



U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council

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Request for Proposal

Date: November 25, 2019

To: Public Relations and Communications Firms and Individuals in the Agricultural Sector
From: Kasey Cronquist, President, United States Highbush Blueberry Council
RE: Seeking Proposals to Develop Crisis Communication Plan in 2020

Background

The United States Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) seeks a qualified public relations and communication firm or individual to develop a crisis communication plan on behalf of the highbush blueberry industry. The selected firm/individual will be expected to establish a set of guidelines to prepare the industry when a crisis first emerges, advise on how to communicate with the public, and how to prevent the issue from occurring again.

Scope

The selected firm/individual will assist USHBC focus the industry's response and how it will communicate with its stakeholders in the case of an emergency or unexpected event. They will create steps to ensure a consistent message is communicated across all industry platforms, and ensure information quickly reaches industry stakeholders (employees, growers, packers, processors), media (both conventional and social media), and the general public (i.e. consumers).

Responsibilities will include, but may not be limited to:

- 1. Identify the goal of the plan.** Facilitate a communication planning session with USHBC staff and industry leadership to identify the common goal of the crisis communication plan. Conduct industry background research from valid primary and secondary sources to describe the blueberry industry supply chain. This will include collection of historic statistics, state, and federal agricultural policy, and growing/packing procedures and practices.
- 2. Identify and describe stakeholders.** Outline a list of stakeholders to keep informed during a crisis, including contact information.

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3. Create a ladder for sharing information. Form a hierarchy demonstrating how information should be shared within the industry (i.e. President > Chairman > Industry Relations Chair). Staff roles will also be determined (i.e. assigning people to create lists of known facts pertaining to the crisis and answer questions).

4. Create and maintain inventory of crisis management tools. Develop example crisis scenarios and responses, including prepared press materials and transcripts for phone calls, social media mentions, and media inquiries.

5. Identify potential risks. Evaluate all sectors of the highbush blueberry industry and determine weaknesses and vulnerabilities to crisis and response.

6. Conduct Media Training. Develop a media training program and conduct training sessions with industry stakeholders at USHBC board meetings and events.

Budget

Applicants are advised to submit a detailed sample budget. The budget must separate fees and expenses.

Timeline

November 2019: Solicit Proposals from Qualified Firms/Individuals

December 2019: Review Proposals and Conduct Interviews

January 2020: Select Firm/Individual

February 2020: Conduct Crisis Communication Strategic Planning Session

March 2020: Introduce Crisis Communication Plan at USHBC Board Meeting

Requirements

Applicants must demonstrate the following:

- Understanding of key blueberry industry stakeholders (i.e. growers, packers, processors, importers)
- Ability to develop and execute an effective strategy and communication plan
- Familiarity and knowledge of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) requirements and regulations
- Ability to provide sufficient staff and administrative resources

Anti Discrimination Clause

USHBC does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, gender identity (including gender expression), disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, genetic information, income derived from a public

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assistance program, parental status, marital or family status, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all bases apply to all programs.) USHBC and any contractor must fully comply with any and all applicable Federal, State, and local equal employment opportunity statutes, ordinances, and regulations, including, but not limited to, Executive Order 11246 (Equal Employment Opportunity); Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; and the Equal Pay Act of 1963.

Instructions

Proposals must include the following components:

1. Company background
2. Relevant experience and qualifications (including key personnel and/or subcontractors)
3. Proposed approach and methodology to be followed in the development and successful implementation of a crisis communication plan
4. Detailed budget
5. Timeline
6. Quantifiable performance measures
7. References (at least three)

Questions and proposals must be submitted electronically to Alicia Adler at aadler@nabcblues.org by 5:00PM (PST) on Friday, December 20, 2019.