist

Proposer should acknowledge all Addenda to this RFP (if any) by completing, signing, and returning the Addenda Checklist (ref. **Section 4** of **APPENDIX ONE**) as part of its proposal. Any proposal received without a completed and signed Addenda Checklist may be rejected by University, in its sole discretion.

1.9.6 Submission

*Proposer should submit all proposal materials as instructed in **Section 3** of this RFP.*

University will not under any circumstances consider a proposal that is received after the Submittal Deadline or which is not accompanied by the HSP as required by **Section 2.5** of this RFP. University will not accept proposals submitted by mail, email, telephone, or FAX transmission.

Except as otherwise provided in this RFP, no proposal may be changed, amended, or modified after it has been submitted to University. However, a proposal may be withdrawn and resubmitted at any time prior to the Submittal Deadline. No proposal may be withdrawn after the Submittal Deadline without University's consent, which will be based on Proposer's written request explaining and documenting the reason for withdrawal, which is acceptable to University.

SECTION 2

EXECUTION OF OFFER

THIS EXECUTION OF OFFER MUST BE COMPLETED, SIGNED AND RETURNED WITH PROPOSER'S PROPOSAL. FAILURE TO COMPLETE, SIGN AND RETURN THIS EXECUTION OF OFFER WITH THE PROPOSER'S PROPOSAL MAY RESULT IN THE REJECTION OF THE PROPOSAL.

- 2.1 Representations and Warranties.** Proposer represents, warrants, certifies, acknowledges, and agrees as follows:
- 2.1.1 Proposer will furnish the Services to University and comply with all terms, conditions, requirements, and specifications set forth in this RFP and any resulting Agreement.
 - 2.1.2 This RFP is a solicitation for a proposal and is not a contract or an offer to contract. Submission of a proposal by Proposer in response to this RFP will not create a contract between University and Proposer. University has made no representation or warranty, written or oral, that one or more contracts with University will be awarded under this RFP. Proposer will bear, as its sole risk and responsibility, any cost arising from Proposer's preparation of a response to this RFP.
 - 2.1.3 Proposer is a reputable company that is lawfully and regularly engaged in providing the Services.
 - 2.1.4 Proposer has the necessary experience, knowledge, abilities, skills, and resources to perform the Services.
 - 2.1.5 Proposer is aware of, is fully informed about, and is in full compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations and ordinances relating to performance of the Services.
 - 2.1.6 Proposer understands (i) the requirements and specifications set forth in this RFP and (ii) the terms and conditions set forth in the Agreement under which Proposer will be required to operate.
 - 2.1.7 Proposer will not delegate any of its duties or responsibilities under this RFP or the Agreement to any sub-contractor, except as expressly provided in the Agreement.
 - 2.1.8 Proposer will maintain any insurance coverage required by the Agreement during the entire term.
 - 2.1.9 All statements, information and representations prepared and submitted in response to this RFP are current, complete, true and accurate. University will rely on such statements, information and representations in selecting Contractor. If selected by University, Proposer will notify University immediately of any material change in any matters with regard to which Proposer has made a statement or representation or provided information.
 - 2.1.10 PROPOSER WILL DEFEND WITH COUNSEL APPROVED BY UNIVERSITY, INDEMNIFY, AND HOLD HARMLESS UNIVERSITY, UT SYSTEM, THE STATE OF TEXAS, AND ALL OF THEIR REGENTS, OFFICERS, AGENTS AND EMPLOYEES, FROM AND AGAINST ALL ACTIONS, SUITS, DEMANDS, COSTS, DAMAGES, LIABILITIES AND OTHER CLAIMS OF ANY NATURE, KIND OR DESCRIPTION, INCLUDING REASONABLE ATTORNEYS' FEES INCURRED IN INVESTIGATING, DEFENDING OR SETTLING ANY OF THE FOREGOING, ARISING OUT OF, CONNECTED WITH, OR RESULTING FROM ANY NEGLIGENT ACTS OR OMISSIONS OR WILLFUL MISCONDUCT OF PROPOSER OR ANY AGENT, EMPLOYEE, SUBCONTRACTOR, OR SUPPLIER OF PROPOSER IN THE EXECUTION OR PERFORMANCE OF ANY CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT RESULTING FROM THIS RFP.
 - 2.1.11 Pursuant to §§[2107.008](#) and [2252.903](#), *Government Code*, any payments owing to Proposer under the Agreement may be applied directly to any debt or delinquency that Proposer owes the State of Texas or any agency of the State of Texas, regardless of when it arises, until such debt or delinquency is paid in full.
 - 2.1.12 Any terms, conditions, or documents attached to or referenced in Proposer's proposal are applicable to this procurement only to the extent that they (a) do not conflict with the laws of the State of Texas or this RFP, and (b) do not place any requirements on University that are not set forth in this RFP. Submission of a proposal is Proposer's good faith intent to enter into the Agreement with University as specified in this RFP and that Proposer's intent is not contingent upon University's acceptance or execution of any terms, conditions, or other documents attached to or referenced in Proposer's proposal.
 - 2.1.13 Pursuant to [Chapter 2271, Texas Government Code](#), Contractor certifies Contractor (1) does not currently boycott Israel; and (2) will not boycott Israel during the Term of this Agreement. Contractor acknowledges this Agreement may be terminated and payment withheld if this certification is inaccurate.
 - 2.1.14 Pursuant to [Subchapter F, Chapter 2252, Texas Government Code](#), Proposer certifies it is not engaged in business with Iran, Sudan, or a foreign terrorist organization. Proposer acknowledges any contract or agreement resulting from this RFP may be terminated and payment withheld if this certification is inaccurate.
 - 2.1.15 Pursuant to Chapter 2274, *Texas Government Code (enacted by SB 19, 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2021))*, Proposer verifies (1) it does not have a practice, policy, guidance, or directive that discriminates against a firearm entity or firearm trade association and (2) it will not discriminate during the term of any contract or agreement resulting from this RFP against a firearm entity or firearm trade association. Proposer acknowledges any contract or agreement resulting from this RFP may be terminated and payment withheld if this verification is inaccurate.

