



SALTER &  
ASSOCIATES<sup>LLC</sup>

Advertising • Marketing • Research • Web Design

July 31, 2008

Purchasing Division  
2019 Washington Street East  
P.O. Box 5030  
Charleston, WV 25305-0130

RE: HHR90023

Professional Advertising and Marketing Services

“NO BID” RESPONSE

Pursuant to a review of the original RFP HHR90023, as well as information tendered to interested parties at the pre-bid conference held in Charleston on July 14 2008, and answers to oral and written questions distributed to all interested parties in Addendum 1 printed on July 24 2008, please note the following from Salter & Associates, LLC.

1. The original RFP calls for an undetermined amount of work apportioned throughout and in response to the needs of multiple subordinate agencies within the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (Department).
2. The scope of this work can only be ascertained by speculation and by reviewing past performance which is not necessarily an accurate indication of forward-looking needs
3. The RFP contains a menu of tactical marketing communications tools, but does not identify where in the overall equation these tools are to be deployed, if at all.
  - a. Ability to perform these tasks is widely distributed and is not an indication of proficiency in managing an integrated marketing communication program.
4. General discussion in the pre-bid conference, confirmed by written response to post-conference questions submitted by vendors authorized to bid on the basis of their attendance at the pre-bid conference, confirms the absence of a master plan, acknowledged throughout and specifically noted on Page 11 of Addendum 1:
  - a. “\$2,149,677.89 was spent last year and the year before that \$2,028,012.44 ” and
  - b. “No known written marketing plans are available. The need for marketing services will arise as needed throughout the agency. At that time, the vendor will be contacted with specific information regarding the project and will work with each unit to develop a plan for that specific project.”
  - c. This language suggests that fractional plans will be written only after the winning agency has committed to a price for services.
5. While it is likely that some benefits and results have been achieved through a \$4 million dollar investment over the last two years, the most important component of the overall DHHR marketing and communications program – the strategic marketing plan - has been omitted, thereby denying the Department the benefits of integrated financial planning, expense reduction, synergies in spending benefits and continuity from one program to another, from one department to another and from one time period to the next.
6. Therefore, it is our opinion that *any* bid tendered in response to this RFP cannot be supported by fact simply because the facts do not yet exist and needs specific to budget estimates have not been determined.
7. While we are confident that we can do this work and serve the needs of the Department with the interests of the people of West Virginia at the forefront of our efforts now and in the future, we are not confident that any firm can attach a true and accurate cost as outlined in HHR90023 regardless of what actual services and expenses past agencies have tendered to the State.
8. The fact is, the State of West Virginia DHHR has heretofore spent more than \$4 million in the last two years without a documented and approved strategic marketing plan.

RECEIVED

2008 AUG -4 A 9:38

9. Without such a plan, HHR90023 invites conjecture, which ultimately yields an enormous liability for the winning agency and sets the stage for continued underperformance as evidenced by the absence of the aforementioned plan after at least two contract cycles
10. Under these circumstances and for reasons outline above, Salter and Associates, LLC respectfully enter a "NO BID" in response to RFP HHR90023

This response is not a request to remove our firm from the State Bidders' List, nor is it intended to create an adversarial relationship between the State and our firm

- As professionals doing business in an unlicensed profession, however, we must regulate ourselves with common sense and sensitivity to the resources of our clients.
- In the future, we encourage the Department to invest in the equivalent of an architectural plan to more accurately define the situation. This can be accomplished through an independent marketing and communications audit to determine the needs of each subordinate department, resulting in an RFP, more specific than the RFP we have in hand, that invites third-party vendors to submit proposals for plan implementation and optimization through creative energy, collaboration with DHHR service providers and goal-oriented cost management
- We would be happy to provide such an audit if invited by the State of West Virginia.
- Additionally, we would remove our firm from the next bidding cycle on the implementation of the resulting plan itself, which would obviate any real or perceived conflict of interest and assure the State of West Virginia Department of H&HR the best and most efficient use of resources from whoever is ultimately awarded the contract.

Sincerely and with great respect,



Ronald W. Salter, President  
Salter & Associates LLC  
417 Grand Park Drive Ste. 205  
Vienna, WV 26105