- 2.1.16 Pursuant to Chapter 2274, *Texas Government Code* (enacted by [SB 13, 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session \(2021\)](#)), Proposer verifies (1) it does not boycott energy companies and (2) it will not boycott energy companies during the term of any contract or agreement resulting from this RFP. Proposer acknowledges any contract or agreement resulting from this RFP may be terminated and payment withheld if this verification is inaccurate.
- 2.1.17 Pursuant to Section 161.0085, *Texas Health and Safety Code* (enacted by [SB 968, 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session \(2021\)](#)), Proposer certifies that it does not require a customer to provide any documentation certifying the customer's COVID-19 vaccination or post-transmission recovery on entry to, to gain access to, or to receive service from Proposer's business. Proposer acknowledges any contract or agreement resulting from this RFP may be terminated and payment withheld if this certification is inaccurate.
- 2.2 No Benefit to Public Servants.** Proposer has not given or offered to give, nor does Proposer intend to give at any time hereafter, any economic opportunity, future employment, gift, loan, gratuity, special discount, trip, favor or service to a public servant in connection with its proposal. Failure to sign this [Execution of Offer](#), or signing with a false statement, may void the submitted proposal or any resulting Agreement, and Proposer may be removed from all proposer lists at University.
- 2.3 Tax Certification.** Proposer is not currently delinquent in the payment of any taxes due under [Chapter 171, Tax Code](#), or Proposer is exempt from the payment of those taxes, or Proposer is an out-of-state taxable entity that is not subject to those taxes, whichever is applicable. A false certification will be deemed a material breach of any resulting contract or agreement and, at University's option, may result in termination of any resulting Agreement.
- 2.4 Antitrust Certification.** Neither Proposer nor any firm, corporation, partnership or institution represented by Proposer, nor anyone acting for such firm, corporation or institution, has violated the antitrust laws of the State of Texas, codified in [§15.01 et seq., Business and Commerce Code](#), or the Federal antitrust laws, nor communicated directly or indirectly the proposal made to any competitor or any other person engaged in such line of business.
- 2.5 Authority Certification.** The individual signing this document and the documents made a part of this RFP, is authorized to sign the documents on behalf of Proposer and to bind Proposer under any resulting Agreement.
- 2.6 Child Support Certification.** Under [§231.006, Family Code](#), relating to child support, the individual or business entity named in Proposer's proposal is not ineligible to receive award of the Agreement, and any Agreements resulting from this RFP may be terminated if this certification is inaccurate.
- 2.7 Relationship Certifications.**
- No relationship, whether by blood, marriage, business association, capital funding agreement or by any other such kinship or connection exists between the owner of any Proposer that is a sole proprietorship, the officers or directors of any Proposer that is a corporation, the partners of any Proposer that is a partnership, the joint venturers of any Proposer that is a joint venture, or the members or managers of any Proposer that is a limited liability company, on one hand, and an employee of any member institution of UT System, on the other hand, other than the relationships which have been previously disclosed to University in writing.
 - Proposer has not been an employee of any member institution of UT System within the immediate twelve (12) months prior to the Submittal Deadline.
 - No person who, in the past four (4) years served as an executive of a state agency was involved with or has any interest in Proposer's proposal or any contract resulting from this RFP (ref. [§669.003, Government Code](#)).
 - All disclosures by Proposer in connection with this certification will be subject to administrative review and approval before University enters into any Agreement resulting from this RFP with Proposer.
- 2.8 Compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity Laws.** Proposer is in compliance with all federal laws and regulations pertaining to Equal Employment Opportunities and Affirmative Action.
- 2.9 Compliance with Safety Standards.** All products and services offered by Proposer to University in response to this RFP meet or exceed the safety standards established and promulgated under the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Law ([Public Law 91-596](#)) and the *Texas Hazard Communication Act*, [Chapter 502, Health and Safety Code](#), and all related regulations in effect or proposed as of the date of this RFP.
- 2.10 Exceptions to Certifications.** Proposer will and has disclosed, as part of its proposal, any exceptions to the information stated in this [Execution of Offer](#). All information will be subject to administrative review and approval prior to the time University makes an award or enters into any Agreement with Proposer.
- 2.11 Manufacturer Responsibility and Consumer Convenience Computer Equipment Collection and Recovery Act Certification.** If Proposer will sell or lease computer equipment to University under any Agreement resulting from this RFP then, pursuant to [§361.965\(c\), Health & Safety Code](#), Proposer is in compliance with the Manufacturer Responsibility and Consumer Convenience Computer Equipment Collection and Recovery Act set forth in [Chapter 361, Subchapter Y, Health & Safety Code](#), and the rules adopted by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality under that Act as set forth in [30 TAC Chapter 328, §361.952\(2\), Health & Safety Code](#), states that, for purposes of the Manufacturer Responsibility and Consumer Convenience Computer Equipment Collection and Recovery Act, the term "computer equipment" means a desktop or notebook computer and includes a computer monitor or other display device that does not contain a tuner.
- 2.12 Conflict of Interest Certification.**
- Proposer is not a debarred vendor or the principal of a debarred vendor (i.e. owner, proprietor, sole or majority shareholder, director, president, managing partner, etc.) either at the state or federal level.
 - Proposer's provision of services or other performance under any Agreement resulting from this RFP will not constitute an actual or potential conflict of interest.

- Proposer has disclosed any personnel who are related to any current or former employees of University.
- Proposer has not given, nor does Proposer intend to give, at any time hereafter, any economic opportunity, future employment, gift, loan, gratuity, special discount, trip, favor or service to an officer or employee of University in connection with this RFP.

2.13 Proposer Certification Relating to Critical Infrastructure. Pursuant to Chapter 2274, *Texas Government Code* (enacted by [SB 2116, 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session \(2021\)](#)), Proposer certifies (A) it is neither owned by nor is the majority of stock or other ownership interest of the Proposer held or controlled by (i) individuals who are citizens of China, Iran, North Korea, Russia, or a country designated by the Governor of Texas as a threat to critical infrastructure under Section 2274.0103 of the *Texas Government Code* (a “designated country”) or (ii) a company or other entity, including a governmental entity, that is owned or controlled by citizens of or is directly controlled by the government of China, Iran, North Korea, Russia, or a designated country; and (B) it is not headquartered in China, Iran, North Korea, Russia, or a designated country. Proposer understands that the prohibitions set forth in the preceding sentence apply regardless of whether (1) Proposer’s or its parent company’s securities are publicly traded or (2) Proposer or its parent company is listed on a public stock exchange as either (a) a Chinese, Iranian, North Korean, or Russian company or (b) a company of a designated country. Proposer acknowledges any contract or agreement resulting from this RFP may be terminated and payment withheld if this certification is inaccurate.

2.14 Proposer Compliance and Certification Relating to Cloud Computing Services. Section 2054.0593 of the *Texas Government Code* (enacted by [SB 475, 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session \(2021\)](#)) requires the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) to establish and implement a state risk and authorization management program to provide a standardized approach for security assessment, authorization, and continuous monitoring of cloud computing services that process the data of Texas state agencies. DIR by rule shall prescribe (1) the categories and characteristics of cloud computing services subject to the state risk and authorization management program and (2) the requirements for certification through the program of vendors that provide cloud computing services. DIR shall evaluate vendors to determine whether a vendor qualifies for a certification issued by DIR reflecting compliance with program requirements. Texas state agencies must ensure that each contract for cloud computing services that the agency enters into or renews on or after January 1, 2022, complies with Section 2054.0593.

As a result, Proposer certifies that if selected it will comply with the requirements of such a state risk and authorization management program and maintain program compliance and certification throughout the term of any contract or agreement resulting from this RFP. Proposer understands and agrees that the University may not enter into or renew any contract or agreement resulting from this RFP with Proposer to purchase cloud computing services for the University that are subject to the state risk and authorization management program unless the Proposer demonstrates compliance with program requirements. Proposer acknowledges that any contract or agreement resulting from this RFP may be terminated and payment withheld if Proposer does not comply with this Section.

2.15 Proposer should complete the following information:

If Proposer is a Corporation, then State of Incorporation: _____

If Proposer is a Corporation, then Proposer’s Corporate Charter Number: _____

RFP No.: 720-2206 – Communications, Public Relations and Media Relations Services

NOTICE: WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, INDIVIDUALS ARE ENTITLED ON REQUEST TO BE INFORMED ABOUT THE INFORMATION THAT GOVERNMENTAL BODIES OF THE STATE OF TEXAS COLLECT ABOUT SUCH INDIVIDUALS. UNDER §§552.021 AND 552.023, GOVERNMENT CODE, INDIVIDUALS ARE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE AND REVIEW SUCH INFORMATION. UNDER §559.004, GOVERNMENT CODE, INDIVIDUALS ARE ENTITLED TO HAVE GOVERNMENTAL BODIES OF THE STATE OF TEXAS CORRECT INFORMATION ABOUT SUCH INDIVIDUALS THAT IS INCORRECT.

Submitted and Certified By:

(Proposer Institution’s Name)

(Signature of Duly Authorized Representative)

(Printed Name / Title)

(Date Signed)

(Proposer’s Street Address)

(City, State, Zip Code)

(Telephone Number)

(FAX Number)

(Email Address)

SECTION 3

PROPOSER'S GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE

NOTICE: WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, INDIVIDUALS ARE ENTITLED ON REQUEST TO BE INFORMED ABOUT THE INFORMATION THAT GOVERNMENTAL BODIES OF THE STATE OF TEXAS COLLECT ABOUT SUCH INDIVIDUALS. UNDER §§552.021 AND 552.023, GOVERNMENT CODE, INDIVIDUALS ARE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE AND REVIEW SUCH INFORMATION. UNDER §559.004, GOVERNMENT CODE, INDIVIDUALS ARE ENTITLED TO HAVE GOVERNMENTAL BODIES OF THE STATE OF TEXAS CORRECT INFORMATION ABOUT SUCH INDIVIDUALS THAT IS INCORRECT.

Proposals must include responses to the questions contained in this Proposer's General Questionnaire. Proposer should reference the item number and repeat the question in its response. In cases where a question does not apply or if unable to respond, Proposer should refer to the item number, repeat the question, and indicate N / A (Not Applicable) or N / R (No Response), as appropriate. Proposer will explain the reason when responding N/A or N/R.

3.1 Proposer Profile

3.1.1 Legal name of Proposer company:

Address of principal place of business:

Address of office that would be providing service under the Agreement:

Number of years in Business: _____

State of incorporation: _____

Number of Employees: _____

Annual Revenues Volume: _____

Name of Parent Corporation, if any _____

NOTE: If Proposer is a subsidiary, University prefers to enter into a contract or agreement with the Parent Corporation or to receive assurances of performance from the Parent Corporation.

3.1.2 State whether Proposer will provide a copy of its financial statements for the past two (2) years, if requested by University.

3.1.3 Proposer will provide a financial rating of the Proposer entity and any related documentation (such as a Dunn and Bradstreet analysis) that indicates the financial stability of Proposer.

3.1.4 Is Proposer currently for sale or involved in any transaction to expand or to become acquired by another business entity? If yes, Proposer will explain the expected impact, both in organizational and directional terms.

3.1.5 Proposer will provide any details of all past or pending litigation or claims filed against Proposer that would affect its performance under the Agreement with University (if any).

3.1.6 Is Proposer currently in default on any loan agreement or financing agreement with any bank, financial institution, or other entity? If yes, Proposer will specify the pertinent date(s), details, circumstances, and describe the current prospects for resolution.

3.1.7 Does any relationship exist (whether by family kinship, business association, capital funding agreement, or any other such relationship) between Proposer and any employee of University? If yes, Proposer will explain.

3.1.8 Proposer will provide the name and Social Security Number for each person having at least 25% ownership interest in Proposer. This disclosure is mandatory pursuant to §231.006, Family Code, and will be used for the purpose of determining whether an owner of Proposer with an ownership interest of at least 25% is more than 30 days delinquent in paying child support. Further disclosure of this information is governed by the Texas Public Information Act (ref. Chapter 552, Government Code), and other applicable law.

3.2 Miscellaneous

- 3.2.1 Proposer will provide a list of any additional services or benefits not otherwise identified in this RFP that Proposer would propose to provide to University. Additional services or benefits must be directly related to the goods and services solicited under this RFP.
- 3.2.2 Proposer will provide details describing any unique or special services or benefits offered or advantages to be gained by University from doing business with Proposer. Additional services or benefits must be directly related to the goods and services solicited under this RFP.

SECTION 4

ADDENDA CHECKLIST

Proposal of: _____
(Proposer Company Name)

To: The University of Texas System

Ref: Communications, Public Relations and Media Relations Services

RFP No: 720-2206

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The undersigned Proposer hereby acknowledges receipt of the following Addenda to the captioned RFP (initial if applicable).

Note: The number of initials required should correspond directly to the total number of Addenda issued.

No. 1 _____ No. 2 _____ No. 3 _____ No. 4 _____ No. 5 _____

Respectfully submitted,

Proposer: _____

By: _____
(Authorized Signature for Proposer)

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX TWO
SAMPLE AGREEMENT
(INCLUDED AS SEPARATE ATTACHMENT)

APPENDIX THREE

ACCESS BY INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Access by Individuals with Disabilities: Contractor represents and warrants (**EIR Accessibility Warranty**) the electronic and information resources and all associated information, documentation, and support Contractor provides to University under this Agreement (**EIRs**) comply with applicable requirements in [1 TAC Chapter 213](#) and [1 TAC §206.70](#) (ref. [Subchapter M, Chapter 2054, Texas Government Code](#)). To the extent Contractor becomes aware the EIRs, or any portion thereof, do not comply with the EIR Accessibility Warranty, then Contractor represents and warrants it will, at no cost to University, either (1) perform all necessary remediation to make the EIRs satisfy the EIR Accessibility Warranty or (2) replace the EIRs with new EIRs that satisfy the EIR Accessibility Warranty. If Contractor fails or is unable to do so, University may terminate this Agreement and, within thirty (30) days after termination, Contractor will refund to University all amounts University paid under this Agreement. Contractor will provide all assistance and cooperation necessary for performance and documentation of accessibility testing, planning, and execution criteria conducted by University or University's third party testing resources, as required by [1 TAC §213.38\(g\)](#).

APPENDIX FOUR

CERTIFICATE OF INTERESTED PARTIES (Texas Ethics Commission Form 1295)

This is a sample Texas Ethics Commission's FORM 1295 – CERTIFICATE OF INTERESTED PARTIES. If not exempt under [Section 2252.908\(c\), Government Code](#), Contractor must use the Texas Ethics Commission electronic filing web page (at <https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/data/forms/1295/1295.pdf>) to complete the most current Certificate of Interested Parties form and submit the form as instructed to the Texas Ethics Commission and University. **The Certificate of Interested Parties will be submitted solely by awarded Contractor(s) to University with the signed Agreement.**

CERTIFICATE OF INTERESTED PARTIES		FORM 1295	
Complete Nos. 1 - 4 and 6 if there are interested parties. Complete Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 if there are no interested parties.		OFFICE USE ONLY	
1 Name of business entity filing form, and the city, state and country of the business entity's place of business.			
2 Name of governmental entity or state agency that is a party to the contract for which the form is being filed.			
3 Provide the identification number used by the governmental entity or state agency to track or identify the contract, and provide a description of the services, goods, or other property to be provided under the contract.			
4 Name of Interested Party	City, State, Country (place of business)	Nature of Interest (check applicable)	
		Controlling	Intermediary
5 Check only if there is NO Interested Party. <input type="checkbox"/>			
6 AFFIDAVIT I swear, or affirm, under penalty of perjury, that the above disclosure is true and correct.			
_____ Signature of authorized agent of contracting business entity			
AFFIX NOTARY STAMP / SEAL ABOVE			
Sworn to and subscribed before me, by the said _____, this the _____ day of _____, 20_____, to certify which, witness my hand and seal of office.			
_____ Signature of officer administering oath		_____ Printed name of officer administering oath	
_____ Title of officer administering oath			
ADD ADDITIONAL PAGES AS NECESSARY			